

SERMON XVII. (IX.)

BY THE REV. NATHANAEL VINCENT, A.M.

OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

PUBLIC PRAYER OUGHT NOT TO BE MADE IN AN UNKNOWN TONGUE.

PUBLIC PRAYER SHOULD BE IN A KNOWN TONGUE.

I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.

—1 Corinthians xiv. 15.

THE Spirit of God, foreseeing that in the latter days there would be an apostasy and departure from the faith, and that impious and corrupt doctrines would be published by men of corrupt minds, hath so compiled the holy scriptures, that from thence even those errors which arose long after the time of the apostles may be detected and confuted. With very good reason did Tertullian say, *Adoro scripturæ plenitudinem*,* “I adore the fulness of the scripture.” The perfection and sufficiency of it must needs be granted by all that understand it, and that will believe the testimony which it gives concerning itself. It is “profitable” *προς διδασκαλιαν, προς ελεγχον*, “for doctrine and reproof.” (2 Tim. iii. 16.) It serves to inform and open the eyes of the ignorant; it serves to stop the mouths of gainsayers. Hence we may be furnished with both offensive and defensive weapons: and the armour which is fetched from it is styled *τα οπλα του φωτος*, “the armour,” or “the weapons,” “of light.” (Rom. xiii. 12.) And truly, sin and error being but discovered, that very discovery will have a great influence unto the mortification of the one, and our preservation from the contagion of the other.

I do not at all wonder that the church of Rome should take away the key of knowledge. Open but that door, and that command would more generally be obeyed which you read in Rev. xviii. 4: “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” The Popish leaders are very much against the scripture’s being known, because it makes so much against them, and speaks so plainly against their doctrines; and they are jealous lest their own men, upon serious reading and consideration, might be brought to say, *Aut hoc non est evangelium, aut nos non sumus evangelici*: “Either this is not the gospel, or we are not gospellers:” “Either this word of God is not true; or if it be true, then Popery is a mere falsehood.”

That there is such a great disagreement between the scripture and Popery, might easily be made manifest in all the points of controversy between the Romish church and ours; we having departed from them upon this very score,—because they have rejected the word of God, and left that “faith which was once delivered to the saints.”

* *Liber adversus Hermogenem*, cap. 22.

But the point now to be insisted on is, *the language or tongue in which prayer that is public ought to be made.*

How near akin is mystical Babylon unto Babel of old in the land of Shinar! We read that there the aspiring builders' language was confounded, and they did not understand one another's speech; (Gen. xi. 7;) and this confusion stopped the building of that tower which was designed to reach heaven. In the devotions of the Romish church, the priest speaks, but the people understand not what is spoken; and this is an impediment unto the people's edification: so that their devotions reach not heaven, but are only a "speaking into the air;" (1 Cor. xiv. 9;) and are as little regarded by God, as they are understood by themselves. The Protestant churches, on the other side, are for prayer in a known tongue: and good warrant they have from the apostle himself; who says, "I will pray with the understanding;" and that "in the church he had rather speak five words," that is, a few words, "with his understanding, that by his voice he might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." (Verse 19.)

The text informs us of the apostle's practice: which he proposes, surely, not that we should dislike it, and refuse to follow him; but for our imitation. Three things are here to be considered:—

1. What is meant by *prayer*?—It must be understood concerning public prayer, or prayer with others: for the apostle, in this chapter where the text lies, is delivering a decency and order which was to be observed in the public assemblies; he supposes several persons to be present, that might answer "Amen" to the supplications and thanksgivings that were made. (Verse 16.) This interpretation, as Beza observes, is most agreeable with the scope of the apostle and the drift of his discourse.*

2. What is meant by *the spirit*?—"I will pray in the spirit;" that is, "by the gift of prayer which the Spirit bestows." This exposition I find in Chrysostom: *τῷ πνεύματι, τούτεστι, τῷ χαρισματι.*† Extraordinary abilities of prophesying and praying were given after Christ's ascension and the mission of the Holy Ghost; and the end of all was the church's increase and edification. Here it is not amiss to add, that by comparing other places with this, we must grant that "praying in the spirit" comprehends a great deal more than the bare gift of utterance in this duty, whether extraordinary in an unknown, or more ordinary in a known, language. To pray in the Holy Ghost, implies, and that chiefly, the having our infirmities helped by the Spirit of God; our graces quickened, our affections and desires raised, unto that strength and fervency unto which the Lord, for his Son our Advocate's sake, has promised satisfaction.

3. What is meant by *understanding*?—This must not be referred to the understanding of the apostle; for it is difficult to suppose that he at any time did not understand what himself did speak. But it relates to the understanding of others; as, verse 19: "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also."

* *Si de privatis precibus ageret, videri posset a suo proposito aberrare.*—BEZA in locum. "If he were treating of private prayers, he would seem to wander from his purpose."—EDIT.

† *Λογῶν λεγομένων in 1 Epist. ad Corinth.*

To teach with the understanding, in the apostle's sense, is to accommodate what we say to the understanding and capacity of those whom we teach. In like manner, to pray with the understanding, is to pray so, as that those whom we pray with may apprehend what we beg for at the throne of grace, and for what we return thanks unto God; else how is it possible they should be edified?

