The Anatomy of Simon Magus

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Anonymous, 1700



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Foreword

The term "simony" is derived from Simon Magus, the Samaritan sorcerer of Acts 8 who offered Peter silver in exchange for the power of the Holy Spirit. While it most frequently refers to the purchase of church office, the term refers more broadly to the buying and selling of any spiritual thing.

When *The Anatomy of Simon Magus, or, The Sin of Simony Laid Open* was first published in London at the turn of the 18th century, the sale of ecclesiastical privileges was alive and well in the Church of England, albeit in forms that were not widely regarded as simony. These usually centered around the right of presentation, also known as advowsons, by which one could recommend a candidate for a vacant church office[1]. The anonymous author penned this work not as a historical curiosity but as an autopsy, to expose the very real corruption of his own day.

Why, then, does this Anglican treatise from 1700 demand our attention in 21st-century evangelicalism? Because the concerns present therein have found their modern analogs. We may not traffic in benefices and bishoprics, but we have found new ways to make commerce of spiritual things. Spiritual words[2] are merchandised as biblical instruction

[1] See especially 17-20. Also see William Downes Willis, Simony, 21-24.

[2] 1 Cor 2:12–13; cf. 2 Cor 2:17.

is licensed and sold through conference tickets, seminary tuition, ebooks, and more. As the anatomist sought an antidote by dissecting the ancient sorcerer, we would do well to follow suit. The way forward is backward: We must revive the distinctions of the early and medieval church.

While the text of this work has been modernized, the world it describes remains distinctly foreign. Additionally, Reformed readers like myself will find the Anglican presuppositions theologically uncomfortable. I urge you not to be distracted by the author's specific background and ecclesiastical grievances but rather to look to the anatomy he presents: a surgical exposure of the sin of simony.

It seems fitting at this point to end with the words of a contemporary review: "The author…has uttered some ungrateful truths, which will not be well relished by several in this age; and perhaps some will be free in their censuring of us also for giving this account of it. But, *magna est veritas, & prævalebit*; truth will still be such, in spite of the prejudices, prepossessions, and contradictions of unreasonable and gainsaying men."[3]

Conley Owens
Sunnyvale, CA
January 29, 2026

[3] "The Anatomy of Simon Magus," The Works of the Learned, vol. 2, 507.

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Of the Nature of Simony, What It Is

AS the great design of the Son of God's coming into the world, and giving himself to death, was to purchase and purify to himself a glorious church, which might be holy without blemish, spot, or wrinkle; so it was no less his design, to intimate, how zealous he would be to have a glorious purity maintained in his church under the gospel, than it was to reprove the Jews' profaneness, that he took the scourge in his hand, and with such authority drove out of the temple the buyers and sellers, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, sharply thus rebuking them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves;[4] and charging them, saying, Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.[5] This was not done nor spoken merely in behalf of the old temple, whose glory was now tending to its period, and whereof shortly the abomination of desolation was to take possession; but in behalf of the Christian church, and with intuition to that purity and holiness which the Lord was to require in his spiritual temple, which was immediately to be set up, and to continue to the end of the world. There-

[4]Matt 21:13.
[5]John 2:16.

fore, Origen expounding these words, says, *Mystice autem Templum Dei est Ecclesia Christi,* (By the temple of God is mystically meant the church of Christ); and that by these three sorts driven out from there by Christ, are designed three kinds of covetous persons, who are to be accounted unworthy to be in the church, and communion of the saints. By the buyers and sellers are understood, such as among Christians, are taken up about nothing but the cares of trading for worldly gain: By the money-changers, those who having the charge of the poor's alms, do not acquit themselves faithfully, but misemploy the same, or enrich themselves thereby. And by those that sold doves, are signified the bishops and priests, who sell the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and make merchandise of churches. And, of this last, there is no corruption more dangerous; nor is there more need of watching against any evil, than to preserve the church from the impurity of this simoniacal malady; which, when suffered to creep in, consumes her very vitals, by filling her bowels with a corrupt priesthood. For, as says Chrysostom,

Si Sacerdotium integrum fuerit, tota Ecclesia floret; si autem corruptum fuerit, tota fides marcida est. (If the priesthood be sound, the whole church flourishes; but, if it be corrupt, then all faith and religion withers and decays.)[6]

Therefore, how long that Spirit of Christ, which made the zeal of God's house to eat him up, possessed the governors of the church, it moved them to make very strict and cautious laws and canons for stopping all those conduits whereby this corruption might be feared to enter, and to inflict severe

[6]Super Mattheum Homilia 37.

censures upon such as they found guilty of this sin. But when that primitive fervor began to decay, and the spirit of the world to take hold of the lukewarm clergy, then began Simon Magus again to set up the head, being animated by the secret favor of a strong party in the church, of whom (though he knew they would not avowedly own his interest,) he was confident, they would prove clandestine abettors of his designs. And this indeed is the lamentable policy of this degenerate age; wherein, though men be ashamed to espouse his odious name, yet do they secretly caress and nourish him, and cover his deformities with such artificial dresses, as may best serve, not only to deceive others, whose simplicity is easily abused, but also, to impose upon themselves, and make them yield up their own consciences to those voluntary deceptions, which may prove advantageous to their interest. Therefore, (out of a single principle of zeal for the purity of the church, and glory of God,) I have resolved, not only to unmask, but to anatomize, and rip up the very corners of the heart and bowels of this monster; that, his nakedness being discovered, and his loathsome deformities laid open before the world; those who have never fully known what the sin of simony is, may learn to understand it; others may be ashamed to give it any countenance. And such as have any way polluted their consciences with the guilt thereof, may repent of this their wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps it may be forgiven them.

My first work then must be to show what simony is. I trust it is known to most who talk thereof, that this sin of simony derives its name from Simon Magus; yet must we not

therefore suppose, that it had its first beginning from him; but that we read him to have been the first author thereof in the Christian church, and was guilty of this sin in an eminent degree; and upon this account it is, that it derives its denomination from him. Therefore, by considering what the fact of Simon Magus was, we shall the more easily define what the sin of simony is.

We read in the 8th chapter of the Acts, that this man was a sorcerer, or magician, and therefore is called Simon Magus; but when the people of Samaria were converted to the Christian faith, and baptized by Philip, he embraced also the faith, and was baptized. And when, upon the report of the conversion of the Samaritans, the apostles Peter and John, came down from Jerusalem to confirm them, while he saw that by the imposition of the apostles' hands, the gift of the Holy Spirit was given; he thereupon offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Your money perish with you, because you have thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter; for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I perceive, that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.[7]

Many who have read these words, think it an easy matter to wipe off the guilt of simony from themselves, supposing that there is no simony, but the offering to buy the extraor-

[7] Acts 8:19–23.

dinary gift of the Holy Spirit, which they deem to have been the peculiar fact of Simon Magus, which none, or few else, can ever stumble upon. But how superficially they pass over the text, and that they either do not, or are not willing to understand the same, may easily appear to any who looks more narrowly into, and more seriously considers the matter contained therein. For it may be evidently concluded from the words, that not only buying, or a desire, or offer to buy; but also selling, or a desire, or offer to sell. And not only the buying or selling of the gift of the Holy Spirit, but also of other spiritual and sacred things which have affinity therewith, is here condemned, and comes within the predicament of Simon's sin.

That, not only buying, but selling, or a desire, or offer to sell, as well as to buy, is here condemned, is evident. First, in regard that Peter here condemns Simon Magus, that he thought the gift of God could be bought with money; now if he condemns him for desiring and offering to buy, should it not have been as sinful in Simon Peter, if he should have struck in with Simon Magus in the bargain, and should have offered to sell what could not be bought? And had Simon Peter made the offer, might it not have been as justly said to him, Your money perish with you, because you have thought, that the gift of God could be sold for money? Secondly, because it appears to have been the design of Simon Magus to buy this gift, that by selling the same again, and making merchandise thereof, he might make his own gain. For seeing the hope of his gain by his sorceries, wherewith he had bewitched the Samaritans of a long time, was now gone; he

no doubt, intended to make the giving of the Holy Spirit, a gainful trade for himself; and therefore offered money for this power; *Ut deterius venderet quod male comparasset* (That what he had wickedly bought, he might more wickedly sell); as says Gregory.[8] *Volebat enim emere potestatem, etc.* says Nicolaus de Lyra:

> For he would buy the power of giving the Holy Spirit, with an intention of purchasing gain thereby. Wherefore the vice of simony, whereby any man sells or buys things spiritual, derives its name from him.[9]

For seeing he thought it could be bought, consequently he thought also, it could be sold; and so the thought of selling comes as well to be condemned in him, as of buying; and the one is no less the sin of simony than the other. So that, however some have accounted selling of the gifts of God to be Gehazi's sin, and have called the sellers, Gehazites; yet it belongs, no less than the buying, to the sin of Simon Magus; and so they may as well be called simoniacs.

And that not only the buying or selling of the gift of the Holy Spirit, but also of other sacred and spiritual things which have affinity therewith, is here condemned, and comes within the predicament of Simon's sin, may sufficiently appear from the text; and that two ways.

First, it may appear from the ground and reason whereupon the apostle condemns this purpose of Simon Magus, and that was, because he thought that the gift of God could be

[8] Gregory the Great, Homily 4 on the Gospels.

[9] In Act 8

purchased with money. So that while he condemns him for offering to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit upon this account, that it is the gift of God, he excludes what is the gift of God from being the subject of merchandise, or matter that can come under buying or selling. And so it appears, there are other things besides this particular extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit, which Simon would have bought; which, because they are the gifts of God, cannot be bought or sold.

Yet, are not the words so generally to be extended, as that they should be understood to comprehend under this sentence, all gifts which come from the hand of God; but it is to be considered; that things temporal and secular, which God is pleased to bestow in common, upon the unbeliever, as well as upon the believer; upon those without, as well as upon those within the church as houses, riches, food, clothing, etc. are the gifts of God; and yet, that these things may be sold, and bought, and purchased with money, there is no doubt; because, though they come principally from the hand of God, as the author and giver of every good thing; yet, in regard they are commonly attained by ordinary means, and are the fruits of human industry, as God is pleased to bless the same; therefore he allows them to be made the subject of commerce, giving unto men a right and power to dispose thereof as their own proper goods. Therefore the gifts here meant, must be things of another nature, which none can lay claim to as their property; but God alone, whose peculiar gifts they are, reserved to be bestowed upon his church, or special persons unto whom he is pleased to dispense them; and are such as have affinity with, or relation to that gift which gives

the ground and occasion of the apostles' words, to wit, of the Holy Spirit; and such are only spiritual, or sacred things. And that it may appear, that these, in regard of this relation, are more peculiarly the gifts of God, and so not subject to buying or selling; it is to be considered, that sacred and spiritual things are such, either *ex sua natura* (of their own nature); or, *ex institutione Divina* (by God's ordinance and appointment).

Some things are spiritual of their own nature; such are, all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, whether ordinary or extraordinary. And these are called the gifts of God; because, as his peculiar gifts, they are given and bestowed by the Spirit of God, according as in his wisdom he is pleased to dispense the same for the good of his church. And thus the apostle Paul calls all these charismata, mentioned by him, 1 Cor 12 the gifts of God; saying, Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. For to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, diverse kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues. But all these works, that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.[10]

Some things again are reckoned spiritual, because they are such by the ordinance and appointment of God; and that two ways. Some things are such, as being instruments and means appointed by God for working spiritual effects: Thus

[10] 1 Cor 12:4, 8, 9, 10, 11.

the Word, and the Sacraments, and the offices in the church, and the vocation, ordination, and authority to dispense the same, and to exercise these sacred and spiritual offices, are set apart as things sacred and spiritual; and these are called the gifts of God, because they are given of God and his Spirit, as instruments whereby he works; as our Savior said to his Father, of his disciples, I have given them your word.[11] It is his gift. And as the apostle says of him, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.[12] — And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Some things again, are by God's appointment reckoned spiritual, as being conjoined and annexed to sacred and spiritual things, as ministries and helps thereto. Thus things set apart and dedicated to holy and spiritual uses, and for the support and maintenance of spiritual offices, with the rights and titles thereto, though in their own nature they be things temporal, yet, in regard of this connection to spiritual things, they become sacred and spiritual. And these things God lays claim to, and seals them as his peculiar gifts. Thus the Lord calls the oblations, tithes, firstfruits, and devoted things, set apart for the priests and Levites, his gifts; saying expressly more than once, I have given them unto you.[13]

[11] John 17:14.
[12] Eph 4:8, 11, 12.
[13] Num 18.

Now all these spiritual things, whether they be such of their own nature, or such by the ordinance and institution of God, are (as the canonists say,) *Indebita materia emptionis & venditionis* (an improper matter for buying and selling), being the peculiar gifts of God, which cannot be subjected to merchandise; and the buying or selling whereof, has such affinity with, and comes so within the predicament of the sin of Simon Magus, that whoever is guilty thereof, may be said to be guilty of buying or selling the Holy Spirit, in regard he buys or sells these gifts which are of so near a relation to the Holy Spirit; and wherein whoever offers to bargain, offers to put an affront upon God and his blessed Spirit, whose peculiar gifts they are, and whose privilege it is to give them; so, as Bonaventure says rightly, *Donum Dei impretiabile sub pretio ponens, facit contumeliam Spiritui Sancto* (He that subjects the invaluable gift of God to a price, does put a reproach upon the Holy Spirit).[14]

Secondly, it is a known rule, that in expounding the law of God, under the prohibition of any one sin, it is to be understood, that all sins of the same kind, whether more or less heinous; and also, all things which are the proper ministries, helps, occasions, accessories, and inducements thereto, are prohibited and condemned. As in the seventh commandment, under the prohibition of adultery, fornication and all kind of sexual immorality are forbidden; and moreover, the company of prostitutes, unclean communication, surfeiting, drunkenness, making provision for the flesh, and all things

[14]Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences*, Liber 4, Distinction 25, Article 1, Question 4.

whatever may occasion, or directly minister to such a sin, are prohibited and condemned. So then, while Simon Magus is condemned by the apostle, for offering money for the gift of the Holy Spirit, not only under this, is to be understood the buying or selling of that extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit, for which he intended to bargain; but also, all bargaining for other sacred and spiritual things, and for what are the instruments and ministries thereto, (as being upon that account spiritual,) is here condemned, as being in the same predicament with the sin of Simon, in subjecting these spiritual things to buying and selling, which are the improper matter of merchandise.

Thus having seen what the sin of Simon Magus was; and having considered and cleared from the words of the apostle, what is comprehended under the same, we may the more easily come to define what simony is.

The common definition thereof, given by the schoolmen and canonists, is, that it is, *Studiosa voluntas, seu cupiditas, emendi vel vendendi Spiritualia, vel Spiritualibus annexa* (A studious or earnest will, or desire of buying or selling spiritual things, or things annexed to spiritual things).[15,16]

But, because this defines simony only as it is in the affection;[17] though it may indeed by consequence reach it in the external action and effect; yet in regard it expresses not the same; I find the canonists therefore give also another definition thereof, calling it, *Pactio circa Spiritualia, aut Spiri-*

[15]Thom. 22ae. qu. 100. Art. 1.

[16]Bonavent. in lib. 4. Sent. Dist. 25. Art. 1. qu. 3.

[17]Bernard. Compost. in Decret. Gregor. 9. De Simonia. cap. 1.

tualibus annexa (A pact, or bargain about spiritual things, or things annexed to spiritual things).[18]

But this again, reaches only the effect, while the guilt of simony may be incurred in the affection and endeavor, though it never come in effect to a pact or bargain; as it was in the case of Simon Magus himself, who was guilty in the thought of his heart, and in the offer of his money, but did effectuate nothing. Therefore, it may more fully be defined thus: *Simonia est peccatum circa Spiritualia, quo impretiabile Dei Donum sub pretio ponitur* (Simony is a sin about spiritual things, whereby the invaluable gift of God is put under a price, or subjected to merchandise). And this definition does include both the former; because, whether it be by a real pact, that one buys or sells spiritual things; or, whether it be in affection; or, that by endeavor, he expresses his affection to do so; whether it be by deed, or whether it be by desire, he prostitutes to merchandise the gifts of God, which cannot be prized.

As likewise, under the name of spiritual things, this comprehends these which the former descriptions call things annexed to spiritual things; because, by virtue of that annexation or connection, (as I have showed) they become, through God's appointment, sacred and spiritual. And this definition may be well gathered from the text; which holds out, that the sin of Simon was about a thing spiritual, the gift of the Holy Spirit. And, that his trespass in that was, that that gift of God which could not be valued, nor purchased with sums of money, he would have subjected to a price, and offered

[18]Decret. Greg. 9. De rerum permut. cap. 5.

money for it. And all simony being but the transcript of his sin, it may then rightly be thus defined.

