

Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical

Wulfstan the Homilist

Imperial · Early Medieval · Treatise

STROMATA 31

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INTRODUCTION

Composed in the early eleventh century by the Archbishop of York who also drafted law codes for Æthelred and Cnut, these chapters set out the reciprocal duties binding king, bishop, noble, and commoner under God. Wulfstan wrote with the authority of a man who had stood at the drafting table of English law itself, and the text accordingly blurs the line between homily and statute, sermon and constitutional charter. It stands among the earliest sustained attempts in the vernacular to articulate a Christian social order, a tradition that would echo through medieval mirrors-for-princes and into later Protestant theories of magistracy. Expect prescriptive, cadenced prose meant to be heard and heeded, not debated.

Chapter 1. Of the Heavenly King.

In the name of the Lord. There is one eternal King, Ruler and Maker of all creatures. He is rightfully King, and Glory of Kings, and of all kings best, who ever were, or shall be. To him be ever praise and glory, and eternal majesty, for evermore. Amen.

Chapter 2. Of an Earthly King.

It is the duty of a Christian king, in a Christian nation, to be, as it is right, the people's comfort, and a righteous shepherd over a Christian flocks And it is his duty, with all his power, to upraise Christianity, and everywhere further and protect God's church; and establish peace among, and reconcile all Christian people with just law, as he most diligently may, and in everything love righteousness, before God and before the world; because he shall thereby chiefly prosper himself, and his subjects also, because he loves justice, before God and before the world. And it is his duty earnestly to support those who desire right, and ever severely to punish those who desire perverseness. He shall evil-doing men vigorously chastise with secular punishment, and he shall robbers, and plunderers, and public spoilers, hate and suppress, and all God's foes sternly withstand; and rightly he shall be both mild and severe, mild to the good, and stern to the evil. That is a king's prerogative, and a kingly practice, and that in a nation shall be most effective. Lo! Through what shall peace and support come to God's servants and to God's poor, save through Christ, and through a Christian king? Through the king's wisdom, the people

become happy, well-conditioned, and victorious, and therefore shall a wise king magnify and honour Christianity and kingship, and he shall ever hinder and abhor heathenism. He shall very diligently listen to book-precepts, and zealously hold God's commandments, and frequently meditate wisdom with the 'witan,' (privy council) if he will rightly obey God. And if any one be so violent, anywhere in the nation, that he will observe no law, so as he ought, but corrupts God's law, or obstructs the people's law, then be it announced to the king, if it be needful, and let him then forthwith decree respecting the 'bot,' and strenuously compel him to that which is his duty, even forcibly, if he otherwise cannot; and let him do as it behoves him, let him purify his people before God and before the world, if he will merit God's mercy.

Chapter 3. Of a Kingdom

Eight are the columns which firmly bear up a lawful kingdom: truth, magnanimity, liberality, steadfastness, formidableness, promotion [of the good], lightness [of taxation], righteousness [of judgment]; and seven things are befitting a righteous king: first, that he have very great awe of God, and secondly, that he ever love righteousness, and thirdly, that he be humble before God, and fourthly, that he be rigid towards evil, and fifthly, that he comfort and feed God's, poor, and sixthly, that he further and protect God's church, and seventhly, that, towards friends and towards strangers, he be guided alike to just judgment.

Chapter 4. Of a Throne

Every lawful throne, which stands perfectly erect, stands on three pillars: one is 'oratores,' and the second is 'laboratores,' and the third is 'bellatores.' Oratores are supplicants, whose duty is to serve God, and earnestly intercede, both day and night, for all the nation. Laboratores are workmen, who are to provide that by which all the people shall live. Bellatores are warriors, who are to defend the country martially with weapons. On these three pillars ought every throne rightfully to stand, in a Christian nation; and if either of them become weak, forthwith the throne will totter; and if either of them break, then will the throne fall down, and that is altogether to the nation's detriment; but let them be diligently fixed, and strengthened, and confirmed with the wise law of God, and just secular law, that will be to the lasting advantage of the nation: and true it is what I say, if Christianity be weakened, the kingdom will forthwith totter; and if bad laws be set up anywhere in the nation, or vicious habits be anywhere too much loved, that will be all to the nation's detriment: but let be done as it is requisite, let unrighteousness be suppressed, and God's righteousness upraised; that may be beneficial before God, and before the world. Amen."