Upon the words thus opened I build this THESIS, which I am to maintain :—

THESIS.

That public prayer is not to be made in an unknown tongue, but in such a language as is understood by the common people.

In "public prayer" I include confessions of sin, petitions for grace and mercy, intercessions for others, and giving of thanks, which are uttered in the hearing of the congregation: and I affirm, that all such public worship and service is to be performed in such a tongue as the congregation is acquainted with. Hearken to the apostle: "Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified." (1 Cor. xiv. 16, 17.) Chrysostom upon these words speaks thus: *Ἰδιωτὴν τὸν λαϊκὸν λέγει.* "By 'the man unlearned' the apostle means the layman. Even he must understand the words that are spoken in prayer, that thereby he may be edified."

In the handling of this thesis,

I. *I shall give you the judgment of the church of Rome in the matter:*

II. *Produce arguments to prove that public prayer ought not to be made in an unknown language.*

III. *I shall make it manifest that antiquity is utterly against the Papists in this business.*

IV. *I shall answer the objections of the Romish doctors; and show the weakness of their arguments which they urge for their Latin, and by the people not-understood, service.*

V. *I shall discover "the mystery of iniquity" in this Papal doctrine, which preaches up and encourages to an ignorant devotion.*

VI. *Conclude with a practical application.*

I. *In the first place I am to give you the judgment of the church of Rome.*—And that they indeed hold that public prayer may be made in a language that the people understand not, appears two ways:—

1. *By their general practice.*—Their Mass-book is in Latin; their divine service and Offices, as they call them, are performed in the Latin tongue. But this is certain,—that the Latin tongue is not now the mother-tongue of any nation under heaven. In former ages, indeed, it was spoken in Italy. But that nation has been so often invaded and over-run by foreign enemies, especially by the Goths and Vandals, that there has been a great alteration in their language; the present Italian being vastly different from that language which the Romans of old used. But though Latin be not understood by the common people, yet in Italy and Spain and Germany and France, and other places where the pope

governs and is obeyed, the public service is Latin; and to teach that the people should understand what they pray for, is declaimed against as a piece of heresy.

2. It is not only the practice of that church to have Latin prayers; nor the opinion of some private doctors, nor the judgment of a provincial or national synod, that thus it ought to be: but *that very council of Trent which they (though without reason) call "holy and œcumenical," or "general," does determine that prayer need not be made in a vulgar language.*—The words of the council are these: *Etsi Missa magnam contineat populi fidelis eruditionem, non tamen expedire visum est patribus ut vulgari linguâ passim celebraretur*: (Sessio xxii. cap. 22:) "Though the Mass do contain a great deal of instruction for the faithful people, yet it did not seem expedient to these fathers that it should be every where celebrated in a vulgar tongue."

Indeed, afterward they command that the pastors *exponant aliquid*, "expound something;" but since "something" is only mentioned, and not what, nor how much, and to be sure not all, we may well say, *Hoc aliquid nihil est*: "This 'something' is as good as nothing." Moreover the ninth canon runs thus: *Si quis dixerit linguâ tantum vulgari Missam celebrari debere, anathema sit*: "Whosoever shall say that the Mass ought to be celebrated only in a vulgar language, let him be accursed." You see how a Popish council determines that public prayer need not be in a known tongue, and thunders out an anathema against those who are otherwise-minded.

II. *In the second place follow the arguments against the Papists, which prove that public prayer ought not to be made in a language unknown to the people.*

ARGUMENT 1. *When prayer is made in an unknown tongue, the name of God is taken in vain.*—Aquinas speaks of four ways of taking God's name: 1. *Ad dicti confirmationem*, "when we call God to witness the truth of what has been spoken." 2. *Ad sanctificationem*, "to the sanctifying and separating of a thing to an use that is holy." Thus the water in baptism is separated to a sacramental use, by the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. 3. *Ad operis completionem*, "unto the performing of any work which we undertake." Thus David went forth against Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts, whose armies that proud giant had defied. 4. *Ad confessionem et invocationem*, "when we make confession of God's name before others, or call upon his name ourselves."

Now, when thus in prayer we take the name of God into our mouths, we must remember the third commandment, and how the great Lawgiver has expressly signified that he will not hold the transgressors guiltless. It is the first petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be thy name:" but how can those that understand not the words of prayer, hallow God's name? How can their hearts and their words go together? And if they do not, the worship is vain: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me," and "in vain do they worship me." (Matt. xv. 8, 9.) The people in Latin prayers understand not when sin is confessed, nor when pardon and grace are asked, nor when praise is offered: how,

then; can their hearts be suitably affected? It follows, therefore, that the Lord's name is taken, and an ordinance used, in vain. Certainly the end of oral prayer is not attained in the church of Rome. The reason of using words in this duty is, that others may understand, and join with us; and also that our own thoughts and hearts by the words may be kept more close to God and intent upon his service: but, in both these regards, Latin prayers, to those that understand not Latin, are just as good as none at all.