And hence it is evident, that all buying, or selling, or bargaining about spiritual things, whether they be such in their own nature, (as all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, whether ordinary or extraordinary,) or whether they be such by divine institution; and that either as instruments and means for working spiritual effects, (as the Word, the Sacraments, the spiritual offices in the church, vocation, ordination, authority to exercise these offices, and the exercise or administration of spiritual things thereby;) or as ministries and helps to spiritual things; (as things consecrated and devoted, and benefices and maintenance set apart for the utility and support of spiritual offices, with the presentations, rights and titles thereto, etc.) All buying, or selling, or bargaining (I say,) about any of these things, is simony, and a grievous sin in the sight of God, in that it does put to a price these gifts of God, which are not the subject of merchandise.

That buying or selling of any of these things, (save of the last kind) falls under the sin of simony, is scarcely doubted by any. But, as for the matters of benefices, and church maintenance, and things set apart to serve spiritual offices, there be many whose interest prompts them to cavil upon that subject: And, because these things are in their own nature things temporal, therefore they are bold to argue, that all such things, with their rights and presentations, and titles thereto, may be bought and sold; at least, the buying or selling thereof, falls not under the guilt of simony. But, hereunto I answer:

First, if we consider these things in their own nature, as separate from the spiritual office and use to which they are appointed, they be things temporal indeed, and so are vendible; yet, by virtue of the annexation and dedication to the ministry of such an office, they become things spiritual, and so not vendible. For this alters the nature thereof. Even as the bread and wine in the Eucharist, are in their own nature, and while separate from the sacrament, things temporal, and may be bought and sold; but, when by consecration, they are set apart for that spiritual and sacred use of the sacrament, they change the nature of temporal things, and are no more vendible. Thus things devoted, before they were devoted, were but temporal; and so vendible. But, being once devoted, they could not so much as be altered, or changed; the Lord himself has said, Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord.[19]

Secondly, whatsoever benefices, or such things as minister to spiritual offices and uses, may be, as to the matter; yet, in regard of their connection (as I have said,) they become spiritual, as being consecrated and devoted to God; so as no merchandise can be made thereof, without usurpation upon God's right, and violation done to his divine majesty, in regard he has avouched these things as sacred and holy to himself; as is evident in the 27th chapter of Leviticus, where the Lord asserts his property in the things devoted, and in the tithes set apart, for the maintenance of the priests and Levites, saying, of every such thing, It is most holy unto

[19]Lev 27:10, 28.

the Lord.[20] So that, whoever transacts by way of buying or selling, for benefices, or any part of the church livings, or stipends dedicated for the ministry of spiritual offices, cannot shun to incur the guilt, either of simony or sacrilege. If it be done merely in contemplation of the benefice, without intuition to the office, but only that the buyer may enjoy the church revenue, without any purpose to exercise or discharge the office to which it is annexed; he who either buys or sells a benefice so, becomes guilty of gross sacrilege, in that he disjoins and separates what God has joined together, and comes under that rebuke and curse, uttered from the mouth of the Lord by Malachi, against those that rob God, saying, Will a man rob God? yet you have robbed me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me; even this whole nation.[21] And is liable to that woe, which is denounced against those that eat the fat, and clothe themselves with the wool, but feed not the flock.[22] But if a man make any such bargain in order to the office, intending, that in regard of the connection that the benefice has with the office, by a title to the one, the buyer may come to the other, he is guilty of simony. As when one buys a presentation or title to a benefice, whereby he may come to be invested with a spiritual office, and so having the office may enjoy the benefice; whoever does so, incurs this guilt; because, he not only buys a benefice, which (being annexed to a spiritual

[20]Lev 27:28, 30.

[21]Mal 3:8, 9.

[22]Ezek 34:2, 3.

office) is spiritual and sacred, as being a thing whereunto God lays a claim of property; but also, by that bargain, he comes to be invested with a spiritual office. And therefore,

Thirdly, with good reason I may say, that whoever buys or sells a benefice, or presentation thereto, buys and sells the office also. For it is a known maxim, *Causa causae, est causa causati* (That which is the cause of the cause, is the cause also of the effect).

Now the money which the buyer pays to the seller, is the cause which procures the presentation; the presentation procures ordination, and ordination the office; and so the money answers all; and being the cause of the presentation, is the cause also of the office, which without the presentation is not attained. Therefore Lombard says well, *Quisquis horum alterum vendit, sine quo alterum non habetur, neutrum invenditum derelinquit* (Whoever sells the one of these things, without which the other is not enjoyed, leaves neither of them unsold).[23]

And what is said, I suppose, may be sufficient to make any person who pretends to religion, blush, to plead in behalf of such simoniacal transactions.

[23]Lib. 4. Senten. Dist. 25.

Of the Several Ways Whereby the Guilt of Simony May Be Incurred in the Entrance upon a Spiritual Office

THAT the buying and selling, or the making merchandise of sacred and spiritual things, is the sin of simony, I have shown; and how heinous a sin it is, I will afterwards (God willing,) more fully show. Only, before I proceed, I cannot tell, if I will need to warn, that however, it was money that Simon Magus offered, and that it was for this that the apostle condemned him, that he thought the gift of God could be purchased with money; that none therefore suppose, (for I think none so ignorant as to suppose so,) that the guilt of simony cannot be incurred, unless money be told in the bargain. But, whereas many other things may be commensurate by money; and there is much merchandising, and many sorts of transactions in buying and selling, where things of other species come in the room of money, and become the price of what is bought and sold, therefore every gainful transaction, and every compact or bargain, whereby anything is yielded, given, or received, as a price intended for the purchase of

spiritual things, is a sinful and simoniacal buying and selling thereof, no less than if money were paid for the same. And whereas, there are many ways whereby the guilt of this sin may be incurred; that every one who fears God, and has zeal for his church, may keep their hands undefiled therewith, I will here lay before their eyes, the several ways whereby men may chance to split thereupon; at least, I will set down so many ways thereof, as unto which all others may be easily reduced; and within the compass whereof, he who is any way guilty, will find himself either explicitly or implicitly included.

It is then to be considered, that the guilt of simony may be incurred, either by a mercenary entrance into a spiritual office, or by a mercenary exercise or administration of spiritual things in that office. As to the entrance upon a sacred or spiritual office, men may incur this guilt, either as principal agents, or as abettors and instruments therein, and participant with them.

Those who come first under our view, are the principal agents. And a man as such, may incur this guilt three ways; that is, either in affectu, in the inward affection; or in conatu, in the endeavor; or in effectu, in the external effect or deed.

First, there is a guilt of simony, in affectu, in the affection or will; when a man has an inward desire or purpose of heart, and intention, either to buy or sell any sacred office, or spiritual thing, by any compact or condition for money, or anything answerable thereto. And therefore (as I have told before) it is defined by the schoolmen and canonists, to

be *Studiosa voluntas, vel cupiditas, etc.* (An earnest will and desire of buying or selling spiritual things.)

And this very desire and purpose in the heart of Simon Magus, did the apostle Peter look upon as such a sin, that he uttered against it this very rebuke, Your money perish with you, because you have thought, that the gift of God may be purchased with money. — And, Your heart is not right in the sight of God. And therefore, it is rightly observed by the canonists, that *Intentio facit hominem Simoniacum:* (The intention renders a man guilty of simony.)[24]

I do not say, that the desire or purpose of the heart to have a spiritual office, is either simony or sin. For, the apostle Paul says, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work.[25] But, to desire to come thereto in the way of bargaining, or by bribery, that is the sin; that by a preposterous way, he will buy from the hand of man what he should wait for from the hand of God. And a desire to enter thus, before God open the door, is, no doubt, for an evil end, and with an eye more to preferment or gain, than to God's glory.

Secondly, the guilt of simony may be incurred in conatu exprimente affectum, in the endeavor, whereby the affection or desire is expressed or manifested. And thus, whoever uses any endeavors to purchase by money, bribes, or such unlawful means, a place, or office in the church; or to procure a presentation, title, or order thereto, (whether these endeavors produce the effect of their desire, or not,) they are guilty of simony, whether they are the buyers or the sellers. It was

[24]Bernard. Compost. in Decret. Greg. 9. de Sim. cap. 34.

[25]1 Tim 3:1.

but a fruitless endeavor that Simon used, when he offered the apostles money; it was neither accepted, nor did he thereby attain his end; yet was he therefore condemned by Simon Peter. And it was but in vain, that Korah conspired with Dathan and Abiram by force and tumult, to be possessed of the priest's office; and yet, not only did Moses rebuke him for it, but the Lord also by a visible judgment condemned the attempt.[26] And whoever uses such endeavors, their heart is not right in the sight of God. Hence it is, that all offers, promises, conditions, compacts, insinuations, force or fraud, and all deceitful arts and machinations, whereby men aspire to sacred offices, or go about to obtain the same, being such endeavors as do express their inward simoniacal affection and desire, are justly condemned as simony. As by the 4th Council of Toledo, they are condemned as unworthy of the priestly office, *Qui honorem illum muneribus obtinere moliuntur* (Who do but endeavor to obtain that honor by gifts.)[27]

And the canonists determine, that *sola promissio est simonia;* (the promise alone is simony):[28] and that no offer, or pact, or condition in spiritual things, is free from this vice. And therefore Athalaricus, that Gothic king of Italy, about the year 531, having by that edict of the marble table, condemned simony, he also, by his confirmation of the decree of the senate against it,[29] condemns those as simoniacal persons, who should be found rei ambitus, guilty of going about, or ambitiously compassing, or by fraudulent machinations

[26]Num 16:9, 10, 32.

[27]Concil. Tolet. 4. Can. 8.

[28]Bernard. Compost. in Decret. Greg. 9. De Simonia. cap. 12, 34.

[29]Epist. ad Johan. 22. in Concil. Tom. 2. Part. 1.

studying to enter upon places in the church, and denounces them infamous. So then, whoever should go about to invade an office in the church, by such ways as Vigilius did the papal chair, who, by calumny and force, extruded his predecessor Silverius, and by dishonest promises made to Theodora Augusta, of favor to a heretic, got himself promoted; or by such an artifice, as Benedictus Cajetanus (called afterwards Boniface the Eighth,) went about to mount to the same place, while by a counterfeit voice transmitted through a wall, by a hollow engine, (as if it had been an angel, or some divine warning from heaven,) he so abused the simplicity of Celestinus, his predecessor, as he made him betake himself to a hermitage, to make room for him; whoever (I say) should go about by any such kind of ways, either of force or fraud to enter, whether they should prove successful or not, even upon the account of these dishonest endeavors, they were justly to be reputed simoniacal persons.

Thirdly, the guilt of simony may be incurred in effectu, in the effect or deed; and that is, when persons by any real bargain, compact, or condition, do buy and sell, or make merchandise of any spiritual benefices and offices in the church. Whoever does so, whether it is he that is to receive the same, or the patron that gives title, or he that ordains and consecrates, or he that has any kind of right, or suffrage in election, he is guilty of simony. And whereas, this may be done either by real money, or other things commensurate by money, or by what may stand one in as good use as money; therefore does Gregory the Seventh and the schoolmen observe, that the sin of simony may be committed in the effect or deed,

these three ways, (which are comprehensive of all others,) that is, *Aut munere à manu, aut à lingua, aut ab obsequio:* (By a gift, either by the hand, or by the tongue, or by homage or service.)[30]

First, this sin may be committed by a gift or bribe, à manu, by the hand; that is, by transaction for money, or for anything moveable or immoveable, which comes in the room of money, as a price laid out of the hand for the thing transacted. Thus, when any person does purchase a presentation and title to a spiritual office, or ecclesiastical charge; or procures ordination thereto; or obtains suffrages for his election, by money, or any gift or bribe whatsoever, given by himself, or others in his behalf; or, when any patron bestows a presentation, or any bishop, or ordinary gives ordination, or any man gives his voice for election to such an office, upon the condition of receiving any money, gift or bribe; such are in effect guilty of palpable simony. For, if it was sin in Simon Magus to offer the like, much more is it in effect to give, or receive it. For, this is not the way that God will have his priests made; but the way after which, by the contrivance of Jeroboam, (as Abijah upbraids him,) the priests of the high places were made, that whoever came to consecrate himself (or as it is according to the original, מָלֵא יָד, *ad Implendum*, to fill his hand,) with a young bullock, and seven rams, the same might be a priest of them who are no gods.[31] And therefore, all such transactions for such offices, by money,

[30]Greg. 7. Lib. 6. Epist. 34. Thom. 22ae. qu. 100. Art. 5. Durand. Lib. 4. Dist. 25. qu. 4.

[31]2 Chr 13:9.

gifts, or bribery, are justly condemned as gross simony. So concludes the canon law of him who by pact obtains a right from a patron; *Si ordinandus praesentatori suo, etc.* (If he who is to be ordained give unto him who presents him, anything by way of pact, it is a simoniacal bargain.)[32]

So likewise, when one practices by a pact with any of the clergy, for the bestowing of offices in the church; or with any prince or lay person, by money, to give consent, or to further his election to a bishopric, or any high place in the church, he falls under the sentence of a simoniacal person.[33] And upon this account likewise, the bestowing of a presentation, with a reservation of any portion of the benefice, or with a pact of yielding some yearly benefit therefrom, is justly concluded to be simony. So says the Third Lateran Council, *Res sacra ut possideatur, etc.* (While for the obtaining of the enjoyment of a thing sacred, anything is given, or promised, or somewhat upon that account is retained, it appears to be simony.)[34]

And so says Aquinas, *Si episcopus ab eo cui beneficium confert, etc.* (If a bishop from him upon whom he bestows a benefice, require anything of the fruits of that benefice, it is all one as if he should exact from him a bribe, and is not free of simony.)[35]

For, as say the canonists, *Remissio juris, etc.* (A passing from that right which should befall one by virtue of a presentation, is as much as to give something.)[36]

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[32]Decretal. Greg. 9. De Simonia. cap. 20.

[33]De Simonia. cap. 11.

[34]Append. Concil. Lateran. 3. Part. 49. Cap. 7.

[35]Thom. 22ae. qu. 100. Art. 5.

[36]Bernar. Compostel. in Decret. Gregor. 9. De Simon. Cap. 45.

And who knows not, that in such cases, *remissio juris proprii, cadit sub rationem pretii:* (A man's yielding up of his own right, is of the same nature with a price paid for what he transacts about.)

And the Council of Turon condemns the advancing of any to the government of churches, sub annuo pretio, for a yearly rate,[37] as a making of the priesthood vendible. And upon the same account, the bestowing of a presentation, or the giving of ordination with a condition, whereby the hands of the person presented, or ordained, are bound up from suing his patron, or ordinary, for any further just provision, is justly judged, and condemned as simony. *Si quis ordinaverit, etc.* (If any man ordain, or present to ordination, any person, taking of him a promise, or oath, that he will not trouble him for his provision, they are by the law, made liable to severe censures.)[38]

And by the Second Aurelian Council,[39] and by the Council of Paris under Gregory the Fourth, the exacting of money, or any thing else, for elections, or ordinations, is condemned as simony, and as ungodly corruption and execrable impiety. And thus it appears, how simony is incurred by a gift of the hand.

Secondly, persons may fall under the guilt of this sin, munere à lingua, by a bribing tongue. For, bribery may be practiced as well with the tongue, as with the hand; and by the one, as well as by the other, a man may be

[37] Can. 5.

[38] Decretal. Gregor. 9. De Sim. cap. 45.

[39] Can. 3. Lib. 1. cap. 11.

brought in a snare. Thus Absalom by his fair tongue, bribed the affections of the men of Israel, and by stealing away their hearts thereby, ensnared them in a course of rebellion and treason against his father.[40] And thus, by the people's tongues, was Saul bribed to spare Agag, and the fat cattle of the Amalekites, and so was ensnared in the sin of rebellion against God; fearing, lest if he should not have hearkened to their voice, he should have lost their favor, and incurred their hatred. Therefore said he to Samuel, I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.[41] And so, when by compliment or flatteries, or by menaces or threats, or to gratify the entreaties, or solicitations, or importunities of carnal friends, or great persons, for conciliating their favor, or for fear of incurring their displeasure, one is moved to present, ordain, or advance any person to a spiritual office, without consideration of his worth; or, to prefer any by partiality, he falls under this guilt of simony by the tongue. For, as the canonists rightly conclude, *favor, vel gratia, vel odium, succedit loco pretii:* (Favor or good will, or hatred, (in such cases,) falls in place of a price.)[42]

And I am sure, to promote one upon such carnal respects, agrees not well with that apostolical canon which the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, and charged him before God and his angels, to observe, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality; and saying, Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins.[43] From which, how he keeps his hands pure, who, to gratify the

[40] 2 Sam 15.

[41] 1 Sam 15:24.

[42] Bernard. Compost. in Decret. Gregor. 9. De Sim. cap. 14.

[43] 1 Tim 5:21, 22.

solicitations and importunities of carnal friends, inconsiderately advances a man to a spiritual office, I see not.

Yet this is not so to be understood, as if all intercessions in affairs of this nature, were either simoniacal or sinful; but it must be considered, whether the person in whose behalf friends do intercede and entreat for, be a person worthy; that is, holy, and well qualified for such a sacred function; or unworthy, and unsuitable for it. If he is unworthy, then certainly he sins heinously who interposes in his behalf. For he sacrifices the glory of God, and the blood of poor souls, to the interest of his unworthy carnal friend or favorite; and so does he, who, to gratify man, is moved by entreaties, to invest him with such an office.