Chapter 5. Of the Chief 'Witan'

Kings and bishops, 'eorls' and 'heretogs,' reeves and judges, doctors and lawyers it rightly befits, before God and before the world, that they be of one mind, and love God's righteousness. And bishops are heralds, and teachers of God's law, and their duty is to preach [righteousness], and forbid unrighteousness, and he who disdains to listen to them, let that be in common with him and God himself. And if

bishops neglect to correct sins and forbid unrighteousness, and make not known God's righteousness, but murmur with their throats, where they ought to cry out, woe to them for that silence! Of them spake the prophet, and thus angrily said: 'Haec dicit Dominus: Si non adnuntiaveris iniquo iniquitatem suam, sanguinem ejus de manu tua requiram.' 'If thou,' said our Lord, 'wilt not correct the sins of the sinful, and forbid unrighteousness, and make known to the wicked his wicked deeds, thou shalt bitterly pay for that soul.' this may be a heart-care to every bishop; let him bethink himself earnestly, according as he will. And he who will not properly hear God's preachers, nor attend to divine doctrine as he should; he shall hear foes, if he will not friends; because he is a contemner of God, who contemns God's preachers; as Christ himself, in his Gospel, manifestly said, when he thus spake: 'Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit.' He said: 'He who heareth you, heareth me; and he who despiseth you, despiseth me.' Alas! heavy is the burden, which God's herald must bear, if he will not strenuously forbid unrighteousness; because though he himself do good, and another man does amiss, that shall injure him, if he will not correct [him]; and though God's herald do amiss, let not a man look to that, but mind his doctrine, if he teach what is good, so as Christ taught that a man should do, when he, in his Gospel, manifestly thus spake: 'Quae hi dicunt facite, quas autem faciunt, facere nolite.' He said: 'Follow their doctrines, but not their sins.' No man ought ever, on account of the bishop's sins, to disregard himself, but let him follow his doctrines, if he teach well. And lo! beloved men, do as I enjoin, without anger; listen to what I say. I know very well myself to be wicked in word and deed, all too much; nevertheless I dare not, through fear of God, be altogether silent regarding many of those things which injure this people.

Chapter 6. Of Bishops

Bishops shall follow their books and prayers, and daily and nightly, oft and frequently call to Christ, and earnestly intercede for all Christian people; and they shall learn, and rightly teach, and diligently inquire regarding the people's deeds; and they shall preach and earnestly give example, for the spiritual need of a Christian nation; and they shall not willingly consent to any unrighteousness, but earnestly support all righteousness; they shall have the fear of God in mind, and not be too slothful, for fear of the world; but let them ever earnestly preach God's righteousness, and forbid unrighteousness; observe it who will; because weak will the shepherd be found for the flock, who will not defend, at least with his cry, the flock which he has to tend, unless he otherwise may, if any public robber there begin to rob. There is none so evil a robber as is the devil himself; he is always [busied] about that one thing — how he may rob most among men's souls: therefore should the shepherds be very watchful, and diligently calling, who have to shield the people against this public robber. These are bishops and mass-priests, who have to protect and secure the godly flock with wise instructions, that the ferocious were-wolf do not too widely devastate, nor bite too many of the spiritual flock: and he who scorns to listen to them, be that between him and God himself. Alas! Many are there nevertheless, of those who heed but little, and care little for precepts of books, or instructions of bishops, and also hold lightly of blessings or curses, and understand not, as they ought, what Christ in his Gospel manifestly said, when he thus spake: 'Quis vos audit,' &c. and likewise: 'Quodcunque ligaveritis,' &c. and likewise: 'Quorum remiseritis peccata remittuntur eis,' &c. Alibi etiam scriptum est: 'Quodcunque benedixeritis,' &c. Et psalmista terribiliter loquitur, dicens: 'Qui noluit benedictionem, prolongabitur ab eo.' Such is to be borne in mind, and God's

anger ever to be guarded against Now we also earnestly enjoin every man to follow God's precepts, and his laws; then will he earn for himself eternal joy.