ARG. II. *Prayer in an unknown tongue is ignorant worship.*—The Samaritans were blamed by Christ for worshipping they knew not what; (John iv. 22;) and he speaks by way of rephension to his disciples, "Ye know not what ye ask:" (Mark x. 38:) so that not only the object of prayer must be known, but likewise the matter which we pray for. But in both these regards the poor Papists are miserably ignorant. Their idolatry plainly shows [that] they have not right conceptions of the Godhead. How like are they to the Heathen Romans of old, who, before their conversion to the Christian faith, "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man!" (Rom. i. 23;) which is an evident argument, that they are "become vain in their imaginations, and that their foolish hearts are darkened." (Verse 21.) The Papists multiply altars, indeed; but upon all their altars this inscription may be written, which was upon the altar at Athens: *Αγνωστω Θεω* (Acts xvii. 23:) they are dedicated "to a God [whom] they know not."

And as they know not the God [whom] they pray to, so neither do they understand what they pray for. And what is ignorant worship, if this be not,—to make unknown prayers to an unknown God? Surely it is the will of God [that] we should understand what we pray: but the Papists are willingly ignorant; and it abundantly suffices them, if so much time is but wasted in their devotions, and so many words are but pronounced, though they understand those words no more than a parrot does the meaning of those words of ours which it has learned to imitate.

ARG. III. *How can such prayers as are made in an unknown tongue be made in faith? And yet faith is so necessary an ingredient in prayer, that the apostle sticks not to say, "Let not that man," who asks not in faith, "think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."* (James i. 7.)—We must believe that what we ask is according to the will of God. To this end the word, which is the declaration of God's will, ought to abide in us: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv. 7.) There must also in prayer be a reliance upon the promises of God; all which are "Yea and Amen in Christ." But how can we either believe that we ask according to the will of God, or rely upon those promises which God hath made, if we know not what we pray?

Faith in prayer, which is true, always pre-supposes knowledge. "How shall they call on him," says the apostle, "in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. x. 14.) He that understands not the tongue in which the prayers are made, cannot certainly tell whether the Lord be praised or blasphemed; whether grace be implored, or liberty begged to continue in

wickedness : nay, he cannot tell whether God be prayed to at all. How, then, shall a man in faith be able to join in such manner of supplications? And as this unknown tongue is an impediment to faith, so, when what is asked is not understood, how can the desires be lively? *Ignoti nulla cupido.** The understanding must apprehend the evil, before that evil can be heartily deprecated; and be convinced of the good, before the will is brought to embrace it.

ARG. IV. *The design of prayer is not to work any change in God, with whom there is not the least "variableness, neither shadow of turning;" but a change in us; that by prayer we may be the better disposed for the reception of what we ask. But how can prayer which is not understood be here available?—*When this duty is rightly performed, it tends to the making of us more sensible of our guilt and vileness, our neediness and insufficiency; and to the setting of a greater edge upon our affections toward those spiritual and eternal blessings which are promised in the new covenant: and by this means we are made more meet for the accomplishment of those promises. But prayer in an unknown tongue leaves men as it found them. And they must needs continue under their deadness, their hearts being straitened and "alienated from God through the blindness that is in them."

ARG. V. *Though to speak in an unknown tongue was in the first age of the Christian church a miraculous gift, and served much for the confirmation of the Christian faith; yet unless there were an interpreter, the use of an unknown tongue was not permitted in the public worship of God.—*"If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God." (1 Cor. xiv. 28.) Surely, then, it plainly follows, that prayer with the unlearned should not now be made in Latin; since skill in that language is not now an extraordinary gift, but gained by ordinary instruction and industry; and the use of it in prayer, with those that know not the meaning of it, tends not to confirm Christianity, but to hinder true devotion.

ARG. VI. *The use of an unknown tongue in the Lord's service is expressly denied to be unto edification.—*The apostle gives this general rule: "Let all things be done unto edifying." (1 Cor. xiv. 26.) And he before expressly says that the unlearned is not edified by worship in a language which he does not understand, though the prayers or praises be never so excellent. (Verse 17.) The Papists, indeed, that are devout in their way, may possibly imagine they are edified by their Latin prayers: but they would do well to consider that the apostle speaks very plainly, that an unknown tongue is not to edification: and it concerns them likewise to suspect their own hearts which are so deceitful; and to fear lest Satan, by delusory affections and a false peace, impose upon them. But let us suppose that they are really affected at their devotions; certainly no thanks at all to the prayer, the meaning of which they are utterly ignorant of.

Well, then, since prayer is to be unto edification, it must be such as may be understood by the people. The spiritual benefit and advantage of their souls is to be regarded in all public administrations. The apostles had indeed the gift of tongues in the day of Pentecost; but,

* "There can be no desire for that which is unknown."—EDIT.

which is very much to be marked, it was not that they might speak in an unknown, but in a known, language to the people. Therefore you read, that those Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the rest of them, did say, "We do hear, every one in the tongue wherein we were born, the wonderful works of God." (Acts ii. 8, 11.)

I might farther add, that it is repugnant to the very nature of public prayer, that it should be in an unknown tongue. For the people all the while, if they are at any, are at their private, devotions, though in the public assembly: while the priest in Latin is confessing sin, the people's hearts may be giving thanks for mercy; while the priest is asking for one kind of blessing, the people's affections may be carried out after another. Thus there is not that agreeing together in what they ask which Christ speaks of, and which is necessary in public prayer.