But if the person is worthy, then he who intercedes for him, must consider, upon what principle he does so. If it be out of a pious affection to the good of the church, and a well-grounded hope of his being a good instrument for the glory of God; upon such a ground one may not only without sin, but very commendably recommend such a person, and even use entreaties and solicitations for his advancement to such a holy function; nay, and so much the rather, if he is a person in whom he has an interest of natural relation: (For religion does no way weaken, but rather corroborates the bonds of natural affection.) Neither does such dealing want precedents which may sufficiently warrant it. The brethren at Ephesus did recommend Apollos by letters to the brethren in Achaia, entreating them to receive him.[44] The apostle Paul

[44] Acts 18:27.

recommended Epaphroditus to the Philippians;[45] as likewise Marcus, the sister's son of Barnabas, did he recommend to the Colossians.[46] Nay, and though carnal affection was no ingredient in our Savior's choice of his disciples; yet it is manifest, that John, his cousin according to the flesh, was taken into the number, and is more than once called, the disciple whom Jesus loved.[47] But though the person for whom one intercedes, be never so worthy; yet if his intercessions for him, proceed not from a religious, but only from a carnal principle, to promote a worldly design; then is the intercessor guilty of this simony by the tongue, while his end therein is not to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but only a carnal interest.

Moreover, some parents, it may be, may have in their pious intentions, designed a child to the ministry of God's house, (as Hannah did her Samuel;[48]) choosing rather to have him serve God at the sacred altar, than in any secular employment; and, upon this account, have studied to have him qualified for that work. Now, for such a parent, when occasion offers, to interpose for a child whom he finds competently endowed with gifts and graces for the same, to have him placed in the sacred function, (not designing it merely as a trade of lucre, and livelihood,) is not only lawful, but laudable; as it was in Hannah, whom Eli praised for this devotion, and for which the Lord rewarded her with the blessing of more children.[49] Nay, he who out of zeal to the glory of God,

[45] Phil 2:29, 30.

[46] Col 4:10.

[47] John 13:23 and 19:26. and 20:2. and 21:20.

[48] 1 Sam 1:11, 28.

[49] 1 Sam 2:20, 21.

in the simplicity of his heart, (not with a covetous eye to gain, nor with an ambitious eye to preferment;) has made it his study to furnish himself for the holy ministry of the church, may even lawfully offer himself, and express his desires to those who have right and title to advance him thereto, so he do it modestly, and without a preposterous thrusting himself upon the sacred function. For to this, he has the approbation of the apostle, saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work.[50] And, so his desire is good, if it proceed (as Gregory says,) *a zelo charitatis divinitus excitato* (from a zeal of charity stirred up by God).[51] And for any to comply with the desire of such a person, upon the consideration of his worth, is neither simoniacal, nor sinful.

Thirdly, the third way of bribery, whereby the guilt of simony may be incurred in deed, is, ab obsequio, by homage or service. Thus, he who either for the present, or by any obligation for the future, does service or homage; or by any good offices, ministers to the interests of man, upon design to procure his own advancement to a spiritual office, is guilty of simony, as the buyer; and so is he, as the seller, who, upon the account thereof, promotes him thereto. For, while by such service, the one bribes, and the other is bribed, it is all one as if the merchandise were made by money. When Jacob did purchase his wives by his service from Laban, they accounted themselves as sold for money.[52] And so, the homage or service which one pays for spiritual things, is nothing else

[50]1 Tim 3:1.

[51]Pastor. Part. 1. Cap. 8.

[52]Gen 31:15.

but the money of Simon Magus, transmitted with another impression, from a different kind of mint. Therefore says the canon law, *simoniacum est, pro temporali obsequio beneficium ecclesiasticum promittere* (To promise an ecclesiastical benefice for temporal service, is simony.)[53]

And again, *pro habendis spiritualibus homagium facere, simoniacum est:* (To do homage for enjoying of spiritual things, is simony.)[54]

And therefore, how they can wash their hands from the loathsome stain of this sin, who pay their servants' salaries by a spiritual benefice; or, who serve any man with a design to earn a church as their wages, I cannot see. Nor are they less guilty, who make their matches an engine to promote them to a charge; or, who make the donation of a church a mean, much more a condition for the marriage of a handmaid, or to procure a fortune unto, or to supply the place of a dotal provision, for an indigent niece or cousin; which is, not unfitly, termed by our countrymen, smock-simony; because, by serving of such interests, the church is sold. And they may well be brought within the same predicament, who make a spiritual benefice a patrimony unto, or a rescue for the penury[55] of a useful friend or kinsman. Upon which account, the canon law decrees thus; *Qui emit jus patronatus, etc.* (He who buys the right of patronage, that he may present a son, or a nephew, or any whom he pleases, ought to be deprived thereof.)[56]

[53]Decret. Gregor. 9. De Sim. Cap. 12.

[54]Cap. 17.

[55]extreme poverty

[56]Decret. Gregor. 9. De Jure Patronat. cap. 6.

And this is an evil that Jerome much complains of, that affinity, or consanguinity[57], or service, should be the ground of preferring men to spiritual offices, or degrees, as if they were to be bestowed, as men are advanced to military offices in the world.[58] Yet I do not say, but that any man may lawfully prefer to an ecclesiastical charge, a friend, or relative, who is well qualified for the office. For (as I have said already,) religion does not weaken, but rather strengthens the bonds of natural affection; so that it were injustice to deal worse with relatives, than with strangers; or, caeteris paribus, not to prefer them to others. But to do so, merely upon a carnal account, because they may serve better our temporal ends and designs; or to prefer a person unfit, because he is a friend, betrays an eye more to carnal interest than to God's glory. Neither do I say, but Durandus is in the right, in saying, that one may lawfully confer an ecclesiastical office or benefice upon him who has served him, through a sense of that worth he has learned to be in him, by experience and daily converse; if he does it in contemplation of his worth, and not of his service.[59] But, if respect to this is the principle that sways him, he is guilty of simony. Therefore, I cannot but judge them exceeding guilty in the sight of God, who promote men to any degree of the sacred hierarchy, not upon a consideration of their sanctimony, or abilities to serve God therein, but out of a design to serve secular ends; and therefore do make choice of such, from whose inclinations

[57] of the same blood

[58] Advers. Jovin. Lib. 1.

[59] Lib. 4. Dist. 25. qu. 4.

they can expect, and promise to themselves, that they will prove fittest instruments for abetting their public or private interests; the expectation of which service, (much more, if it is made a condition in the bargain,) is no less the price of such a promotion, than if it were sold for service already done. And not without reason may it be said, that those merchants do trade for such creatures, not to be ministers to God, but slaves to themselves. But much more does he incur this guilt, who, for the purchase of such a preferment, enslaves his conscience implicitly to follow the dictates of his promoter; by whom, while he is advanced upon the condition, or expectation of such a blind obedience, I'm sure God has no hand in the bargain. But, I think I need say no more for the discovery of these rocks, whereupon the principal agents in such spiritual traffic may chance to split, in the way of entrance upon sacred offices.

I proceed next, to show how the guilt of simony may be incurred by others, as being instruments and abettors thereof. For who are thus partakers therein, by walking contrary to the rule of the apostle, who has said, Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;[60] they become socii criminis, companions in the crime and guilt. And thus men may be guilty several ways.

First, a man may incur this guilt by promoting of a simoniacal design, in becoming a mediator, or secret agent; either by advice and counsel, or by transacting between the parties, or in behalf of either of them, in any condition, compact, or payment of money; or by using any sinister devices for

[60]Eph 5:11.

that effect. And, that he who does so, becomes in the sight of God guilty of this sin, he may be easily convinced, if he consider, that a fellowship in any sin, by advice and counsel, does stir up the wrath of the Almighty, as well against the evil counselor, as against the perpetrator thereof; which is evident from that command which the Lord gave to Ezekiel, to prophesy against those that did devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in Jerusalem;[61] and that the transactors for others in wicked purposes, are liable to the same punishment with them; whereof God's judgment denounced against Jezebel, for her secret transactions to possess Ahab of that bloody purchase of the vineyard of Naboth, is a pregnant testimony.[62] And so do those, who by secret transactions and conveyances, meddle as instruments, to promote simoniacal designs, involve themselves in the same guilt with those, in behalf of whom they deal; and sometimes into more, when they do it without the party's privity or consent. And therefore were the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon so severe against such, as to decree, that *si quis mediator in tam turpibus & nefandis datis vel acceptis extiterit, etc.* (If any man should be found to be a mediator in such filthy and nefarious bargains, of giving and receiving anything for spiritual offices; being a clergyman, he should lose his degree; or, if a lay person, or monk, he should be anathematized.)[63]

And, lest by this means any should be entered into the church, the sentence of the canon law is somewhat more

[61]Ezek 11:2, 3, 4.

[62]1 Kgs 21:23.

[63]Can. 2.

severe, which says, *electio simoniaca est cassanda, facta, etc.* (A simoniacal election is to be made void, if it have been made by other men's promises of money, although he who is elected be ignorant thereof; unless it have been done of a fraudulent purpose against him.)[64]

And the ground hereof is, because, though he have no hand therein himself, yet it is by a simoniacal pact that he is introduced into the church.

Secondly, a man incurs this guilt, when he complies therewith by consent or approbation. That consent or approbation renders a man guilty of the sin to which he consents, and wherein he allows the sinner, I trust none will question, who has ever read these words, whereby God declares a man unworthy upon this account, to take his covenant in his mouth, saying, When you saw a thief, then you consented with him.[65] Or, the words of Paul confessing it as his sin, that he was consenting to the shedding of the blood of that proto-martyr Stephen.[66] And, is not he then guilty before God, who, seeing one as a thief and a robber, climbing up into the sheepfold of Christ by simoniacal means, yields his consent thereto? Whoever then, being conscious to a simoniacal transaction made by any person, for procuring of a title or right to a spiritual office, or benefice, does consent to give him ordination, or collation thereto, by this sinful compliance becomes guilty of simony. And whoever, having notice of such a transaction, concurs with his consent to the

[64]Decret. Greg. 9. De Simon. Cap. 27.

[65]Ps 50:18.

[66]Acts 22:20.

election, ordination, or collation of such a person, involves himself in the same guilt.

Thirdly, a man may incur this guilt by connivance[67]; when, being privy thereto, he winks at it, or forbears, according to his place and calling, either to oppose himself thereto, or to censure the same. How guilty connivance, or forbearance of sin, renders a man, may appear by the Lord's comminations[68] against those who would hide their eyes from the man who gives of his seed to Molech;[69] and against Eli, for conniving at the wickedness of his sons;[70] and against the church of Thyatira, for suffering Jezebel.[71] Therefore, for any man to be privy to a person's simoniacal ways, whereby he studies as a thief, to creep into a charge of the church, and not to represent it to those who should by their authority obstruct him; by his connivance, he becomes guilty of fellowship with him in his sin. But so much the more, if he is silent at his taking of that oath which is usually tendered to those that take institution for purging themselves of that crime. For which guilt, I leave him to consider what Solomon says, Whoever is partner with a thief, hates his own soul: he hears cursing, and betrays it not.[72] And much more do they render themselves guilty of a fellowship with such in their sin, who by their authority should punish the same, and yet wink at it; and therefore says Gregory, *Participem se reddit alienae simo-*

[67] collusion
[68] divine vengeance
[69] Lev 20:4.
[70] 1 Sam 2 and 3:13, 14.
[71] Rev 2:20.
[72] Prov 29:24.

niae, quisquis contra simoniacam haeresin, pro officii sui loco, vehementer non exarserit, etc. (He renders himself partaker of another man's simony, whoever, according to his place and calling, is not vehemently zealous against that heresy of simony; and let not that man doubt, but he will have his portion with him who first committed that heinous crime.)[73]

Fourthly, a man may incur the guilt of simony by patronizing; that is, when he takes part with simoniacal persons, and bears them out, either by countenancing them in their sin, or by pleading for them, or by setting himself out to justify and defend them therein. And this indeed is such a high degree of fellowship in this sin, as he who does so, espouses the interest of Satan, as well as of Simon, and stands upon his side against God. But to him who takes such a plea in hand, I may use the like words, as the father of Jerubbaal did to the men of his city, who rose up against him, for his son's throwing down of Baal's altar, saying, Will you plead for Baal? will you save him?[74] So I may say, Will you plead for Simon Magus? will you defend him? And as Jehu the Seer said to Jehoshaphat, for assisting Ahab, Should you help the ungodly?[75] And what he who does so, will answer to him who has said, You shall not countenance a poor man in his cause,[76] I know not. For, even though his poverty might plead for our charity, yet our charity must not make us yield our patronage to an evil cause. And he may think with himself, what he can expect from the hand of the Almighty, who has

[73] Apud Gratian. Caus. 1. Quest. 1. Can. Quisquis per pecuniam.

[74] Judg 6:31.

[75] 2 Chr 19:2.

[76] Exod 23:3.

threatened severe wrath against those that strengthen the hands of evildoers.[77]

Thus have I shown the several ways whereby men may be guilty of simony, either as the principal agents, or as instruments and accomplices with them in their sin. By which ways, whoever enters into the sacred offices of the church, is intruded by the artifices of man; but they may hear God saying of them, I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran.[78]

[77] Jer 23:14, 15.
[78] Jer 23:21.

How Simony Is Practiced in the Administration of a Spiritual Office

THE sin of simony does not confine itself within the compass of their transactions, who practice the same for making way for their entrance upon the holy calling in the church; but extends itself also to the exercises of that calling in the hands of many who bear charge. So that, as there may be guilt by a mercenary entrance into a spiritual office, so there may be much guilt also by the mercenary administration of spiritual things in that office; as when merchandise is made of the word and sacraments, of the sentences of the church, and of the exercise of any acts and duties which belong to the holy ministry. For these spiritual things being the free gifts of God, and so improper matter of merchandise; whosoever, either in the internal affection, or external practice, makes them the subject of buying and selling, is a disciple of Simon Magus, who (as I have told before, in the words of Gregory and Nicolaus de Lyra,) would have bought the power of giving the Holy Spirit, that afterwards by exercising that power, he might purchase gain to himself. For, as he who does but design, or desire by the ministry of the gospel, to gratify his covetousness is guilty of simony in the will, and affections of his heart; so he, who in the exercise of that sacred office, sets

the ministry of spiritual things to sale, and makes the same a matter of merchandise, and subservient to his gain, incurs the guilt of simony, in effect and deed. And, how dreadful a guilt this is, may appear by that grievous increpation uttered by the prophet Micah, against the house of Israel, saying, The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money; — Therefore will Zion for your sake, be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem will become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.[79]

Now the ministers and pastors of the church may incur the guilt of this sin two ways; that is, while either for their advantage and gain, they obtrude falsehood and error for truth, and minister to people corrupt, instead of wholesome food; so selling for upright, what is but sophisticate and counterfeit; or, while they in their administration, make the true and holy ordinances of Jesus Christ vendible, by setting these spiritual things to sale.

First, the guilt of simony is incurred in the administration of the spiritual calling, and that in a high measure; when those who exercise that calling, do, for some temporal advantage, corrupt the spiritual ordinances of the gospel, setting forth things counterfeit for upright, and falsehood and error for truth and sound doctrine. And this men do, either while by present profit, or expectation of some future gain, or by fear of displeasure, or for conciliating of favor, or by hope of preferment, their tongues are bribed to teach complacencies, to soothe and flatter men in their sins, to forbear reproofs

[79] Mic 3:11, 12.

and censures, to smother the truth and counsel of God, to adapt their doctrine to human humors and inclinations, and to comply with men in their errors or sinful courses; or, while out of a secret desire of vain-glory, or an ambitious design of setting themselves up as the heads of sects, and drawing disciples after them, they forge new and false doctrines, broach and vent errors and heresies, and disseminate their own wild fancies, filling the heads of people with corrupt principles, which when they have made them to drink in, by imposing upon their weak and unwary understandings, they easily betray their affections, and proselyte them to their party. All which practices are nothing else but gross simony, while they sell the truth, and make merchandise of souls; whether the price be the present profit, or the hope of future gain, or human favor, or fear, or ambitious designs, or vain-glory; for all these are the current money of Simon Magus. And of such cheating merchants in the church, the apostles have sufficiently warned us, giving them their proper characters. The apostle Paul speaking of such, calls them unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers, — teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.[80] And he warns the overseers of the church to watch against such, saying, Of your own selves, will men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them: therefore watch.[81] And he gives a caveat to all, to avoid such, as men that serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words,

[80] Titus 1:10, 11.