Chapter 7. Likewise

To a bishop belongs every direction, both in divine and worldly things. He shall, in the first place, inform men in orders, so that each of them may know what properly it behoves him to do, and also what they have to enjoin to secular men. He shall ever be [busied] about reconciliation and peace, as he best may. He shall zealously appease strifes and effect peace, with those temporal judges who love right. He shall in accusations direct the Mad,' so that no man may wrong another, either in oath or in ordeal. He shall not consent to any injustice, or wrong measure, or false weight; but it is fitting, that every legal right, (both 'birth-right' and 'land-right,') go by his counsel, and with his witness; and let every burg-measure, and every balance for weighing, be, by his direction and furthering, very exact; lest any man should wrong another, and thereby altogether too greatly sin./ He shall always shield Christian men against every of those things which are sinful ; and there- fore he shall apply himself the more vigorously to everything, that he may the more readily know how the flock fares, which he has to tend from God's hand ; that the devil may not too greatly ravage therein, nor too much of his falsehood sow among them. Never will the people's course be well directed, nor well assured with regard to God, in that country, where wrongful gain and most falsehood are loved; therefore should a friend of God suppress every unrighteousness, and exalt righteousness, and never consent that men, through falsehood, and through wrongful gain, too greatly foredo themselves before the righteous God, who shuns every unrighteousness. It behoves all Christian men to love righteousness, and shun un- righteousness ; and especially men in orders should ever exalt righteousness, and suppress unrighteousness; therefore should bishops, with temporal judges, direct judgments so, that they never permit, if it be in their power, that any injustice spring up there. And on priests also it is incumbent, in their shrift-districts, that they diligently support every right, and never permit, if they can ameliorate it, that any Christian man too greatly injure another; nor the powerful the weak, nor the higher the lower, nor the shire man those under him, nor the 'hlaford' his men, not even his thralls. By the confessor's direction, and by his own measure, it is justly fitting that the thralls work for their 'hlaforde' over all the district in which he shrives. And it is right that there be not any measuring rod longer than another, but all regulated by the confessor's measure; and let every measure in his shrift-district, and every weight be, by his direction, very rightly regulated: and if there be any dispute, let the bishop arbitrate. It is every 'hlaford's' own advantage, to protect his thralls as he best may, because they and those that are free are equally dear to God, and he bought us all with equal value. We are all God's own thralls, and so he will judge us as we here judge those over whom we have judgment on earth: it therefore behoves us to protect those who are to obey us; then may we look for the greater protection at God's own judgment.

Chapter 8. Likewise

A bishop's daily work. — That is rightly, his prayers first, and then his book-work, reading or writing, teaching or learning; and his church hours at the right time, always according to the things thereto befitting; and washing the feet of the poor; and his alms-dealing; and the direction of works, where it may be needful. Good handicrafts are also befitting him, that crafts may be cultivated in his family, at least that no one too idle may dwell there. And it also well befits him, that at the 'gemot' he oft and frequently promulgate divine lore among the people with whom he then is.

Chapter 9. Likewise

Wisdom and prudence are ever befitting bishops, and they have estimable ways who follow them; and that they also know some separate craft. Nothing useless ever befits bishops neither extravagance nor folly, nor too much drinking, nor childishness in speech, nor vain scurrility in any wise, neither at home, nor on a journey, nor in any place; but wisdom and prudence befit their order, and sobriety befits those who follow them.

Chapter 10. Of the Synod

It is incumbent on bishops in the synod, first of all to consider about unanimity and true concord among themselves, and how they may, before all things, exalt Christianity and most effectually suppress heathenism. And let every bishop have the book of canons at the synod. It is greatly needful to bishops, before God and before the world, that they be all strictly unanimous, and all desire one thing; and if any man do wrong to one, let all see it compensated. It is the duty of bishops to warn each other, if one hear anything of another, or know anything himself; and let each defend other behind his back; and no one conceal from another what it behoves him to know, but let each honour other by word and deed, and be, as it is their duty, ‘quasi cor unum et anima una.’