ARG. VII. *The apostle, having delivered this doctrine, That prayer and praise should be in a known tongue, adds, at the close of the chapter, not only that he taught the same "in all the churches of the saints," (1 Cor. xiv. 33,) but also, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (Verse 37.)*

So much for the arguments against prayer in an unknown tongue.

III. *In the third place I am to manifest that antiquity is utterly against the church of Rome in this matter.*—The Papists talk much of the fathers, indeed; but how disobedient they are to them, and how much they dissent from them, may most easily be evinced.

And because the council of Trent hath anathematized all that are against the Popish Latin prayers, I will suppose another council, and several of the most eminent and ancient fathers members of it: and that I may deal the more fairly with our adversaries, I will suppose some of their own most noted and famous doctors admitted into this council: and that yet it may be the more regarded, I shall suppose the apostle Paul himself to be the president of it.

The fathers whom I shall mention are Justin Martyr, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Basil, and Chrysostom.

The question to be debated is, "Whether prayer is to be made in a known or in an unknown tongue." Let the fathers speak in order.

JUSTIN MARTYR, who is very ancient, and lived about the year 160, tells us: *Και τη του ήλιου λεγομενη ήμερα, παντων κατα πολεις η αγρους μενοντων επι το αυτο συνελευσεις γινεται, και τα απομνημονευματα των αποστολων η τα συγγραμματα των προφητων αναγιωσκεται μεχρις εγχαρει.* *Ειτα παυσαμενου του αναγιωσκοντος, ο προεστως δια λογου την νουβησιαν και προκλησιν της των καλων τουτων μιμησεως ποιειται.* *Επειτα ανισταμεθα κοινη παντες, και ευχας πεμπομεν και παυσαμενων ήμων της ευχης, αρτος προσφερεται και οινος.* *Και προεστως ευχας όμοιως και ευχαριστιας, όση δυναμις αυτα, ανακεμπει και ο λαος ευφημει, λεγων το Αμην.* (*Apol. II. ad Antoninum Pium, sub finem.*) "On the day commonly called Sunday, assemblies are made of citizens and countrymen, and the writings of the apostles and prophets are read. The reader giving over, the minister makes an exhortation to the people, persuading to the imitation and practice of

those good things that are propounded. After this we rise all, and pour out prayers : and bread and wine are brought forth. And the minister, to the uttermost of his ability, does send forth prayers and praises unto God ; and the people give their consent, saying, 'Amen.'” Behold the scriptures read even to citizens, nay, to country-people, and prayers made which they did understand, and say Amen to.

ORIGEN may speak next : *Οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν οὐδὲ ἐν ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς κειμένοις ὀνομασί καὶ τεταγμένοις ἐπὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ χρῶνται ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς· ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνας Ἕλληνικοῖς, οἱ δὲ Ῥωμαῖοι Ῥωμαϊκοῖς. Καὶ οὕτως ἕκαστος κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ διαλεκτὸν εὐχεται Θεῷ, καὶ ὕμνει αὐτὸν ὡς δύναται· καὶ ὁ πάσης διαλεκτοῦ Κυρίου τῶν ἀποστόλων διαλεκτοῦ εὐχομένων ἀκούει.* (*Contra Celsum*, lib. viii. p. (mibi) 402.) “The Christians in their prayers use not the very words” (he means the words in the original) “of the scriptures : but they that are Greeks do use the Greek tongue ; and those that are Romans, the Roman tongue. And so every one according to his dialect does pray unto God, and praise him according to his ability : and He that is the Lord of every language, does hear the prayers which are put up to Him in every language.”

CYPRIAN speaks thus : *Aliter orare quàm docuit Christus, non ignorantia sola est, sed et culpa ; quando ipse posuerit et dixerit, “Rejicitis mandatum Dei ut traditionem vestram statuatis.”* (*De Orat. Domin.* p. (mibi) 309.) “To pray otherwise than Christ has taught, is not only ignorance, but a great fault ; for he has expressly said, ‘Ye reject the command of God, that ye may establish your own tradition.’” Now where has Christ taught the use of an unknown tongue in prayer ? It is but Rome’s invention and tradition, and that not of a very long standing.

AMBROSE may be heard in the next place : *Si utique ad ædificandam ecclesiam convenitis, ea debent dici quæ intelligant audientes : nam quid prodest ut quis linguâ loquatur quam solus scit, ut qui audit nihil proficiat ?* (*In I Cor. xiv.*) “If ye come together to edify the church, those things ought to be spoken that the hearers may understand : for what does he profit the people who speaks in an unknown tongue to them ?” And afterwards the same father adds : “There were some, of the Hebrews especially, that used the Syriac and the Hebrew tongue in their services ; but these aimed at their own glory and commendation, not at the people’s benefit.” Though the Hebrew tongue was that in which God of old uttered the law upon Mount Sinai, that which Moses and the prophets used ; though the Syriac was that in which our Lord himself spake, while he was upon earth ; yet Ambrose blames those that prayed in these languages with those people who did not understand them.