[81] Acts 20:30, 31.

and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple.[82] And so does also the apostle Peter, warn against such, saying, There will be false teachers among you, who privily will bring in damnable heresies, etc. And through covetousness, will they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not.[83] And what character the apostle Jude gives of such, may be read in his epistle at length. And such pastors under the gospel, may be well ranked in the predicament with those prophets under the law, of whom the Lord complains, that they did pollute him among his people, for handfuls of barley, and for pieces of bread, — by lying, and strengthening the hands of the wicked;[84] and they made his people to err, pleasing the wicked, in crying peace to them, and preparing war against those that put not into their mouths;[85] and with those priests that corrupted the covenant of Levi, — and were partial in the law.[86] They may well (I say) be ranked in the predicament with these, since the likeness of their ways declare them to be *animalia ejusdem speciei* (creatures of the same kind). But it becomes all who would wish to approve themselves the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, to entertain an abhorrence of all such corrupt dealing, which either human favor, or gain, or glory, bribes men to; that so, with the testimony of a good conscience, they may be able to say, both in the sight of God and man, with the

[82]Rom 16:17, 18.
[83]2 Pet 2:1, 3.
[84]Ezek 13:19, 22.
[85]Mic 3:5.
[86]Mal 2:8, 9.

blessed apostle Paul, We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.[87] And our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile; But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men; but God, which tries our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory.[88]

Secondly, not only are those guilty of simony in their administration, who cheat people with corrupt and counterfeit ware; but those also, who, pretending to be the pastors of Christ's flock, set to sale upright and true spiritual things, and ordinances of the Lord Jesus, committed unto their dispensation, making the free gifts of God vendible. And thus are they guilty, who make use of the word of God, of the sacraments, of their preaching, exhortations, admonitions, consolations, prayers, benedictions, and of the acts of discipline, censures of the church, or any matter of the pastoral office, as the gainful commodities of their shop; setting them forth, or shutting them up, according as they may best contribute, either for their profit, or for their praise. For not only does he play the simoniac, who sells the gospel for money or real bribes; but he also, who preaches to purchase to himself applause, and the praise of men. For thus, his praise is the price of his preaching; at which, while he aims, he preaches not Christ, but himself; and it may be,

[87] 2 Cor 2:17.

[88] 1 Thess 2:3, 4, 5, 6.

he has his reward; but he will come short of that reward which he now enjoys, who said, We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.[89] Nor can those pastors, who for their gain, basely make merchandise of those spiritual things committed to their dispensation, expect that reward of the crown of glory, from the hands of the chief shepherd, while, in order to the obtaining thereof, they discharge not their duty upon the right principle, nor according to that rule prescribed by the holy apostle Peter, saying, Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.[90] Wherefore, whosoever have their lucre in their eye, in the administration of the ministerial office, and limit their labors to the expectation of their worldly gain, are justly to be reputed mercenary, and simoniacal persons. And therefore, many councils have strictly inhibited and condemned such merchandise. That council holden in Trullus of Constantinople, called Quini-sextum, has a particular canon to this purpose; wherein (besides other words,) it is said, *Si quis eorum, etc.* (If any of the clergy be found to exact any kind of price from him to whom he imparts the Holy Communion, let him be deposed, as an imitator of the error and wickedness of Simon.)[91]

And that council of Rheims, under Leo the Ninth, forbids, under the pain of an anathema, *Ne quis pro sepultura vel, etc.*

[89] 2 Cor 4:5.
[90] 1 Pet 5:2.
[91] Can. 23.

(That none should exact anything for burial, or for baptism, or for the Eucharist, or for visiting of the sick.)[92]

And not only by these, but by several other councils, and sentences of the canon law, the same is condemned, which likewise decrees it as simony, *pretio, vel favore, etc.* (For price or favor, to conceal what should be brought to public penance; or, to reconcile to the church (or absolve) an impenitent person; or, to remove from reconciliation (or absolution) a person truly penitent.)[93]

And, against such merchandise in the administration of spiritual things, (besides canonists and school-men,) the whole stream of all the ancients, which ever I did read, where they fall upon this subject, do clearly run; condemning such pastors, and comparing them to Gehazi and Simon Magus; because, for these free spiritual gifts of God, they surreptitiously take a price, as Gehazi did, and account them matters which may be bought and sold for money, as did Simon; and therefore against such, have commonly made use of those words of our Savior to his disciples, when he sent them forth upon the work of the ministry, *gratis accepistis, gratis date;* freely you have received, freely give.[94] Which words are notwithstanding cautiously and rightly to be understood, and not as some sacrilegious tongues and pens of perverse men (to whom, what is allotted for the maintenance of the gospel, is an eye-sore;) have perverted the sense thereof, to the prejudice of all ecclesiastical benefices, and with a design

[92]Can. 5.

[93]Decretal. Greg. 9. De Sim. Cap. 14.

[94]Matt 10:8.

(so far as in them lies,) to rob the church and pastors of what the charity of devout persons has mortified, or what the munificence of pious princes has by their laws allowed, or what in justice is due, for the accommodation and livelihood of the laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. Which, while their covetous hearts are panting after, that they may flatter their own consciences into a liberty to invade the same, and cast some cloak upon their sin, they impudently cry out against the pastors, reproaching them as mercenary priests and hirelings, who preach the gospel for money, and sell the gifts of God, which they should freely give, according as Christ gave command to his disciples. So do they reproach every one who enjoys any stipend for his service in the ministry.

For the stopping of the mouths of these croaking vultures, (who would rapaciously devour the food of the altar, and strip the church of her patrimony;) I will not say with some, that these words of our Savior do relate, not to the preaching of the gospel, but to those gifts of working miracles, wherewith he sent forth his disciples endued, for the confirmation of their preaching; nor that these words were intended only for the apostles, and not for the ordinary ministers of the church. (Although indeed, the difference be considerable betwixt extraordinary persons, who have by an immediate act of divine inspiration, received a supernatural faculty of dispensing the spiritual things of the holy calling, and those ordinary persons, who by study and industry, have acquired abilities to fit them, and must be at assiduous pains to furnish themselves for the dispensation thereof.) But, that our Savior never intended by these words, to strip either the extraor-

dinary or ordinary pastors of his church, of the expectation of due maintenance for their labors, is evident to any eye, in which there is not some beam of prejudice: For, as at the giving of their commission for the dispensation of these divine gifts, he said, Freely you have received, freely give; so immediately (dissuading them from care to provide for themselves,) he says, The workman is worthy of his meat.[95] And so said he to the seventy disciples also, The laborer is worthy of his hire.[96] So that the Lord Jesus would not have them suppose, that he had spoken to debar them from due maintenance at their hands, to whom they were to preach the gospel, but rather allowed them to expect the same. And so affirms the apostle Paul, (who much better understood his meaning, than all these prejudicate glossers:) For, 1 Cor 9 pleading in behalf of the ministers of the gospel, after he has shown, that they have as good a right to their maintenance, as a soldier in the war has to his wages, as the planter of a vineyard has to the fruits thereof, and as he that feeds a flock, to eat of the milk; declaring it to be no great matter, to reap carnal things at their hands, to whom they sow spiritual things; and having urged, that by as good right the ministers of the gospel should have their maintenance thereby, as those under the law, who ministered about holy things, did live by the things of the temple and altar; (and how liberal a maintenance that was, he understands little of the Jewish law, who knows not:) He then pleads our Savior's authority, for confirmation thereof, saying, Even so has the

[95] Matt 10:10.

[96] Luke 10:7.

Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel.[97] And therefore also does the same apostle say, Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teaches him, in all good things.[98] And again, Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially, they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, You will not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn; and, The laborer is worthy of his reward.[99] So that, when our Savior said, Freely you have received, freely give; it was nothing of his intention to debar the laborers in the gospel, to whom he had committed the dispensation of spiritual things, from their maintenance; but, that they should not make merchandise of these spiritual things, nor set them to sale, as matters that might be bought or sold; but should dispense them as the free gifts of God, to which no money nor temporal thing can be a price proportionable; which is nothing inconsistent with their receiving, and enjoying a sufficient maintenance and livelihood by their labors; and which to require, is neither simony nor sin. For it is received, (as it is said in the schools,) *non tanquam merces operis, sed ut stipendium laborantis; non tanquam pretium spiritualium, sed ut sustentationis stipendium necessarium.* (Not as the reward of the work, but as the wages of the worker; not as the price of spiritual things, but as the necessary stipend for his sustentation that dispenses them.)

[97] 1 Cor 9:14.
[98] Gal 6:6.
[99] 1 Tim 5:17, 18.

And therefore says Augustine, *Accipient sustentationem necessitatis à populo, mercedem dispensationis à Domino:* (They will receive their necessary sustentation from the people, but the reward of their dispensation from the Lord.)[100]

Thus it is evident, that the pastors of the church are not to be reputed hirelings, or simoniacal merchants of spiritual things, upon the account of the requiring and exacting of their stipends, and the fruits of their benefices due from the people for their maintenance; if so be the benefice be not the end they aim at, and their temporal commodity the design of their labors; but that they feed the flock for love to Christ, and not for filthy lucre, not making the matters of their calling, the subject of transactions for worldly gain; which, whoso does, deals as an hireling indeed. For the pastoral office, is called, a warfare; and as it is in the secular warfare, so is it in the case of the church militant. There are many soldiers in the war; all have their wages. But, in some, the design of their service is, the safety of their country; in others, the design is, only their own gain; and upon this account, they list themselves in the war. They both require, they both exact, they both receive their wages; yet, he who designs his service for the preservation of his country, is not to be reputed a mercenary soldier, because he hazards himself, not for his wages, but for his country, howsoever he do require his wages as well as the other, that thereby he may be sustained to attend his duty. But the other is to be accounted mercenary, because the design of his service, is not the country's good, but his own gain; and he hazards his life only for his money. So in

[100]Lib. De past. cap. 2.

the church, the ministers of the gospel do all require, and receive wages and maintenance; but it may be, all design not the same thing: He, whose design is the glory of God, and the feeding of the flock, may lawfully require his stipend, and the due fruits of his benefice; nay, (as Aquinas says rightly,) he may exact the same, *a nolentibus, & valentibus solvere.* (from those who are able to pay, even though they be unwilling.)[101]

For he exacts but what is his own, and what others have neither just title to, nor can lawfully possess; yet is he not to be reputed mercenary for all that, because the end of his labors is not these things, but the edification of the church; and only he requires his wages, or stipend, as the matter of his maintenance, that he may attend without distraction, to the duties of his calling. But he, whose design is gain, and not the glory of God, nor edification of souls, but only exercises the office, that he may have the benefice, is the mercenary man that makes merchandise of his office. *Mercenarius quippe est* (says Gregory,) *qui locum quidem pastoris tenet, lucra autem animarum non quaerit, sed terrenis commodis inhiat.* (He truly is the mercenary man, who holds indeed the place of a pastor, yet seeks not the benefit of souls, but gapes after earthly commodities.)[102] And so much the more mercenary is he, if, besides the allowance of that maintenance, which is set apart for him, as a steward in God's house, he make also his advantage of those spiritual things which are committed to his dispensation, and gives not to every one their portion in due season, but limits it to

[101]Thom. 22ae. qu. 100. Art. 3.

[102]Homil. 14. in Evang.

the seasons and measure of his gain; nor does he dispense the bread and water of life indifferently to all, but keeps back, or lays out, impairs, or augments the portion of the children, according to the expectation of either the benefit or favor he may reap thereby. Such a one, is indeed but a base simoniacal peddler, making merchandise of the gifts of God. But such is not he, who requires but his allowance of these due accommodations which the diligent attendance to his duties call for, wherein he exercises himself without any base design, giving unto every one their portion in due season; nay, this is the faithful and wise steward;[103] and blessed will he be, when at the coming of his Lord, he will be found so doing.

[103]Luke 12:42, 43.

Of the Heinousness of the Sin of Simony

IF the heinousness and impiety of this sin of simony were seriously considered, it could not but beget a perfect detestation and abhorrence thereof, in the heart of any true Christian. Wherefore, having shown what simony is, and the several ways whereby the guilt thereof may be incurred; I proceed now to set it forth in its own colors, and to show, how great and heinous a crime it is. And this I hope to make appear, by arguments of good and solid reason; from the grievous characters put upon it, and evidences of God's wrath against it, set down by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures; and from the sentiments the holy fathers and church of Christ have had thereof, and censures they have judged it liable to.

First, how great and heinous a sin simony is, may appear by these reasons following.

First, because simony is a kind of theft, and that of an high nature. We justly account him a thief, who, being a steward, and put in trust with his Lord's substance, giving charge to dispense the same for the provision and maintenance of his household, and authority freely to fill all the places of office in the family with worthy and faithful fellow-servants; if he should so abuse this power and trust, as either to embezzle his master's goods, or convert them to his own use, by selling

of offices, and putting men in charge for bribes, without consideration of their worth and fidelity, and by making merchandise of his master's wealth for his own private gain; we justly (I say,) account such a one a thief, and guilty of a theft of the highest nature, as being *fur in officio,* a thief in his office and calling, betraying his trust, and selling away, as his own, that whereof he is not the Lord, or owner, but the steward; and as ensnaring others also into the guilt of his crime, by making as many thieves as he has receivers of his theft. Now such thieves are simoniacal persons, who sell and make merchandise of spiritual things, which are not the proper subjects of buying or selling, but the free gifts of God, whereof they are not lords, but stewards, to whom the free dispensation of these things is committed, and of whom it is required, that they be found faithful.[104] And, if that flying roll of the curse (as the Lord of Hosts has said by the prophet,) will enter into the house of the thief, — and will consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof,[105] their houses, I'm sure, are in a tottering state, who are guilty of this simoniacal theft, of making merchandise of the offices of God's house, and converting the spiritual things committed to their trust, to their own private gain; whereby, they are not only thieves, but murdering thieves, while by such merchandise they make merchandise also of the blood of souls. And so much the greater is their danger, as the matters are sacred which they thus embezzle; and in so much as that Lord to

[104] 1 Cor 4:1, 2.

[105] Zech 5:4.

whom they betray their trust, is not man, but that God who is a consuming fire.[106]

Secondly, by simony men incur the heinous guilt of great ingratitude, and contempt of God, in setting his spiritual gifts at a low rate. If some great prince or royal person, should fall in love with the daughter of a beggar, and should bestow upon her some rich jewels, as the pledges and tokens of his love, and such gifts as might raise her to, and support her, and such servants as were requisite for her attendance, in a grandeur suitable for a person of such high pretensions, as the mistress, or future spouse of a king; and then this woman should esteem so light of all those jewels and gifts, as out of a base covetousness to sell them; or, out of some carnal respect, to throw them away upon some base relatives, or lewd paramours, or favorites of her own; might she not justly bear the character of a person of monstrous ingratitude, and foolishly to have contemned such a royal lover, in prizing so lightly all his presents? And did she not deserve to be cast off with disgrace, as one unworthy ever for the future, to pretend to any interest in him? Now, such is the dealing of these simoniacal persons with Jesus Christ: This great king of glory, out of his transcendent love, has come down from the throne of heaven, to purchase us, an offspring of beggars, and mushrooms of the dunghill, to be his royal spouse; and for preparing and fitting us for our eternal marriage with him, has bestowed upon us (as pledges of his love,) the celestial jewels of these free spiritual gifts, wherewith he has endowed his church, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the

[106] Heb 12:29.

ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.[107] Wherefore, those who sell away these inestimable gifts, or any way prostitute them to merchandise for any temporal thing in exchange, are guilty of most high ingratitude, and of heinous contempt of Jesus Christ, as undervaluing the pledges of his love, and setting them at a more disproportionable rate, than is betwixt the smallest farthing and the most precious jewel that the richest mines of this world can yield; and therefore, deserve to forfeit his love, whose gifts they have set so light by.

Thirdly, is it not an heinous offense, and fearful sin, to give occasion of blasphemy against God, and of bringing up an evil report upon his church? That it is so, we may easily conclude from the severe anger of God against David upon this account, 2 Sam 12. Because he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.[108] And so indeed do they who practice simony, and make merchandise of spiritual things, give occasion of blaspheming God, and of reproaching him of partiality, as if he had more respect to the rich, as more capable of his gifts and graces, than the poor; and, as if his church were a shop, or warehouse, where they speed best, who have most money. And how, alas! does it open the mouths of many, when they see these sacred things dispensed to the rich, whereof the poor are deprived because of their penury; and bribes making an easy passage for some into the church, while the doors are shut against those that want money; and wealth, and not worth the argument of

[107] Eph 4:12.

[108] 2 Sam 12:14.

promotion to spiritual offices? How does it (I say) open the mouths of many, to cry out in the words of that old satire:

— *Cuncta vaenalia nobis, templa, sacerdotes, altaria, sacra, etc.* (All things are to be sold among us, churches, priests, altars, holy things, etc. and what not!)

And whether it be a light thing to give such occasion of reproach against God and his church, those who do so, will find in the day of their reckoning.

Fourthly, it is no small sin to expose sacred and spiritual things to contempt, and to give occasion to have them vilified and despised as matters of little worth. It was upon this account that it was said of Hophni and Phinehas, that the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord; because they gave occasion for men to abhor, and set light by the offering of the Lord.[109] And so do they, who by their simoniacal bargains, make merchandise of spiritual things: For they give such scandal by setting these things to sale, as makes the multitude have them in the less esteem, and to account them no more worth than the price that is laid out for them, or the visible benefit that is reaped by them, and less worth than these temporal things which stand them at a dearer rate; nay, and in end, altogether to contemn and despise them, reckoning them as matters of no moment, but only as artifices of gain and advantage to spiritual peddlers. And while they give such scandal and occasion of offense, how they will escape that woe, which the Lord Jesus has denounced against those by whom offenses come,[110] I see not.

[109] 1 Sam 2:17.

[110] Luke 17:1.

Secondly, the heinousness of this sin may appear from the grievous characters and evidences of God's indignation against it, which he gives in the Scriptures. Let us but again reflect upon the words of the apostle Peter unto Simon Magus, that first parent of this sin in the Christian church; and upon the account thereof, we find he gives such a character of him, as might affright any Christian from following his footsteps therein, while he tells him, Your heart is not right in the sight of God:[111] And, You are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity:[112] And that his sin was such, as that he could but doubtfully promise to himself pardon thereof, in that he says, Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.[113] And in all our Savior's life, we read not that ever he took the rod in his hand, but when he was to express his indignation against this sin, and his zeal for the purity of his church; and then we find in the gospel, that he made a scourge of small cords, and drove therewith the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that bought and sold doves:[114,115] Thereby intimating, with what wrath he would set his face against those who would in his church make merchandise of spiritual things. And what character he gives of such, we may read in his words, saying, It is written, My house will be called, The house of prayer,

[111] Acts 8:21.
[112] Verse 23.
[113] Verse 22.
[114] Matt 21:12.
[115] John 2:15.

but you have made it a den of thieves.[116] And whoso lists to read the ancients, who have commented upon these words, or written upon this subject, will find them applying these words of the gospel to this purpose, and expounding it to have been the design of our Savior, by that act, to intimate, with what displeasure he would have the buyers and sellers of spiritual things driven out of his church.

But let us also look back, and see under the Old Testament, what evidences of his wrath God has given against such persons. And there we find, that when Balaam would have made merchandise of his prophetical gift, and would have sold the exercise thereof for money and promotion, God was so incensed against him, that he sent an angel with a drawn sword against him in the way, and made the ass he rode upon reprove his folly.[117] We find also, how God's anger was expressed against Gehazi, upon this account, who would needs take money and rewards from Naaman, for the miraculous cure wrought upon him, which his master Elisha had refused to receive for the dispensation of that gift of God, who therefore made the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian cleave unto Gehazi, and from him to be propagated to his seed, whom the Lord would set up as monuments of his displeasure, to warn others of the danger of making merchandise of the free gifts of God, or of using them as means of dishonest gain.[118] I might bring also divers passages from the prophets to this purpose; but I think, these already mentioned may be

[116] Matt 21:13.

[117] Num 22.

[118] 2 Kgs 5.

sufficient to show, how heinous a sin simony is in the sight of God, who will not have men to serve themselves and their worldly ends of him and his Blessed Spirit.

Thirdly, the heinousness of this sin may appear also from this, that the holy men of God and church of Christ, have always entertained grievous sentiments thereof, and have judged it a crime liable to the severest censures and punishments. It were an infinite work, to bring the manifold testimonies of the several fathers and church-men, whereby they have expressed their abhorrence of this sin, and given such black characters thereof, as they have not only called the practicers and transactors in this execrable merchandise, the disciples of Balaam, Gehazi, and Simon Magus: But some have set it forth as more heinous than the heresy of Macedonius, in regard that the Macedonians supposing the Holy Spirit a creature, made him only a servant to God. But the simoniacs, acknowledging the Holy Spirit to be God, yet make him a servant to themselves, and to their own covetous or ambitious designs; nay, as their very slave, they buy, and sell, and make merchandise of him. And some again have paralleled it with the treachery of Judas; in regard, that as he sold and made merchandise of Jesus Christ the Son of God, so do they of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. But I desire neither to be at the pains to set down in writing, nor to put others to the pains to read the several passages in their works, commentaries, epistles and homilies, wherein they paint it forth as a sin of the deepest dye: The multiplicity whereof would make this treatise swell to a greater bulk than I design. But having given this short hint, I will proceed

rather to show, how, by the judgment of the catholic church, and joint suffrages of many fathers together, simony has been accounted a crime deserving, and laws and canons have been made for inflicting the highest censures upon persons guilty thereof; who, according to their different qualities, (whether ecclesiastics or the laity,) have been decreed liable to deposition, or excommunication, and to be stigmatized and branded with a mark of infamy.

Let us then look first upon these, commonly called, The canons of the apostles; (which, of how small authority soever they may seem to be, in regard of their supposititious title; yet may, in regard of their antiquity, claim some veneration.) And thus against simony do they decree; *Si quis episcopus, aut presbyter, aut diaconus, etc.* (If any bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, obtain this dignity by the help of money, let him be deposed; as likewise, he who gave him ordination, and be separated from the communion, as Simon Magus was by Peter.)[119]

More also I might thence cite, but I proceed to what is of more certain authority.

Let us look upon the sentence of that famous general council of Chalcedon, pronounced by the joint consent of six hundred and thirty bishops; and there we find, *Si quis episcopus per pecunias, etc.* (If any bishop for money, or for the filthy benefit of lucre, ordain either bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or any of these who are numbered among the clergy, he will undergo the danger, (or punishment,) of the loss of his own degree. And he who is ordained, will reap no benefit

[119] Can. 30.

by his ordination, but let him be driven from that dignity which he has acquired by money. And if any man interpose, as a mediator, in such vile and wicked bargains; if he be a clergyman, let him be turned off from that degree which he holds; but if he be a lay person, or monk, *anathematizetur,* let him be excommunicate.)[120]

Behold also, what the second council of Braga says; *Ne aliquo pretio gratia Dei, etc.* (Let not the grace of God and imposition of hands be sold for any price, because the ancient sentence of the fathers have defined, saying, *Anathema danti, anathema accipienti:* Cursed be the giver, cursed be the receiver.)

Behold also the sentence of the eighth council of Toledo; *Decernentes omnino, etc.* (We altogether decree, that if any henceforth be discovered to have offered any gift for attaining the dignity of the priesthood, from thenceforth let him know himself to be condemned with the reproach of anathema, (or a curse,) and to be separated from the communion of the body and blood of Christ, etc. And these, who upon this account have received bribes, if they be clergy-men, let them be punished with the loss of that honor; but if laymen, let them be condemned into a perpetual curse, or excommunication.)[121]

I could cite more acts and canons of later times, whereby it is evident, that notwithstanding of the growing corruptions in the church, yet against simony she has still in her doctrine, kept an harmony with the more ancient and purer times: But

[120] Can. 2.

[121] Art. 3.

for these, the decrees and sentences of the canon-law may sufficiently serve, wherein we find these determinations: *Sicut simonia pestis, etc.* (As the plague of simony is greater than other diseases; therefore how soon the signs thereof are made to appear by any person, it is without delay to be banished and driven out of the church.)[122]

And again, *Convictus de simonia, etc.* (He that is convict of simony, is to be deposed. The same is to be said of him who is under the scandal or defamation thereof, and cannot purge himself.)[123]

And again, *Si contradicens, etc.* (If he who opposes in an election, be made to forbear by money, given with the will or consent of him who is elected; he who is thus elected or chosen, is holden to renounce.)[124]

And again, *Tam ementes quam vendentes, etc.* (Both the buyers and sellers of offices, and of the administration of spiritual things, are to be condemned as simoniacs, and thrust out of the church.)[125]

Thus it may appear, that simony in all ages of the church, has been judged a most heinous sin, and to deserve no less punishment than deposition and excommunication.

Moreover, as if these were scarce sufficient censures for such a crime, they who should be found guilty thereof, have been also judged to deserve to be stigmatized with an indelible character of infamy. And therefore King Athalaricus, by his confirmation of the edict of the marble table, (contained

[122]Decret. Gregor. 9. De Simon. Cap. 6.

[123]De Simon. Cap. 10.

[124]Cap. 23.

[125]Cap. 38.

in that letter which I have mentioned before,) decrees simoniacal persons to be branded with a note of infamy. And it is enacted in the second Aurelian council, *Si quis sacerdotium per pecuniae nundinum, etc.* (If any man should aspire to the priesthood by the merchandise of money, that he be thrust away as a reprobate.)[126]

And what greater infamy and disgrace can be put upon any man, than to pass under the character of a reprobate? And it was decreed by that Lateran council, under Innocent the Second, five hundred and forty years ago; (which yet is, by near half the time, later than any I have formerly mentioned.) *Ut emptor, venditor, etc.* (That the buyer, the seller, and the meddler in these simoniacal transactions, should be dashed with a mark of infamy.)

Now let any serious man say, whether what has been here said from reason, Scripture, and authority of the church, be not sufficient to make simony to be abhorred as a most heinous and execrable crime? And whether it be not a most dangerous thing, to meddle with that which is hateful to all good men, and whereupon God has put such marks of his displeasure.

[126]Can. 4.

Whether They Are to Be Reputed the Ministers of Christ, Who Enter by Simony?

WHAT is here proposed is a case upon the resolution whereof depends the satisfaction and tranquility of the conscience, both of the priest and people, of the pastor and of his flock, in reference to their respective concerns in the administration of the ministerial duties. For, when he who by simony has procured an entrance into the sacred and spiritual office, receives ordination, collation, institution, and is invested with the charge of a flock, he preaches the word, he administers the sacraments, he exercises the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, he binds, he looses, and in a word, dispenses all things that belong to the ministry. The people see him clothed with orders and authority from the church; and set over them as their pastor, from whose hands they are invited, to expect those spiritual benefits which God has promised to convey to souls by the ministry of the gospel, in those divine ordinances. Now, if he be the lawful minister of Jesus Christ, all is secure enough on both hands; he may confidently exercise the acts of the evangelical priesthood, and by a good title administer the sacred things belonging

thereto; and they may confidently promise to themselves, the gracious effects of his ministration. But if he be not, then does he but boldly usurp, and intrude himself, and has no right to dispense these mysteries; and may expect as little thanks from God for his meddling, as Saul had for presuming upon a burnt-offering; and as Uzziah, for attempting to offer incense in the temple.[127] Nor can the people derive any spiritual benefit from his ministry, who never received what he pretends to give, and whose administrations can have no more virtue, than the exorcisms of the sons of Sceva.[128]

For the resolution of this doubt, it is seriously to be considered, what it is that constitutes a man in the ministerial office. And I lay it down as a sure hypothesis, uncontroverted among the orthodox, that ordination (according to the divine rule of ecclesiastical economy,) is the ordinary way and means appointed by God, for constituting of men in any degree of the sacred hierarchy, and for consecrating them to the priestly office in the church, and making them the ministers of Christ; and that thereby, authority and power is conveyed upon the person thus consecrated, of dispensing the mysteries of the gospel, and administering the ordinances of God. Wherefore, we must consider, that in ordination there is a divine spiritual power and authority, and there is a ministerial ecclesiastical seal. And, howsoever this power and authority be conveyed by the hands of man, as the external agent and instrument in conferring the ecclesiastical seal, yet these external rites of ordination performed by man, do

[127] 2 Chr 26:18, 19.

[128] Acts 19:14, 15, 16.

not give the power, but are only declarative of that spiritual power and grace which is derived from God alone, and flows from the influence of his Blessed Spirit, as the internal and principal author and efficient, upon the person called by him thereto. And therefore, Dionysius Areopagita (or whosoever else is the author of The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy,) says of the person that confers orders, that he is but *Ἐξαγγελεύς*, the Proclaimer, or, Declarer of the Divine Election;[129] Who (says he,) by his own gift, does not advance those who are consecrated unto the honor or power of ecclesiastical order: This he ascribes only to God, whom he calls there *Τελεστάρχου*, the prince of consecration, or, chief ordainer; and pleads the authority of Jesus Christ, for ascribing this power to God alone, and his Holy Spirit.

Nor can it be rationally supposed to be otherwise; for, if a spiritual power be necessary, (as is undeniable,) to the ministration of spiritual and sacred things, then this power can be derived from no other fountain than the divine Spirit. And therefore did our Lord and Savior, both by his words and actions, intimate the same, to flow from him upon the persons of his apostles, while at the giving of their commission, he told them, that the authority and power which he transmitted unto them, was but an emanation of that power which he had received from above, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.[130] And, As my Father has sent

[129]De Eccles. Hier. Cap. 9.

[130]Matt 28:18, 19.

me, so send I you: And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and says unto them, Receive you the Holy Spirit: Whosesoever's sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever's sins you retain, they are retained.[131] And telling them, You will receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: And you will be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth:[132] Whereby he means, that they have both the *ἐξουσίαν*, and the *δύναμιν*, both the authority and the power of their ministry from the Holy Spirit. And not only did our Savior ascribe this unto him, in the persons of these extraordinary ministers, whom he immediately ordained, and sent forth; but the apostle Paul ascribes it also to him in the persons of the ordinary pastors of the church, who were called and ordained mediately by the hands of men, saying unto them, Take heed unto yourselves, and unto all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.[133]

Wherefore, from so clear premises, we cannot but conclude, that to a right and sufficient ordination, to constitute a man a true minister of Jesus Christ, and to endow him with a lawful ministerial power, there must be with the external instrument a concurrence of the internal principal efficient; as it was in the out-sending of Barnabas and Saul, who received their power and authority from God, and the external seal thereof from the church; the Holy Spirit gives

[131] John 20:21, 22, 23.
[132] Acts 1:8.
[133] Acts 20:28.

the command, and calls them, and their brethren gave them imposition of hands.[134] And therefore, Ambrose proposes the question, Who gives the gift or grace of ordination? And he answered, *Sine dubio, Deus;* without doubt, God; *Sed tamen* (says he,) *per hominem dat Deus;* but notwithstanding, God gives it by man: *Homo imponit manus, Deus largitur gratiam: Sacerdos imponit supplicem dextram; & Deus benedicit potenti dextra:* (Man lays on the hands, God bestows the grace: The priest lays on the right hand of prayer, and God blesses with the right hand of power.)[135] And without this, the external seal administered by the hands of men, signifies nothing.

Hence then the collection is easy, and the conclusion evident, that he who enters by simony upon the sacred office, is not to be reputed a true and lawful minister of Jesus Christ; because, though he have the external seal from the hands of man, it is but insignificant, in regard he has not received the internal grace from the hands of God. For, while he comes not thereto by any divine call or warrant, but intrudes by money and bribes, the Holy Spirit gives not his concurrence to confer the spiritual power and authority. And therefore of such one, says Ambrose, *Per pecuniam acquisivit indebitum ordinem, & Deum perdidit in interiori homine:* (By money he has acquired orders he had no right to, and he has lost God in the inward man.)[136]

And he shows at length, how no grace nor good is conferred by such an ordination. But, to put the matter quite out

[134] Acts 13:2, 3.

[135] Lib. De Dignit. Sacerdot. Cap. 5.

[136] Ibid.

of doubt, we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit himself, witnessing, that simoniacal persons are not to be reckoned among the ministers of Christ; for behold, what upon this account he says by Simon Peter to Simon Magus, You have neither part nor lot in this matter:[137] And so, neither can his disciples have any share in the ministry. And from out of the number of his ministers, does our Savior himself plainly exclude those who come in by windows, or posterns, or oblique passages; and that under a very bad character, saying, Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that enters not in by the door, into the sheep-fold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief, and a robber.[138] And I'm sure, none dare say, that they who climb up by the ladder of simony, do enter in by the door. And what are they to be reputed then? Not the true pastors or ministers of Christ, but thieves and robbers; and that justly so, since they imitate such in their way of entrance. And therefore have the canons of the church been very strict, in debarring such from the ministry of holy things; because they cannot say with the apostle, I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, — that he has counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.[139] For Christ has not put them in, but they have thrust in themselves, and so are no ministers of his.

The case standing thus, it may give just occasion to enquire, what effect then can such a one's ministry have upon people? For, seeing God, who is the fountain of grace, has made his ordinances the channels and conduits, whereby the

[137] Acts 8:21.
[138] John 10:1.
[139] 1 Tim 1:12.

graces of his Spirit are conveyed; if these ordinances in the hand of such an instrument, (who is not the lawful minister of Jesus Christ, to whose ordination the Holy Spirit has not concurred, nor given any power, authority, or warrant to administer the same;) will produce these spiritual effects for which they are designed; then is there no great necessity of a distinct order of such persons, as priests or ministers in the church, upon whom people are to depend, or wait for the dispensation of these sacred mysteries, since they may reap the same fruits and effects thereof from his ministration who is no minister of Christ. And so, they may as well wait for these blessings from the performance of every rude artificer and bold mechanic, who lists to step up into the pulpit, and dip his hand in the sacred font, and approach to the holy altar, and to assume the power of administering all the holy ordinances of the gospel, as well as from his ministry who is consecrated, and set apart thereto, by the rites of ordination and power of the Holy Spirit. And, upon the other hand, if the simoniacal entrance of such a one, render his ordination ineffectual, so as his administrations will have no efficacy for the production of those graces and blessings for which God has designed the ministry of the gospel; to what pitiful condition and hard straits are the people, over whom he is set, reduced unto upon his account! And what scruples it may breed in them, in reference to his administrations; and what doubts it may make them wrestle under, in reference to their own spiritual state and condition; and what woeful consequences may follow thereupon, what considering man may not easily apprehend!