After Ambrose, let us hear AUGUSTINE : *Intelligere debemus, ut humanâ ratione, non quasi avium voce, cantemus. Merulæ, psittaci, corvi, picæ, et hujusmodi volucres, sæpè docentur ab hominibus sonare quæ nesciunt : scienter verò cantare, non avi, sed homini divini voluntate concessum est.* (*Enarrat. in Psalmum xviii.*) “We ought to understand what we pray for, that we may, not like birds, but like men, sing unto God. For blackbirds and parrots and crows and pies, and such kind of fowls, are taught to sound forth what they understand not : but to sing”

(which certainly in the Psalms of David includes prayer and praising) "with understanding, is granted, not to a bird, but to a man, through the good pleasure of God." From this father's words you may perceive, that the not-understood prayer of a Papist is likened unto the prating of a pie or parrot.

JEROME, who was famous for his skill in languages, and was himself a presbyter of the ancient church in Rome, yet speaks after this manner: *In ecclesiis urbis Romæ quasi tonitru cœleste audimus populum reboantem, Amen: (Præfat. in Epist. ad Galatas:)* "In the churches of the city of Rome, the voice of the people was like heavenly thunder, when they answered aloud, 'Amen,' " at the end of the prayers which they put up unto God. The people understood, and gave their consent unto, the prayers which were used in those days; but the present church of Rome, *heu! quantum mutatur ab illâ!*"* "alas! how much is it altered from what it once was!"

Again, the same JEROME speaks: *Quodd autem Amen consensum significet audientis, et sit signaculum veritatis, ad Corinthios prima nos docet: in quâ Paulus ait, "Cæterum si benedixeris spiritu, qui supplet locum idiotæ, quomodo dicet Amen super tuâ benedictione, quoniam quidem nescit quid dicas?" Ex quo ostendit non posse idioten respondere verum esse quod dicitur, nisi intellexerit quod docetur. (Sub finem Comment. in Epist. ad Galatas.)* "Amen signifies the consent of the hearer, and is a sealing of the truth. Paul says, 'If thou bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?' Whereby he declares, that the unlearned man cannot answer that that which is spoken is true, since he does not understand it."

Great BASIL'S mind you may know concerning the proposed question. Having complained before that the children of men do not in His temple give glory unto God, he adds, 'Η γλωσσα ψαλλετω, ὁ δε νοις ερευνατω την διανοιαν των ειρημενων' *ινα ψαλλης τῷ πνευματι, ψαλλης δε και τῷ νοί.* (*Homil. in Psalmum xxviii.:*) "Let thy tongue sing, and let thy mind search the meaning of what is spoken; that," according to the apostle, "thou mayest sing with the spirit, and sing with the understanding also."

CHRYSOSTOM agrees with the fore-mentioned fathers fully: *Ιδιωτην τον λαϊκον λεγει, και δεικνυσι αυτον ου μικραν ζημιαν υπομενοντα, οταν το Αμην ειπειν μη δυναται* (*λογοις λεγομενης in I Epist. ad Corinth.* :) "Take notice," says he, "how the apostle does always seek the church's edification. By 'the unlearned man,' Paul means the layman; and shows how this unlearned person does sustain a very great loss, when prayers are made in such a language as [that] he, through want of understanding, is not able to say Amen to them."

I shall add unto these passages of the fathers, a Constitution of the emperor JUSTINIAN. Emperors of old were revered by the church, though now the pope endeavours to lord it over them. The Constitution is thus: *Jubemus omnes episcopos, &c.:* (*Novellæ, Constit. 123:*) "We command that all bishops and presbyters do celebrate the holy oblation, and prayers used in holy baptism, not speaking low, but with a clear

* VIRGILII *Æneid.* ii. 274.

voice which may be heard by the people, that thereby the minds of the people may be stirred up with greater devotion in uttering the praises of the Lord God." And for this is cited 1 Cor. xiv. 16: "How shall the unlearned say Amen, if he does not understand what is spoken?" And then it follows, "If the priests neglect these things, the judgment of God and Christ will fall on them; neither will we," says the emperor, "when we know it, rest and leave it unrevenged."

But now let us hear the Romish doctors themselves, speaking to the question in hand.

Cardinal CAJETAN has these words: *Ex hęc Pauli doctrinā habetur, quodd melius est ad ædificationem ecclesię, orationes publicas, quę audiente populo dicuntur, dici lingüā communi clericis et populo, quā̄m dici Latinę: (Comment. in 1 Cor. xiv.)* "From this doctrine of the apostle Paul it follows, that it is better for the edification of the church, that the public prayers which the people hear should be made in that language which both the priests and people understand, than that they should be made in Latin." Here I cannot choose but cry out, *Magna est veritas*, "Great is truth, and it will prevail!" Behold, a cardinal of the Romish church speaks as plainly against the council of Trent as any whom they nickname "heretics" can!

The next Romish author is NICOLAUS DE LYRA; who, glossing upon the same chapter, speaks to the same purpose: *Si populus intelligit orationem sive benedictionem sacerdotis, melius reducitur in Deum, et devotiüs respondet, Amen:* "If the people understand the prayer or thanksgiving which is performed by the priest, their minds will be brought the better and nearer unto God, and with greater devoutness they will answer, 'Amen.'"