If, for determining the matter of this enquiry, we will take the opinion of Gregory the Great, he is very confident in concluding the absolute ineffectiveness and invalidity of such a one's ministry, saying, *Quicunque sacros ordines vendunt & emunt, sacerdotes esse non possunt, unde scriptum est, anathema danti, anathema accipienti, etc.* (Whosoever sell and buy holy orders, cannot be priests; hence it is that it's written, Cursed be the giver, cursed be the receiver: This is simoniacal heresy. How then, if they be a curse, and not saints themselves, can they sanctify others? And, seeing they are not in the body of Christ, how can they either deliver or receive his body? He who is cursed, how can he bless?)[140]

But how far soever we may go along with him, as to the ineffectiveness of such a one's ministration; yet, in so far as he builds the same upon arguments, whereby it would follow, that the efficacy of the ministry should depend upon the grace or sanctity of the instrument, we cannot comply with him therein; the consequence being dangerous, and such as may seem to savor too much of the leaven of the Donatists, Luciferians, and Apostolici, etc. contrary to the received doctrine of the catholic church, and refuted by several of the ancients, as Augustine, Optatus Milevitanus, Jerome, and many others; showing, that it does not prejudice the increase, whether he that sows, do it with polluted or with pure hands, if so be the seed be good, and the soil be fertile, and the influence of the clouds and heavens not restrained. And the house may receive light by the taper which shines from an earthen as well as from a golden candlestick. And if

[140] Apud Gratian, Caus. 1. Qu. 1. Can. Quicunque Sacros.

there were no good to be reaped by the ministry of wicked men, but that the ministrations of unsanctified persons were altogether ineffectual, Christ would never have commanded people to hear the Scribes and Pharisees;[141] nor would he have sent forth Judas among the Twelve,[142] to gather in the lost sheep of the house of Israel; of whose ministry we hear no less effects than of the rest. Nay, he tells plainly, that many reprobates in the great day, will plead the effects of their ministry, saying, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and in your name cast out devils, and in your name done many wonderful works? To whom he will say, Depart from me you that work iniquity.[143] And if the pravity of the instrument should render the work ineffectual, it should have been no matter of rejoicing to Paul, that Christ was preached by such, who preached him out of envy and contention, and not sincerely.[144] But while he says, We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us;[145] he will have us to understand, that the efficacy of the gospel depends not upon the instrument, but upon the author, who can render a blessing effectual as well from the mouth of Balaam, as from the mouth of Aaron; and can wash a soul from sin, as well by the baptism of Judas, as of John. For he may have *gratiam gratis datam,* who has not *gratiam gratum facientem;* he may be endowed with the grace of edification to save others, who

[141]Matt 23:2, 3.
[142]Matt 10:5, 6.
[143]Matt 7:22, 23.
[144]Phil 1:15, 18.
[145]2 Cor 4:7.

has not the grace of sanctification to save himself. But all this while, we speak of those whom we suppose to have authority by a lawful minister to dispense the mysteries of the gospel.

But the matter of our present enquiry, concerning the efficacy of his ministrations who enters by simony, proceeds upon another hypothesis; that is, that such a one is not the minister of Jesus Christ; and this being already proved, we cannot but approve of Gregory's position, that *quicunque sacros ordines vendunt & emunt, sacerdotes esse non possunt:* (Whosoever sell and buy holy orders, cannot be priests.) And upon this ground we must proceed to determine in this matter.

Now, upon this account, it has not only been much questioned by some, whether any spiritual blessing or benefit can be derived from the ministry of such; but it has been confidently asserted, not only by Gregory, but by many others, that the ministrations of such are altogether ineffectual, and can confer no good, nor transmit any spiritual grace or blessing. Whereupon, Gratian has adopted it among the decrees of the canon law, *Gratia, si non gratis datur, vel accipitur, gratia non est: Simoniaci autem, etc.* (Grace, if it be not freely given or received, is not grace; but simoniacal persons receive it not freely; therefore, they receive not that grace which principally has its operation in ecclesiastical orders: (That is, the ministerial grace, or power;) And if they do not receive it, they have it not; and if they have it not, neither freely, nor not freely, can they give it unto any man.)[146]

[146]Caus. 1. Qu. 1. Can. Gratia, etc.

And it seems indeed to be asserted upon good grounds. For,

First, if such persons (as is shown before,) be not the lawful ministers of Jesus Christ, then have they no title, nor right to dispense the ordinances of the gospel, which Christ has intrusted only to his ministers, to whom alone he has consigned the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and committed the ministry of reconciliation, as his ambassadors, as says the apostle.[147] So that when they presume to meddle with these holy mysteries, they do but sacrilegiously usurp, without authority from God, and so do dispense them in vain, and with an ineffective hand; the bare external seal of ordination by the hands of man, without the concurrence of the divine power, being of no force to work these effects, which are the proper emanations of the Holy Spirit; so that their administrations can be no more valid, than a remission to a guilty person from his hand, who had surreptitiously affixed the king's seal thereto, and without his royal consent or authority, had usurped the office of an herald to proclaim it. And therefore, it was not a groundless debate wherewith the church of Rome was troubled for several years, in the time of Leo IX. Whether ordinations conferred by such simoniacal usurpers, were effectual? Or, whether they should be re-ordained who had been ordained by them? And howsoever, Petrus Damiani wrote his book, called Gratissimus, against those who pleaded for re-ordination; and Leo in two several councils at Rome, allowed those who had been ordained by such, to continue in their office, after the doing

[147] Matt 16:19. John 20:23. 2 Cor 5:18, 20.

of forty days' penance;[148] yet, this seems to have been but of indulgence, and to have proceeded rather from necessity than choice; in respect of the tumult that was raised thereabout, and in regard that a more strict course would have occasioned the silencing of an infinite number of the clergy, and the laying waste such a multitude of churches, as many territories should have been without the sound of the gospel, to the great prejudice of the Christian religion; as may appear by the same Petrus Damiani's epistle to Henry archbishop of Ravenna. And yet, I think Leo did right, not to re-ordain them; but rather, upon their repentance, to reinvest them with better authority in the exercise of their office, since they had once received orders, how ineffective soever, through the want of the divine concurrence with a simoniacal ordainer; yet, the church having by the external seal of ordination, once invested such a one with an ecclesiastical authority, to transmit the same unto others; it had not been convenient, that the church should have called the character of her own ordination in question. Neither needed they who had received the same from the hand of such, but the church's approbation, for their administration; and devout addresses to God, for the power of the Holy Spirit to render it effectual. And therefore says the canon law, *Simoniacos non simoniace à simoniacis ordinatos, misericorditer per manûs impositionem, pro temporis necessitate, in officio concedimus permanere:* (Those whom we account simoniacs, because of their ordination by simoniacal persons, but have not practiced simony themselves; we do, by the imposition of

[148]Concil. Tom. 3. p. 2.

hands, graciously give them leave to continue in their office, through the necessity of time.)[149]

Whereby it appears, that it was not thought fit to re-ordain such, but only confirm their former ordination by imposition of hands, without more rites of consecration of new again.

Secondly, it being undeniable, that the whole efficacy of the ministry depends upon God, and that the spiritual effects thereof flow wholly from that power wherewith he does endow and enable men to administer in the mysteries of the gospel, and from the concourse of his Holy Spirit with them therein: (For, The excellency of the power is of God, and not of man;[150] Neither is he that plants anything, neither he that waters anything, but God that gives the increase:[151]) It will then undoubtedly follow, that the external rites of ordination can transmit no virtue or efficacy into his ministry who receives the same without the call, and concurrence of the Holy Spirit, and without any promise of divine influence upon his administrations. Now, that he who enters by simony upon the pastoral office, is destitute of these, may be evident without much arguing. For, who can suppose that he is called of God, or that the Holy Spirit has given authority to his ordination, who has procured the same by sinister means, since our Savior has told us, that such are but thieves and robbers,[152] who have not entered in by him who is the door? Or, upon what warrant or promise can he step out to officiate in that function, in hope of any gracious success,

[149] Apud Grat. Caus. 1. Qu. 1. Can. Statuimus Decret.

[150] 2 Cor 4:7.

[151] 1 Cor 3:7.

[152] John 10.

of whom the Holy Spirit does witness, that he has neither part, nor lot in this matter;[153] and whom for his execrable merchandise, the Lord would have scourged out of his temple? And whereas, God has said of such as do unwarrantably usurp, and thrust themselves upon such an employment, without his commission or command, I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they will not profit this people at all, says the Lord.[154] What fruit or effect then, what blessing or benefit, can be expected from his hands, to whom God has given no commission, upon whom the Spirit of God has not descended in ordination, and over whom he hovers not in his administrations, to render them productive of these graces which he has designed his ordinances to work by the ministry of the gospel? But what then will become of the flock, over which he is set?

To this I say, that truly I look upon it as one of the saddest dispensations that can befall a people, to be given over to the charge of a simoniacal person. For, since the priest's ministry is the instrument of conveying all the blessings which are annexed to the administration of the evangelical ordinances, what can be thought, but that God has a controversy with that people, whom he gives up to the conduct of those from whom they can derive none of these blessings? But in this case, as divers persons may in the same flock, have different persuasions about it; so must we cautiously distinguish and difference them, according to their various sentiments thereof. There may be some, to whom the simony of such a

[153] Acts 8.

[154] Jer 23:32.

pastor is notorious and known, but reflected upon by them with grief and regret. There may be others who know it, and yet do willingly comply with him. And there may also be many, who are altogether ignorant thereof.

First, to those who know a pastor to have conveyed himself in upon them by simoniacal means, and are grieved that they should be given over to such a hopeless ministry, I say; it highly concerns them, to search into the cause of God's controversy with them; and it is like, they will find it to be such as provoked God of old, to give over his people to the like judgment, to the seduction of false and treacherous prophets, and of covetous and careless, cruel and foolish shepherds and watchmen; that is, because they despised his word, and were disobedient and rebellious to the voice of his faithful messengers;[155] as may appear from Micah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and others of the prophets. And it is no doubt, people's contempt of the gospel, and unfruitfulness under the labors of faithful pastors, that provokes God to remove such from them, and to give them over to such thieves, and robbers, and hirelings, whose ministry can do them no good. And therefore, the only counsel I can give to those in such a condition, is, seriously to reflect upon, and with sorrow to be humbled in the sight of God for this sin, and by strict bonds to devote themselves for the future, to a greater love and regard of the gospel, to a more reverend esteem of, and obedience unto faithful ministers, and to a better improvement of the means of grace. This is the most hopeful means and method I know,

[155] Mic 2:6, 11 and 3:6, 7, 11. Zeph 3:4. Zech 11:16.

for a speedy removal of this judgment, and for rescuing them from that snare whereinto their sins have entangled them.

Secondly, as for those to whom this simoniacal entrance of such a one into the ministerial charge is known, and yet by them a ready compliance yielded unto him; not only will his administrations prove to such ineffectual; but by their consent and compliance therein, they involve themselves in the guilt of his sinful practices, while thus they have fellowship with the unfruitful work of darkness, and seeing his spiritual theft, do consent unto him; a sin evidently condemned,[156] both by the Psalmist of Israel, and the apostle of the Gentiles. And upon this account, Aquinas concludes, that none should communicate with him in the execution of his orders, nor accept of ordination from his hand who is known to be promoted by simony; while he says, *Quod ille qui simoniace recipit sacrum ordinem,* etc. (That he who simoniacally receives holy orders, he receives indeed the character of order, in regard of the efficacy of that sacrament; yet notwithstanding, he receives neither the grace, nor the execution of that order. And that, because he has surreptitiously, or by theft, taken the character, or seal, contrary to the will of the principal Lord; and therefore, he stands justly suspended, both as to himself, that is, that he do not meddle with the execution of his order; and as to others, that is, that none communicate with him in the execution thereof.)[157]

Nay farther, he says, *Nec propter praeceptum ejus, nec propter excommunicationem,* etc. (Neither for his command,

[156]Ps 50:18. Eph 5:11.

[157]Thom. 22ae. Qu. 100. Art. 6.

nor for the thunderbolts of his excommunication, should any man be moved to receive ordination from his hands whom he knows to have been advanced in a simoniacal way.)[158] And all this he asserts, both upon the account of the want of efficacy in such a one's administrations, and in regard of the unlawfulness to communicate with him in sin.

But, Thirdly, to those who are altogether ignorant of, and unacquainted with the simoniacal practices, whereby he who bears the name of their pastor has entered into that function; my charity leads me to judge, that, though such a one be not the lawful minister of Jesus Christ, yet the ordinances of the gospel administered by him, may prove effectual unto them; while, attending thereto with an innocent and religious devotion, out of a pious obedience unto God's command, and an holy reverence to these sacred mysteries, they do in the simplicity of their hearts communicate therein, as supposing them administered by a lawful authority. But, what benefit they derive thence, is not by virtue of his ministry, but out of a paternal indulgence, and respect to their pious intentions; whereby it comes to pass, that, as God often gives *rem sacramenti, sine sacramento,* (the matter of the sacrament, without the sacrament;) so he may be pleased to convey *effectum ministerii sine ministro,* (the effect of the ministry, and the blessing of his ordinance,) though he be no true minister that dispenses it; without regard to whom, God does often concur with his own ordinances, and makes them produce blessed effects, as the reward of a private piety, and as the returns of the prayers of the saints of such a congregation

[158]Loco sup. cit.

offered up with pure hands and hearts, and of the intercessions of the catholic church, which she daily puts up in the behalf of all her members. For, he who has said, Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them:[159] And, that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.[160] And, that to the upright, there arises light in darkness.[161] He who has said so, and made these, and many other gracious promises to his church, and to the prayers of his saints, and to the devotion of the upright, will not frustrate them of the fruits of their religious performances, upon the account of his administration, whose guilt in intruding upon the same, is none of theirs, while they do not communicate with him therein, either by knowledge, connivance, or consent.

And this is all I can warrantably say to this purpose.

[159] Matt 18:20.
[160] Jas 5:16.
[161] Ps 112:4.

A Warning to Young Men, in Reference to Their Entry upon Spiritual Offices in the Church

SUCH is commonly the heat of youth in posting towards preferment, that it out-runs the consideration, not only of the proper ends, but also of the disproportion of its own abilities, for the discharge of the great and weighty duties of the high office and employment to which it aspires. For, as Calvin says truly, *Contigit omnes fere juvenes turgidos esse, & fastuosos, tanquam nubes transvolare possent.* (It is incident almost to all youths, to be big of self-conceit, and proudly to raise their feathers, as if they could mount above the clouds.)

So that, like Phaeton, they must needs be set in their father's chariot, though the event of their preposterous undertaking should be, to precipitate themselves to their own ruin, and to hazard to set the world on fire. And through such preposterous indiscretion, does it come to pass, that many young men aspiring to the holy calling of the ministry, do both in their entry thereto, and afterwards in the exercise thereof, stumble into those errors, which betray misplaced and disordered affections; and are suitable neither to the dignity, nor divine ends of that sacred function.

Mistake me not, dear brethren, as if it were my design to reproach young men, or by reflecting upon others, to purchase an opinion of the innocency of mine own past youth, from those infirmities and errors which are incident to others; (nay, I desire rather to be humbled in the sight of God, for the least error or irregularity, whereunto I am sensible that the folly of my youthful affections have betrayed me.) But what I speak is out of compassion, and for precaution, that you may the more attentively watch against those dangers into which the temerarious fervor of that imprudent age, may drive you headlong: For thus it is, I fear, that many are led into the snare of simony. And therefore I desire to warn all who are aiming at this holy calling, that they would take heed how they enter thereupon.

Wherefore, as I have sufficiently showed before, how great and heinous a crime this sin of simony is; so now I adjure you in the fear of God, whosoever you are, that design to undertake the sacred office of the ministry in the church of Christ, as you would wish to avoid the formidable guilt of that sin, and to enter upon that holy function, and serve him with a good conscience therein, who sees in secret, and searches the hearts and reins, and will render unto every one according to their ways; that you seriously consider what you are doing; and before you presume to meddle therewith, strictly examine whether you be called of God thereto. For the Lord will have none to serve him in his house, but those who are called by himself. And therefore the apostle Paul has told us, that no man takes this honor to himself, but he

that is called of God, as was Aaron.[162] And it is this, that he so often pleads for the authority of his own ministry, that he was called, and set apart of God thereto.[163] Whereupon Chrysostom says, *Ubique se vocatum commemorat; ostendens, quod non ambiendo adeptus sit, sed vocatus accesserit.* (He always mentions himself to be called, showing, that he had not courted that office by indirect means, but that being called, he came thereto.)[164]

And without this call, and commission from God, none has right to administer the same. For, how shall they preach (says the same apostle,) except they be sent?[165] And therefore, although God has been pleased, for preventing that confusion, which vain pretensions to a divine call might introduce into his church, to appoint an ordinary way for the confirmation of his own call, by the seal of ecclesiastical ordination; yet, when that seal is procured from the hands of men, where the call is wanting from the hands of God, it is of small significancy; it is but the setting up of a man in an office in the house, without the master's consent. Therefore again, I warn you, strictly to examine, before you presume to enter upon this office, whether you be called thereunto by God. For, if without his call, by indirect means, you thrust yourself into it, what will you answer in the day when the master of the house shall call his servants to an account, and finding you amongst them, shall put home this question to you, *Amice, quomodo huc intrasti?* (Friend, how came you in hither?)

[162]Heb 5:4.

[163]Rom 1:1. 1 Cor 1:1. Gal 1:15.

[164]In Rom 1.

[165]Rom 10:15.

Whatsoever you may devise to say now for yourself before men, I fear, then you shall be speechless; and what the end thereof shall be, you may easily presage.

Now, when I warn you to examine your call from God, I do not bid you search after it by any extraordinary signs, or wait upon any immediate revelation from heaven, to assure you thereof; but I would have you seriously to consider, whether you find a concurrence of these things upon your own heart, which God works by his Spirit, as things which he necessarily requires in those whom he calls; and thereby you may come to know, whether you be called of him, or not.

First, consider then the end you propose unto yourself in this holy function. For, whom God calls, he sets their eye upon the right end. Now, the great end of the ministry of the gospel, is, the glory of God, and the salvation of man. That this was the end of God's sending forth ministers to preach the gospel, that for his glory they should make manifest the transcendent riches of his grace in Christ; and be instruments, by dispensing the means of grace, for the conversion of souls, and for advancing them by faith in the Lord Jesus, to the participation of eternal life and happiness, is clear from the words of the apostle Paul, who speaking to the Ephesians of his ministry, in the mystery of the gospel, says, whereof I was made a minister, — that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.[166] And to the Corinthians, showing forth the end of his ministry, says, God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the

[166]Eph 3:7, 8.

glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.[167] And, in his speech before King Agrippa, he declares, that the end for which Jesus Christ had appeared unto him, to make him a minister of the Gentiles, was, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in him.[168] Nay, that this is the great design of God in the ministry of the gospel, who is so ignorant as not to know? And therefore, he will have the same to be the design of all who undertake the ministry thereof. For, if he will have this to be the principal end of all our actions, saying, Whether you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.[169] Much more will he have it to be the principal end in that work, wherein his glory, and the salvation of souls are more immediately concerned. So that, if you be called of God, your eye will be upon this, as the principal end and scope that you aim at. But he who designs not this, but intends his own preferment, or profit, to which he resolves to make the ministry subservient, as a mean to raise him from the dunghill; or, it may be, as a rescue from poverty, or from the contempt of a broken fortune, I'm sure, is not called of God. And it is no wonder to see such a one fall into the snare of simony, since base designs find hardly abettors, but such as are procured by bribes. But, what he will answer, when the Lord shall put home to him both these questions together, *Amice, quomodo*

[167] 2 Cor 4:6.

[168] Acts 26:18.

[169] 1 Cor 10:31.

huc intrasti? (Friend, how came you in hither?) And again, *Amice, quorsum huc intrasti?* (Friend, for what end came you in hither?) I know not.

Secondly, consider whether you be sensible of the weight of such a charge. Whom God calls to the work of the ministry, he works in their hearts a deep sense of the weight and burden thereof; and to this effect, he shows them what labor, and trouble, and pains they must be at; what temptations, and tribulations, and affronts, they will meet with; and how they will have many enemies, and must grapple with much opposition and contradiction; and what a weighty charge, the charge of souls is; what account they must give thereof to him; and how the blood thereof will be required at their hands, if through their default they perish. Of these things our Savior warned his apostles, when he sent them forth upon the work of the ministry.[170] And this the Lord warned Ezekiel of, when he set him to be a watchman unto the house of Israel.[171] Nay, and in hundreds of texts, the Lord in the Scripture sets this before their eyes, whom he calls, and sends forth; thereby to engrave upon their hearts the sense of the charge whereof they are to undertake the burden, that so they may count the cost before they begin the work. And therefore, when the Lord told Ananias that he had called Saul, as a chosen vessel, to bear his name before the Gentiles, he said withal, I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.[172] So that, if you be called of God,

[170] Matt 10:16, 17, etc.

[171] Ezek 33:7.

[172] Acts 9:15, 16.

you will have a deep sense of the weight and burden of the ministry, upon your spirit; and will look upon it, as a work that requires much watching, and fasting, and prayer. And sure, whosoever is touched with this sense, and seriously considers what a weighty charge it is, will never make use of the silver keys of Simon Magus, to open a passage for himself thereto; nay, save upon the account of the obligation of a call from God, he would not stoop to take it up. It is only a delusory fancy of carnal minds, that, looking upon it as an office destined for ease, and pleasure, and profit, makes men run to purchase it with money.

Thirdly, consider whether you be sensible of your own insufficiency, and disproportion of your abilities for the work. For, whom God calls, he imprints upon their hearts the humble sense thereof; that they may go forth, not in confidence of their own strength, but of the strength of him who calls them. So as the consideration thereof made the apostle Paul cry out, Who is sufficient for these things?[173] And again, Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God; who also has made us able ministers of the New Testament.[174] The deep sense of which insufficiency, has made many able men of humble minds, either to decline, or with a great reluctancy to embark upon an employment to which they perceived their strength so unequal. Thus Moses, when God was sending him upon his message, said, Lord, who am I? and, O my Lord, I am

[173] 2 Cor 2:16.

[174] 2 Cor 3:5, 6.

not eloquent.[175] And thus Jeremiah cried out, Ah Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.[176] And this made many in the primitive church deaf to all entreaties and arguments, till they were forced thereupon by violence; which excessive aversion, though I dare not altogether commend, yet it gives me ground to say, that if you be called of God, you will have in your heart such an humble sense of your own insufficiency and weakness for the work, as will put you, if not in fear to undertake, at least oft to your knees to beg strength from above. So that there is just ground to doubt their call, where this is wanting; as may be perceived in some, who, as soon as they have commenced masters of arts, before they have well studied the common principles of the doctrine of divinity, (much less the true practice of Christianity, in the mortification of their youthful affections;) begin immediately to court churches with such confidence, as if the superficial knowledge of some few speculative points of theology, and the reading over of some pamphlets, had rendered them sufficiently qualified for the ministerial office, never considering the great endowments of learning, prudence, holiness, and gravity, that are required for the discharge of the duties thereof, and for making them shine as ensamples to the flock. And hence it comes to pass, that with a preposterous speed they run, to have themselves possessed of some charge; and if any thing intervene, to forestall their desires, or to hinder the success of their endeavors, then all imaginable arts shall

[175] Exod 3:11 and 4:10.

[176] Jer 1:6.

be made use of, which the spirit of simony can devise, to render their purpose effectual.

Fourthly, consider by what instinct you are moved, to design yourself for this holy office. Whom God calls, he stirs them up by the secret instinct of his Blessed Spirit, whereby he works in them such divine motions of fervent charity, and zeal for his glory, and the salvation of souls, as they are driven thereby to cast themselves upon greatest hardships, and to resolve to sacrifice their own ease, quiet, and carnal interests, in a calling wherein they may serve God to these ends. As the apostle Paul was, when he went bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, where, he knew bonds and afflictions were abiding him; the motions of charity and zeal so drove him, that he said, None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.[177] And again, I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.[178] And as he was moved by the like instinct, to lay himself out for the salvation of the Corinthians, to whom being about to come, he said, I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.[179] And so, if you be called of God, by such motions of charity and zeal, kindled by the Spirit of God in your heart, will it be that you are carried to a desire for the ministry of the gospel. But,

[177] Acts 20:24.

[178] Acts 21:13.

[179] 2 Cor 12:15.

when the carnal motions of ambition, or covetousness, work a panting after this office; as these motions are not from the instinct of the Spirit of God, but of the spirit of the world; so neither has he a call from God, who is driven thereby. And it is no wonder to see such a one seek to make a passage for his own entrance, by the counsel of that same spirit which was the principal mover in his design, and has the chief hand in simoniacal bargains.

And now finally, I would advise you, that after you have examined your own heart, though you even find in yourself a concurrence of these things, in such a considerable measure as may beget in you a confidence, that God approves of your purpose, and calls you to serve him in the ministry of his church, yet you would not make too much haste, nor run to thrust yourself thereinto, before God open a fair door of entrance for you. I cannot but look upon it as an error, and an act of too preposterous speed, for any to intrude where the door is but half open; or to secure himself with an anti-date of a succession to the charge of a living incumbent: Of which, besides that, through the uncertainty of his own life, he is uncertain of his future enjoyment; he also throws himself upon the temptation of that heinous sin, which with little sense, is too commonly lodged in the unnatural breasts of young rich heirs, amongst whom we find it too often verified:

Filius ante diem Patrios inquirit in Annos. (That the son lives with murdering desires, in a continual longing for his old father's death, whereby he may come to be possessed of his fortune.) And whosoever runs upon suchlike danger, is too little privy to the corruption of his own heart; which

should be a principal part of his study, both to understand, and to watch against, who desires to enter upon the holy ministry. And which, whosoever studies well, will wait, till God by making a clear and pure passage for him, evidence that he has called him thereto, and that he has not run before God sent him.

Yet would I not have any man suppose, that I intend, that he who has been sincerely designing himself for the service of God in the ministry, and finds a proper occasion, should forbear to do any thing, or follow the lawful means for attaining thereto. For, though the deep sense of the weightiness of the work, and of a man's own insufficiency, should make him fear, and beware to thrust himself upon it; yet it betrays too little of charitable zeal to God's service, and the good of souls, when he sees an open door to lie like a block without any motion, or stand idly gazing, till men come and hale him violently to the work. Nor see I how he can avoid the blame of a slothful servant, who uses no lawful endeavors to put his talent to exchange, when a convenient season calls for it. Nay, it gives too much occasion for suspicion of hypocrisy, and affected nicety in any, who after he has for a considerable space, been fitting himself for the ministry, should pretend an aversion thereto, till it were forced upon him against his will. The apostle Peter has exhorted otherwise, bidding take the oversight of the flock, not by constraint, (*μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς*, not by being forced, or compelled thereto,) but willingly.[180] And if it was spoken to the commendation of Amaziah the son of Zichri, a captain in the wars of Judah, that he willingly

[180] 1 Pet 5:2.

offered himself unto the Lord.[181] It can be no reproach for him, who finds his lips touched with a live-coal from the altar, when he hears the Lord, by opening a door, saying, Who will go for us? willingly to offer himself in this spiritual war, and to go to those who stand in the Lord's stead, and say with the prophet, Here am I, send me.[182] For whatsoever discouragement the sense of his own insufficiency may breed in him, yet the sincerity of his intentions, and the evidences of a call from God, may give him confidence to rely upon his grace, as sufficient for him, whose strength is made perfect in weakness.

[181] 2 Chr 17:16.

[182] Isa 6:8.

A Word of Warning to Patrons

IT is much to be regretted, that the patrons of churches should be generally so obnoxious to that odious reproach of the sin of simony, wherein it is the lot of the innocent to suffer with the guilty. But that which has given occasion thereto, is, that the most of patrons have never seriously considered the nature or end of their power; and some have never looked upon it as a matter wherein their conscience is much concerned, but rather as an occasion, whereby they may either gratify others, or serve their own interests: Whereby it comes to pass, that presentations are oft times disposed of by them, without due consideration of the qualities of the persons, or weight of the charge; but that he speeds better at their hands, whose importunity by favor, or bribes, commends him unto them, than he who for his worth, might justly be preferred. Now, I am such a friend both to the conscience and honor of all herein concerned, that I wish from my heart, I could give such an effectual warning, as might make them all study to preserve their souls free from the guilt, and their honor from the stain of such an odious crime.

I am not to debate with you who have this power, how you have come by it, or by what title or right you hold it. But seeing you are in possession thereof, I would warn you to look upon it as a matter of great trust, for which you must

be accountable to the great God of heaven and earth. For, thereby the vineyard of God comes under your charge, to look out for faithful laborers to put into it; thereby you are entrusted with the souls of people, to look out for faithful pastors to commit them to. And if, for the least talent that men receive, the Lord has told, that he will reckon with them how they have employed it;[183] and that, for whatsoever trust is committed unto any man, the upshot at last must be, Give account of your stewardship.[184] How much more will he call for a reckoning at your hands, who have so great a talent, and to whom is committed such an high trust, as that wherein the welfare of his vineyard, and the salvation of the souls of his people is so much concerned! If then, when the vineyard is grown over with thorns, and nettles have covered the face thereof, through your placing of slothful or careless laborers therein, the ground thereof complain, and the barren-trees cry out, when their Lord comes to call for fruits, what will you answer unto him? And, if the souls of people perish, through your placing ignorant and unfaithful pastors over them, when the cry of their blood ascends to heaven against you, what vengeance may you expect shall it draw down upon your heads?

Therefore I would warn you, as you would wish to avoid the vengeance of the Almighty, and be free from the blood of souls, to beware of making use of, or rather of abusing your power in a simoniacal way. I have showed before, how heinous a crime simony is; and I tell you truly, it will prove

[183] Matt 25:19.

[184] Luke 16:2.

a cursed merchandise unto you, to sell away a spiritual charge for human favor, or bribes, or money, or any matter of worldly interest. Consider, alas! What do you sell? Even the gift of God which he has put into your hands, not to purchase worldly benefit to yourselves, but glory to him. And how will he take it at your hands, if you thus abuse your trust, and serve yourselves of him? Nay, again consider, what do you sell? Even the souls of God's people, which you betray, into whose hands you care not, so you get your price. And what better are you than Judas? He sold the innocent blood of Jesus Christ, and you sell the blood of these souls for which it was shed; he sold a Savior, to gratify the rulers; and you sell souls, to gratify, it may be, some friend, or great person; he sold a Savior for thirty pieces of silver, and you sell hundreds of souls for, it may be, a little greater sum. But whatsoever the price be, alas, how unhappy merchants are you! And, what a poor purchase make you! If you do it to gratify man, your gain can in no wise countervail your damage, while you lose the favor of the Creator, to conciliate the favor of the creature, who, it is like, at last will requite you as the elders of the Jews did Judas; and when your conscience, distracted with the horror of your guilt, makes you cry out, We have sinned in betraying innocent blood, will tell you, What is that to us? see you to that.[185] Or, if by your bargain, you have perhaps gained some money, yet, what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?[186] And shall not the Lord smite his hands at this dishonest gain? Shall not this

[185] Matt 27:4.

[186] Matt 16:26.

price of soul-blood bring in a curse with it? Shall it not make the house where it comes, an Aceldama? And shall not the curse of God hover over that tent where this accursed thing is hid, as it did over Achan's, with his sacrilegious treasure? Oh, let the blessing of God be upon your houses; and let never such a cursed wedge come within them. Wherefore I beseech you, if ever any man shall henceforth come to tempt you to such a simoniacal bargain, by the offer of money, or any bribe, let your indignation evidence your abhorrency of such a sin, and your detestation of such a person; and say to him as Simon Peter said to Simon Magus, Your money perish with you. And I'm sure, the reward of such honest zeal shall meet you in heaven.

Moreover, I warn you, as you would wish to avoid the guilt of the blood of souls, to consider well whom you present to have charge over them. Do not imagine to wash your hands from this guilt, by that frivolous excuse wherewith some flatter their own consciences, while they would shift off the whole burden from themselves, upon the bishops and governors of the church, saying, they are the only competent judges of the qualifications of the persons, while the patrons are no more concerned but to present them. But pray, is not the investing of a person with a charge over souls, the work of the Lord? Do not you give him a title to the charge? And, if you do it without probable grounds of his ability for the work, you do all your part to entrust souls to an insufficient person; and is not this to do the work of the Lord negligently, or deceitfully? (call it as you will.) And what the certification

thereof is,[187] you know. But again, suppose the person unfit whom you present, and that you either know so much, or were indifferent whether he were so or not; and suppose the bishop to whom you transmit him, either careless, or corrupt, and apt to comply with your motions, or easy to be swayed by solicitations, to ordain and collate him to the charge; tell me freely, whether you think you were not in the wrong to those souls over whom you present such a person, in committing them to such a steward as would starve them? Or, whether you think the bishop's sin could excuse yours? Sure I am, you cannot imagine so. For, if you will have none of the guilt, why will you needs have an hand in the work? Or tell me, what is the end for which you have this power? Is it not, that you may improve the same for God's glory, and the good of souls? For which, if you have any tenderness or zeal, you will judge your conscience more concerned, than to be so indifferent in your choice. Nay, would God there were not some, who, having once presented a person, how insufficient soever, do look upon it as a reflection upon themselves to have him rejected; and therefore, making all considerations of conscience stoop to the fancy of their reputation, which they think engaged to espouse and promote by all means imaginable, the design of their presentation, and account it their honor, in spite of opposition, to set up their own insignificant creature in a charge over souls. But how such men will answer for a talent thus employed, the day of their reckoning will tell.

[187] Jer 48:10.

Wherefore, I say, I would warn you to consider well whom you present to the charge of souls; and whensoever any occasion thereof falls into your hands, I would advise you, first to have your recourse to God, and falling down before the throne of grace, pray him who is the Lord of the vineyard, to direct you aright for choosing a faithful laborer to put in the vacant place thereof; and as the effect of such devotion performed in sincerity, you may confidently expect divine counsel and concurrence.