The third Romish doctor shall be "the angelical" (as he is called) and highly-magnified THOMAS AQUINAS. His words are these: *Plus lucratur qui orat et intelligit; nam reficitur, et quantum ad intellectum, et quantum ad affectum: (Comment. in 1 Cor. xiv.):* "He gains most who prays and understands the words which he speaks; for he is edified both as to his understanding, and also as to his affections." Again: he saith, *Melius est ut lingua quę benedicit etiam interpretetur; omnis enim sermo bonus est ad ædificationem fidei:* "It is best that the tongue which blesses should interpret; for good words should be spoken to the edification of faith." Here we may with reason say, *Bend quidem scripsisti, Thoma:* "Thomas, thou hast written what is agreeable to truth."

Thus the fathers and the Popish doctors themselves have delivered their opinions; and all are for praying in a known language.

Nay, I have read, and it is acknowledged by a Jesuit, (AZORIUS, *Instit. lib. viii. cap. 26, ex ÆNEA SYLVIO*.) that above six hundred years ago, when the pope did deliberate and consult whether he should grant unto the Bohemians the use of the vulgar tongue in their public devotions, there was heard a voice from heaven, saying, *Omnis lingua confiteatur ei:* "Let every tongue confess unto God."

But now at last let us be determined by the apostle PAUL, the supposed president of the council: and his mind I shall give you in this paraphrase upon his own words:—

"I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all; but I

had rather speak five words to be understood by and to edify those that hear me, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? And if I pray, and those that are present understand not the meaning of the voice, how shall they wrestle with God? How shall they defend themselves against the assaults of the evil one? How shall they join in begging for grace to overcome him? I am an apostle, and not a barbarian; and I would not speak words into the air, but so as to benefit them that hear me. I am unwilling [that] the public worship of God should be exposed to the contempt and scorn of infidels, or that they should censure it to be only the raving of madmen, because they know not the meaning of the words that are used. Our God is not the God of confusion, but requires a reasonable service; and these commands concerning prayer and praising so as to be understood, are his commands. Every one who is indeed spiritual will be thus persuaded: they who are otherwise minded are willingly ignorant."

You see, I have proved the Protestant doctrine out of the fathers; nay, it is granted by Popish authors of very great name; and how plainly the apostle is on our side, do but read and judge.

Let the Papists now for shame cease their bragging of antiquity. It was certainly the manner of the elder and purer times to pray in a known language. Thus prayed the apostles; thus prayed our Lord Jesus; thus praised the heavenly host at Christ's nativity, in such words as the very shepherds understood: "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." (Luke ii. 14.) Thus the prophets prayed, and David, the sweet singer of Israel; all his Psalms were written in Hebrew, the Jews' mother-tongue. Thus sang Deborah and Barak; thus Moses and the Israelites, after their miraculous deliverance out of Egypt, and Pharaoh's overthrow in the mighty waters. Nay, I must add, there was a time when there was but one language in the whole world,—before the building of Babel; and then there was no unknown tongue to pray in. In the days of Enos, the son of Seth, the grandchild of Adam, it is said, "men began to call upon the name of the Lord:" (Gen. iv. 26:) and this must of necessity have been done in a language which none were ignorant of. Surely, then, the Protestant religion in this regard must be acknowledged of sufficient antiquity, since it is as old as the old world, since it was before the flood of Noah.

IV. *In the fourth place I shall answer the Popish arguments to defend their cause; and shall not fear to produce the very strongest which I have met withal.*

OBJECTION I.

It is objected, that "the apostle does not speak in 1 Cor. xiv. concerning the ordinary divine service, but concerning spiritual songs which by an extraordinary gift were uttered."

ANSWER.

The apostle does mention prayer as well as giving of thanks: and there is as much reason that the ordinary service should be understood, as the extraordinary; because that which is ordinarily used, should by all means be to edification.

OBJECTION II.

It is objected, that "prayer in an unknown tongue is not condemned, but prayer in a known tongue only preferred." *

ANSWER.

First. Suppose this: why does the church of Rome pray after the worse, and not after the better, manner of the two? Secondly. I say, it is condemned by the apostle as not being for edification; for he that could speak in a tongue, if he could not interpret, nor any interpreter present, was commanded to keep silence in the assembly.

OBJECTION III.

It is objected, that "of old the instruction and edification of the people were necessary; and the use of prayer was, that they might be instructed and edified: but now the end of prayer is not so much the people's instruction and edification, as the yielding to God that worship which is due to him." †

ANSWER.

First. The apostles were as careful that God might have his worship, as the Papists; nay, a great deal more careful. Secondly. Disjoin not God's worship and the people's edification: for he is best worshipped "in spirit and in truth;" and the more the mind understands and the heart of the worshipper is affected, God is the more honoured and the better pleased.

OBJECTION IV.

It is objected, that "prayer is not made to the people, but unto God; and he understands all tongues alike: and it is sufficient that the Lord understands what is prayed, though the people are ignorant." And this Bellarmine does illustrate by a similitude. "If a courtier," says he, "should petition for a countryman in Latin to a king, the countryman might be benefited by the Latin petition of the courtier, though he should not understand a word of it." †

ANSWER.

1. It might have been said, that God understands all tongues alike in the apostles' days as well as now; the Lord being then and now and always equally omniscient.

2. The use of prayer is not to inform the God [whom] we pray to; for he knows what things we have need of before we ask: (Matt. vi. 8:) but to make ourselves more sensible of our needs, and consequently more meet to be supplied. But how can this be, if prayer be locked up in an unknown dialect?

3. As for Bellarmine's similitude, it will not hold. For the God of heaven is not like the kings on earth, who will hear petitions made by favourites for persons that make no address themselves: but He requires that every particular person should ask if he will receive, and understand what he prays for; and that he should have suitable affections to the matter of his petitions, if he will be heard and answered. Add also,

* BELLARMINUS *De Verbo Dei*, lib. ii. capit. 16.

† Idem, *ibid.*

‡ *Loco citato.*

that if a king should forbid petitions in a strange language, and should command that petitioners should use a tongue [which] they understand, that with the greater earnestness they may beg what they need; to such an one a Latin petition would not be so acceptable: But God has forbid the use of an unknown tongue: Therefore we may conclude that the Popish Latin prayers, in an auditory which understand them not, are to very little purpose. The people must seek and knock, as well as the priest; else they shall not find, else it will not be opened unto them. (Matt. vii. 7.)

V. *In the fifth place I am to discover the tendency of, and "mystery of iniquity" in, this Papal doctrine, which encourages to prayer in an unknown tongue, and teaches people to be contented with an ignorant devotion.*

1. *It gratifies exceedingly the lazy disposition of men.*—Who naturally like a liberty to rest in *opere operato*, "in the work done;" and cannot endure to be urged to the more difficult part of religion; which lies in a conflict with wandering thoughts in duty; in watching over and taking pains with the heart, that it may be intent, considerate, and affectionate in its applications unto God. I know, the Papists boast of their austerities in their devotions: but these are external things; and who has required them at their hands? And I may with good reason affirm that one quarter of an hour spent in prayer, where the very heart is engaged, and understands what it is doing, and seeks the Lord with its whole desire, will be to better purpose than all the prayers by rote that are or can be said by a blind Papist, though he should live to the age of Methuselah.

2. *This doctrine is a notable device to keep the people ignorant, and to make them more dependent upon the priesthood; and hereby they hope more easily to rule them.*—These cruel guides, as they take away the Bible from the people, which is the great means of knowledge; so they will not suffer them to cry for knowledge, so as to know what they cry. What a faithful servant is the pope unto the prince of darkness! and what quiet possession does "the strong man armed" keep, while the gospel is hid, and men pray for they know not what, and consequently obtain nothing!

3. *Many prayers may well be made in Latin merely through shame.*—When I read the scripture, I conclude the Papists are afraid of the light which shines from thence, lest it overthrow their black kingdom; and when I read the foolish, nay, blasphemous, prayers which are made in the church of Rome, I conclude they are ashamed [that] the meaning of them should be known. Thus they pray to the Virgin Mary:—

*Sancta Maria,
Quæ totum orbem illuminas,
Quæ tuos servientes exaltas,
Illuminatrix cordium,
Fons misericordie,
Ab omni malo libera nos, domina.*

To St. Dorothy they pray thus:—

*Sancta Dorothea,
Cor mundum in me crea.*

"O St. Mary,
Who dost enlighten the whole world,
Who dost exalt thy servants,
Who dost illuminate hearts,
Who art the fountain of mercy,
From all evil, good lady, deliver us."

"O holy Dorothy,
A clean heart create in me."

St. Agnes is prayed unto to keep them in the faith ; and St. George, to save them from their sins, that they may rest in heaven with the blessed for ever. These Latin prayers in plain English are most wicked blasphemies ; and both God's work and honour, which are peculiar to himself and dear to him, are (to the provoking of him to jealousy) ascribed and imparted to the creature.

VI. *In the last place I come to the APPLICATION.*

USE I.

Bless the Lord that the day-spring from on high hath visited this land of your nativity, and that Popish darkness is so much dispelled.—How thankful were the Israelites, think you, for that light which shined so clear in Goshen, when Egypt was plagued with darkness that was so hideous and palpable ? Neighbouring regions, most of them, are blinded by Rome and hell ; and see not the things which you see, hear not the things which you hear. You are instructed to whom prayer is to be directed,—unto God ; and in whose name,—in the name of Christ, whose mediation and intercession is always prevalent. Supplications are made in a tongue which you understand ; that you may be the more affected with what you pray for, and consequently have gracious returns to your prayers from the God of all grace. What cause is here of thanksgiving,—that public administrations are so much more agreeable unto Christ's institution than the administrations of the church of Rome !

Prayers being poured forth with so much fervency, and in such words as all, even the meanest, understand ; the scriptures being read in a language which you know, so as that the book of God is not a sealed book to you ; sermons being preached with so much plainness and power ; finally, sacraments being administered so, as that you may know how to improve these seals of the new covenant to the strengthening of your faith, the inflaming of your love, and the increase of all manner of grace :—All this may well cause you to cry out, with David, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts !” (Psalm lxxiv. 1.) And, “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.” (Psalm xxvii. 4.)

USE II.