And next, it is requisite you make use of such means, as whereby you may have sufficient information, and best advice for fixing upon a person most suitable for the charge. Fame may do somewhat herein; your own acquaintance, and knowledge of the gifts and qualifications of men, may do much; but if you scruple, or dare not, or cannot rely upon your own judgment, then have recourse to the counsel and advice of others. No doubt, you will not want abundance who will be ready to obtrude their advice and recommendations, and perhaps vex you with their importunities; but in a matter of such weight, I wish you to be cautious whose advice you make use of.

Those who serve you, may haply be ready to take the first advantage to be interposers in this affair, and specially such who have a preference in your favor above their fellows, will be very confident in their recommendations, as presuming they have the sway of your ears. But, be wary in taking the advice of servants herein, who, for the most part, are mercenary, and ready to make secret simoniacal bargains for

a presentation, and then move you to give what they have sold, while without your privity they gather up the price.

Beware also, to consult herein any covetous persons. For their eyes are commonly more towards earth, than towards heaven; and are wiser for this world, than for the world to come; and you shall be sure to find their counsel tend more for your gain, than for the good of your soul. And it is much, if there be not at the bottom some design for their own advantage.

Beware likewise, to advise with those who are of profane and dissolute lives; these will prove no good counselors, for choice of one to the holy calling: Such a one will be preferable in their eyes, whose conversation differs least from their own; and from whom, they expect least severity against their vices.

Likewise, beware herein to consult proud persons. They will never recommend to you for a pastor, but such a one whom they presume, they may easily tread upon; or who they expect will yield his ministry to truckle to their supercilious humors. Nay, in a word, I would wish you to beware of taking herein, the advice of any in whom the world, or carnal affections, or interests, or ungodly lusts, have a visible dominion. But herein, call for the counsel of such, whose known sincerity, piety and prudence, do commend them as men fit to be consulted in affairs that concern the conscience, whether they be churchmen, or others. (Specially, if there be any such within that congregation whereof he to be presented is to have the charge.) For, from such, you may expect the soundest and most religious advice. And by following

this method both with God and man, I am sure you shall discharge yourselves so, as may probably most conduce for the advantage of the people's souls, and certainly most for the exoneration of your own conscience.

A Humble Advice to Bishops and Governors of the Church

I MAY perchance, incur the censure of presumption, for obtruding my advice upon the fathers and governors of the church; but, it may be, I have had occasion to see more of the danger of that malady which I am to represent unto them, and to hear more of the reproach they suffer upon that account, than is obvious to their notice; and therefore, if zeal excite me to offer what in my humble opinion is convenient for their curing the one, and wiping off the other, I trust I shall thereby incur no imputation of arrogancy at their hands; at least, they will look upon it but as a defect of good manners.

Right reverend fathers, the very title of your office, proclaims the church to be under your oversight; and if you should not take care to stop the conduits of corruption whereby she may be infected, it were an oversight in the worst sense. And there is no corruption whereof the conduit has more need to be strictly blocked up, than that of simony; which, if suffered to spread, produces most deplorable effects, in drawing upon the church the reproach of her enemies, the contempt of her children, and many inward diseases, to the hazard of many souls. Ah! How has the climbing up of some, by pecuniary passages into the church, opened the mouths of adversaries, to reproach us as thieves

and robbers, who enter not in by the door, nor have any call from God; and as hirelings, who serve for bought benefices? Ah! What a scandal does it breed to many Christians? And, how does it render the holy calling contemptible generally among the vulgar, and even among those who otherwise have thoughts of veneration for it, when they see it prostitute to merchandise, and made a matter of buying and selling? I am sure, among all the causes of the contempt of the clergy, there is nothing that exposes them more to contempt, than this, to see them turn so ignominious peddlers, as to make merchandise of spiritual commodities. And what evil consequences may their ministry produce, who enter upon it by such means, may be easily conjectured, if it be considered, that it holds no less true in the church than in the commonwealth, that *Imperium qui malis artibus acquisivit, vix unquam bonis artibus exercuit.* (He that comes to power by evil means, scarce does he ever exercise the same honestly; but makes as small conscience in his administration, as he made in his acquisition.)

So that the souls of people are in no small danger of being obnoxious to all these evils which may befall them, by the corrupt ministry of those whose disposition leads them, when they are in, to serve the same master by whose help they entered. Now you, dear fathers, are they, to whose care it belongs to remedy these evils. It is your pastoral rod that must drive Simon Magus to the doors, and shut them against him; that so the church may enjoy a pure ministry, the flock may be delivered from danger, the pastors from reproach and contempt, and you yourselves from those scandals which the

adversaries of your government are ready to cast upon you, as connivers at all corruption. And, what to this effect is requisite to be done, in confidence of your charitable indulgence, I humbly give my opinion and thoughts.

First, much deliberation and circumspection is requisite, in the granting of license to young men to step out to preach the gospel. For, since the apostle has given warning, to lay hands suddenly on no man;[188] this being the first step in order to imposition of hands, and an act which puts them in some capacity for ordination, is not to be done suddenly either: For, we find by experience, that as soon as youths are licensed to step up in a pulpit, it is, for the most part, their next work, immediately to lay themselves out for a charge in the ministry. And, if they be either of covetous, or ambitious inclinations, they cannot have patience to wait upon the occasion of a fair call, but being spurred forward by the hot desires either of lucre, or preferment; if they find out a covetous patron, they presently join with him in a simoniacal bargain. And there being such a multitude of these young preachers, they so throng one another, that commonly the more modest, and more worthy, are thrust beside the door, by those, who, resolving to make up what is wanting in their worth, by the diligence of their endeavors, do more actively bestir themselves, and set their friends awork, by all imaginable means of money and bribery, to attain their end. For preventing whereof, it may with good reason be supposed, that license for preaching should be granted to none, but upon serious and mature deliberation, and after

[188] 1 Tim 5:22.

a circumspect and diligent search and enquiry into their qualifications, not only of literature, but of their inclinations and dispositions, of their humility, sobriety, prudence, and piety in their conversation. And then, there would be no such multitude, nor such jostling for places.

Secondly, another mean for the remedying of this evil, is, to revive somewhat of the ancient discipline of the church against it, and to inflict upon those whom you shall find guilty of this sin of simony, either *in conatu, aut effectu,* (in endeavor, or in deed,) censures proportionable to their guilt. This rod of ecclesiastical censure, is that scourge which your Lord and Master has put into your hands, whose example should stir up your zeal, therewith to drive the buyers and sellers out of the temple. Your severity against the guilty, will not only prove an awful curb to restrain others from venturing upon that sin; but will also create an abhorrency of it, in those who before harbored lighter sentiments thereof; and will proclaim your own innocency, and holy fervor, for purging of the church, to the silencing of those who reproach you. But, if you prove lukewarm in this affair, then consider what Gregory the Great says, (as I have told before,) *Participem se reddit alienae Simoniae, quisquis contra Simoniacam Haeresin, pro officii sui loco, vehementer non exarserit.* (He renders himself partaker of another man's simony, whosoever, according to his place and calling, is not vehemently zealous against it.)[189]

Or, if you do not inflict a censure proportionable to the crime, you not only thereby draw upon yourselves a suspi-

[189] Apud Gratian. Caus. 1. Qu. 1. Can. Quisquis per pecuniam.

cion, that you have not a just sense of the heinousness thereof, but you also encourage others to adventure upon it with the greater confidence: For, *ubi leves poenae, ibi gravia scelera;* (great vices spread the more when they are lightly punished.) I shall not say, how the church of old would have censured those whom they had found, though but by their endeavors, guilty of this sin, in declaring them altogether incapable of the priesthood; but I'm sure, for such transgressors, there should be appointed some considerable time of penance, for their own humiliation, and for terror to others, ere ever again they be rendered capable of that sacred office.

Thirdly, when any man addresses himself to you clothed with a presentation, it were fit you should seek to be informed, by what means he came by it; and if you find any probable ground for suspicion of simony, that you suspend your procedure till it be cleared. And so much the rather, if he be a person betwixt whose parts and the charge to which he is presented, there is a great disproportion. For, that may give just ground of jealousy, that all is not sound. For, though it be the patron's right to give him a title, yet it is yours to look to the purity of his entry, and to be judges of his fitness for the charge; wherein, if you find not satisfaction, you should be more loath to lay your hands upon his head, than to lay them upon thorns.

I know, that in such cases, you may readily have in your prospect many inconveniences, and dangerous consequences, which this may draw upon you, flowing from the displeasure of patrons, or of such great persons as may be interested; at whose hands you may fear much trouble which

they may breed you, together with the loss of their favor, and the worst effects which their passionate resentments can threaten. But, may I not beseech you to turn away your eyes from what may follow upon your doing, and to fix them upon what is your duty to do? For, he who reckons the sequels before his duty, will make his conscience truckle to his fears. And as Cyprian says, *Actum est de Episcopatus vigore, & de Ecclesiae gubernandae sublimi ac Divina potestate, — si ad hoc ventum est, ut perditorum minas, atque insidias pertimescamus.* (There's an end of episcopal authority, and the sublime and divine power of governing the church, if it be come to this pass, that we fear the threats of evil men, and the snares they may lay for us.)[190]

But, I hope, the fears of these things from men, will neither move you, to shrink from your duty, nor to comply with them in sin; since you know, that your Lord and Master has so often warned you, not to fear men;[191] and, that you will find much more comfort and quiet in your conscience, when to please God, you displease man; than, when by gratifying of man, you displease God. And, there is nothing will discourage simoniacal designs more, than when men see you careful to countermine them, and boldly to oppose them.

Fourthly, it were most necessary, that you should revive somewhat of the ancient discipline, against simoniacal patrons. You know, the ancient canons did smite with anathema, lay-persons, who transacted in such execrable bargains. And truly, there is nothing could give simony a more mortal

[190] Epist. 55. Ad Cornel.

[191] Jer 1:8. Ezek 2:6. Matt 10:28, etc.

wound, than to bring under your censures the sellers, as well as the buyers of spiritual offices, and to exercise the spiritual weapons of the church equally against both.

But finally, I should wish, that your zeal, and care to strengthen your own hands, for the purging of this sin out of the church, would move you by an unanimous and joint address to our sovereign, to petition his majesty, to give strength to your endeavors by his authority, in making such laws, as might not only oblige patrons, as well as the persons presented, to purge themselves of simony before their presentations be accepted; but as might also make them liable to such civil sanctions (if found guilty,) as have sometimes been imposed by the laws of other religious and pious princes. And I am confident, such an address would not only be acceptable, but would have a good effect.

But now I shall say no more; and if any will condemn me for having said too much, I hope he will justify me, for whom I can never say enough; and who knows, that all I have said, has been from a sincere heart, and zealous design for the purity of his church, and glory of his blessed name; whose glory I desire may be the end of all my labors.

FINIS.

Appendix

Abbreviations and Reference Guide

The footnotes in this work follow the scholarly conventions of the early eighteenth century, citing sources by abbreviated titles and location markers that were familiar to educated readers of the time. The following guide is provided for the modern reader's reference. Scripture references follow standard English Bible abbreviations and are not listed here.

Latin Terms

22ae. *Secunda Secundae* — the "Second Part of the Second Part" of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*; written as II-II in modern citations.

Advers. *Adversus* — "Against."

Apud Latin for "found in" or "cited by."

Art. *Articulus* — Article; a subdivision within a formal theological question.

Can. *Canon* — a rule or decree of a church council.

Cap. *Caput* — Chapter.

Caus. *Causa* — Cause or Case; a section division in Gratian's *Decretum.*

Decret. / Decretal. *Decretales* — Decretals; authoritative papal rulings compiled into canon law.

Dist. *Distinctio* — Distinction; a division in Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and the commentaries written on it.

Epist. *Epistola* — Letter.

Evang. *Evangelium* / *Evangelia* — Gospel or Gospels.

Homil. *Homilia* — Homily.

Ibid. *Ibidem* — "in the same place"; refers to the immediately preceding source.

Lib. *Liber* — Book.

Loco sup. cit. *Loco supra citato* — "in the place cited above."

Qu. / qu. *Quaestio* — Question; a formal theological question in scholastic method.

Sent. *Sententiae* — the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (see below).

Ver. *Versus* — Verse; refers to a verse within the scripture passage most recently cited, rather than citing a new passage.

Authors and Works

Thom. 22ae. qu. [N]. Art. [N]. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), *Summa Theologiae*, Part II-II (*Secunda Secundae*), Question [N], Article [N]. The definitive work of medieval Catholic theology, organized into questions and articles.

Bonavent. in lib. 4. Sent. Dist. [N]. Art. [N]. qu. [N]. Bonaventure (1221–1274), *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Book 4, Distinction [N], Article [N], Question [N].

Lib. 4. Senten. Dist. [N]. Peter Lombard (c. 1096–1160), *Sentences* (*Sententiarum libri quatuor*), Book 4, Distinction [N]. The standard theological textbook of medieval universities. Aquinas, Bonaventure, and nearly every major scholastic theologian wrote commentaries on it, organized around the same Distinctions.

Durand. Lib. 4. Dist. [N]. qu. [N]. / Lib. 4. Dist. [N]. qu. [N]. Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (c. 1275–1334), *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Book 4, Distinction [N], Question [N].

Bernard. Compost. / Bernar. Compostel. Bernard of Compostella (13th century), *Commentary on the Decretals of Gregory IX*. Cited with a title and chapter, e.g., *De Simonia. cap. 1* (On Simony, chapter 1).

Decret. Greg. 9. / Decretal. Gregor. 9. *Decretals of Gregory IX* (also called the *Liber Extra*, 1234) — the foundational collection of papal rulings in medieval canon law, compiled by Raymond of Peñafort at the order of Pope Gregory IX. It is divided into titled sections; those appearing in this work include: *De Simonia* (On Simony), *De rerum permutatione* (On the Exchange of Things), and *De Jure Patronatus* (On the Right of Patronage).

Apud Gratian. Caus. [N]. Qu. [N]. Can. [title] Gratian (12th century), *Decretum* (*Concordia Discordantium Canonum* — Harmony of Conflicting Canons, c. 1140) — the foundational text of medieval canon law. *Caus.* = Causa (a numbered case), *Qu.* = Question, *Can.* = the opening word or phrase of the canon cited.

Super Mattheum Homilia [N]. John Chrysostom (c. 349–407), *Homilies on Matthew* (*In Matthaeum*), Homily [N].

In Romans 1 John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans*, Homily 1.

In Act 8 Nicolaus de Lyra (c. 1270–1349), *Postilla litteralis super totam Bibliam* — a verse-by-verse commentary on the entire Bible. "In Act 8" refers to his commentary on Acts, chapter 8.

Greg. 7. Lib. [N]. Epist. [N]. Pope Gregory VII (c. 1015–1085), *Registrum* (his collected letters), Book [N], Letter [N].

Homil. [N]. in Evang. Gregory the Great (c. 540–604), *Homilies on the Gospels* (*Homiliae in Evangelia*), Homily [N].

Pastor. Part. [N]. Cap. [N]. Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule* (*Regula Pastoralis*), Part [N], Chapter [N]. A foundational guide to the duties and character of a bishop or pastor.

Lib. De past. cap. [N]. Augustine of Hippo (354–430), *On the Pastors* (*De Pastoribus*), Chapter [N].

Advers. Jovin. Lib. [N]. Jerome (c. 345–420), *Against Jovinian* (*Adversus Jovinianum*), Book [N].

Lib. De Dignit. Sacerdot. Cap. [N]. Attributed to Ambrose of Milan (c. 340–397), *On the Dignity of the Priesthood* (*De Dignitate Sacerdotali*), Chapter [N].

Concil. Tolet. 4. Can. [N]. Fourth Council of Toledo (633 AD), Canon [N]. A Spanish church council notable for its canons on clerical discipline and the proper qualifications for ordination.

Append. Concil. Lateran. 3. Appendix to the Third Lateran Council (1179 AD), an ecumenical council held in Rome under Pope Alexander III.

Can. [N]. Lib. 1. cap. [N]. (Second Aurelian Council) Second Council of Orléans (533 AD). Orléans was known in Latin as *Aurelia*, hence "Aurelian Council."

Epist. ad Johan. 22. in Concil. Tom. [N]. Part. [N]. Letter of Athalaric, Gothic king of Italy (d. 534), to Pope John II (533), confirming the Senate's decree against simony (preserved in Cassiodorus, *Variae* 9.15), cited from a published collection of council documents (*Conciliorum collectio*), Volume [N], Part [N].

Epist. [N]. Ad [Name]. Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200–258), *Letters* (*Epistolae*), Letter [N], addressed to [Name].

Cyprian was an influential early bishop and martyr whose letters deal extensively with church discipline and authority.

De Eccles. Hier. Cap. [N]. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (c. late 5th–early 6th century), *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (*De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*), Chapter [N]. The work is attributed in the text to "Dionysius Areopagita," though the author acknowledges uncertainty ("or whosoever else is the author"). It is now recognized as the work of an anonymous Syrian writer writing in the Neoplatonist tradition.