It highly concerns you to fear, and to pray against, the return of Popish blindness.—While Satan and his angels are busy and industrious to extinguish the light of the world ; while Rome does join with hell to this end,—that this land may be again overspread with ignorance, idolatry, superstition, will-worship ; it is your wisdom and duty, while they are plotting, to be counter-working by your prayers. O cry unto the Lord to secure his own honour and your privileges against these enemies, who are so great invaders of both ! Beg with the greatest earnestness (and truly earnest begging was never yet denied) that the gospel may continue, and a spiritual way of worship according to the direction of the gospel ; and that Rome's emissaries may never make merchandise of your souls or the souls of your posterity.

USE III.

Let the blind zeal of the Papists make you more frequent in your accesses to the throne of grace.—Though they worship ignorantly, yet how much do they worship! as superstition is wont to urge men to abundant labour. But you that see more reason to pray than they, and have more encouragement from God than ever they understood, should be shamed and quickened unto this duty. The Papists, indeed, if they understood themselves, might well be disheartened, because their worship is will-worship; not of God's appointment, but their own invention. But you should abound in devotion; for God will not be sought in vain as long as you seek him in his own way, and "your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

USE IV.

Take heed of distraction in prayer, and not minding what you ask, or what you are doing, when at the mercy-seat.—It is great hypocrisy, to be present only in body at the sanctuary; the heart, in the mean while, running away after pleasures, covetousness, vanity: and this exceedingly provokes the Lord to jealousy; and "are you stronger than he?" (1 Cor. x. 22.) Pray, what is the difference between a Papist that understands not, and a carnal Protestant that minds not, a word of what is spoken in prayer? Or, if there be any difference, the Protestant is in the worse case; because, having the means of edification, he is the more without apology that he is not edified.

USE V.

Content not yourselves with bare understanding the words of prayer; but know the Lord [whom] you pray to.—Be acquainted with his power and truth; and how he keeps mercy for thousands; and particularly for you, if you are sensible of your sin and misery, and are willing that from both he should deliver you. Understand also the worth of what you ask; that, spiritual and eternal blessings being highly valued, your desires after them may be vehement, and you may wrestle with the greater strength and resolution till you have obtained them.

USE VI.

Let understanding and faith in this duty of prayer be joined together.—The Popish implicit faith—to believe as the church believes; that is, to believe they know not what—is a wretched piece of carelessness and presumption, and a mad venturing of the soul, which is so precious, upon an empty sound and title. But do you search the scriptures; inquire what God has spoken; and firmly believe his words, which are so faithful and worthy of all acceptation. Let your faith in prayer be strong: and be fully persuaded that—having such promises as God has made, and engaged himself to make good; and such an Advocate in heaven as Christ the righteous—what you ask according to the will of God shall in no wise be denied. In a word: know your duty, and do it; and then conclude [that] as certainly as "God is," so certainly he will be "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. xi. 6.)

THOMAS MORTONUS, *episcopus Dunelmensis* : *Non est igitur quod in hæc causâ, lector, hallucineris : neque enim te fugit nos primò antiquitatem novitati, secundò devotionem sanctam et divinam cæcæ et fanaticæ superstitioni, tertio animæ consolationem spiritualem rigidæ stupiditati, quartò infantie prudentiam, quintò torpori consensum, sextò fictis et ementitis periculis commoda penè infinita, septimò sacrosanctam denique Spiritûs Sancti sapientiam humanæ stultitiæ ac temeritati, anteponeere.* (*Apol. Cathol. pars ii. lib. i. cap. 31, de vernac. Precibus, p. 108.*)

“There is, therefore, reader, no room for a mistake in this cause : for thou canst not but know that the Protestants prefer, 1. Antiquity, before novelty ; 2. Holy and divine devotion, before blind and” (properly so called) “fanatic superstition ; 3. The spiritual comfort of the soul, before rigid stupidity ; 4. Prudence, before childishness ; 5. Consent, before carelessness ; 6. Almost infinite advantages, before feigned and imaginary dangers ; 7. The holy wisdom of the Spirit of God, before the folly and rashness of men.”

SERMON XVIII. (XIX.)

BY THE REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL.D.

THE POPE AND HIS CLERGY, BY FALSE, PRESUMPTUOUS PARDONS AND INDULGENCES, HAVE HEINOUSLY INJURED CHRIST, THE CHURCH, AND SOULS OF MEN.

OF INDULGENCES.

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.—
Hebrews x. 14.

THE apostle gives the reason why Christ hath now no more offering to make, no more suffering to endure : *For—That is, Because.* *By one offering—That is, one in specie,* [“in kind,”] in opposition to the four kinds of legal oblations before mentioned ; and one *in numero,* [“in number,”] in opposition to the repeating of them every year. As if he had said, “By Christ’s once offering of himself.” *He hath perfected—That is, all things are consummate, there remains nothing to be done, for the satisfying [of] Divine Justice and our reconciliation with God. Christ hath once satisfied ; and that for ever—That is, to the end of the world, and that which shall be of value to eternity. Plainly : “Christ by his death hath completely done the work once for all.” For them that are sanctified—That is, either those that are separated from the world in God’s purpose and decree ; plainly, the elect : or “them that are sanctified,” that is, those that are renewed by grace, and consecrated to be vessels of honour unto God. In short : Christ hath not so purchased remission of sins, as to leave some satisfaction to be made by themselves or others. No ; he hath perfectly satisfied for them, and perfectly*