It is incumbent on bishops, that venerable ‘witan’ always travel with them, and dwell with them, at least of the priest-hood; that they may consult with them, before God and before the world, and who may be their counsellors at every time, betide whatever betide them.

It is incumbent on bishops, that there be always good instruction in their families, and, be they where they may, let them be ever [engaged] on wisdom, and let alone every triviality unworthy of them.

It is incumbent on bishops, not to be too prone to jesting, nor to care too much for hounds and hawks, nor worldly pomp nor vain pride.

It is incumbent on bishops, not to be too eager for money at ordination, nor at consecration, nor at penance, nor in any wise to get wealth unjustly.

It is incumbent on bishops, if any one offend another, that he be patient until the arbitration of their associates, unless they can settle between themselves; and let them not refer to laymen, nor disgrace themselves.

It is incumbent on bishops, if aught greatly afflict any one, for which he cannot obtain ‘bot,’ that he make it known to his associates, and that they be then all diligent about the ‘bot,’ and cease not before they have obtained it.

It is incumbent on bishops, never to lay a curse upon any man, unless they are compelled by necessity; but if any one do it by compulsion, for enormous deeds, and the party will not yet yield to right, then let it be announced to all his associates, and then let them all lay on the same, and announce it to him; let him afterwards submit, and the more deeply make ‘bot,’ if he reckon of God's mercy and blessing.

It is incumbent on bishops, that they both rightly direct their own ways, and admonish to right men of every order.

It is incumbent on bishops patiently to endure what they themselves cannot amend, until it shall have been announced to the king; and let him then get amends for the offence against God, where the bishop cannot; if he will rightly execute God's will, and righteously exalt his own kingship.

Chapter 11. Of 'Eorls'

'Eorls,' and 'heretogs,' and these secular judges, and likewise reeves, have need to love justice, before God and before the world, and nowhere, through unjust judgment, for money or for friendship, neglect their wisdom, so that they turn injustice to justice, or adjudge unjust judgment to the injury of the poor; but it is their duty, above all other things, to honour and defend the church, and gladden widows and step-children, and help the poor, and protect slaves, if they will rightly execute God's will; and thieves and public depredators they shall hate, and spoilers and robbers they shall condemn, unless they desist; and they shall ever rigidly shun injustice; for true it is what I say, believe it who will: woe to him who practises wrong too long; unless he desist, verily he shall traverse the dim and dark abyss of hell, of help deprived: but too few are there of those who that understand, as a man ought, but may God amend it; and let every friend do as is needful, let him diligently take heed, and guard himself, so that he anger not God too greatly, but propitiate his Lord with righteous deed.

Chapter 12. Of Reeves

It is right that reeves zealously provide, and always rightfully gain for their lords: but now it has been altogether too much the case, since Edgar ended, so as God willed it, that there are more robbers than righteous; and it is a grievous thing, that those are robbers who should be guardians of a Christian people. They rob the poor without any blame, and at another time devastate the flock that they ought to keep, and with evil pretexts defraud poor men, and set up unjust laws, in every wise to the injury of the poor; and oft and frequently strip widows. But whom those men were chosen wisely in the nation, as guardians of the people, who would not, for worldly shame, nor durst, for fear of God, obtain anything by fraud, or make gain unjustly, but ever gained with justice: and since that it has been sought, by means of those above all, who knew how, most expressively to cheat and deceive, and with falsehoods to injure poor men, and most speedily to get money from the innocent since then God has been exceedingly much angered, oft and frequently; and woe to him, for his money, who has gained most of it by injustice, unless he desist, and the more deeply atone, before God, and before the world.

Chapter 13. Of Abbots

It is right that abbots, and especially abbesses, constantly dwell closely in their minsters, and ever zealously take care of their flocks, and always set them a good example and rightly preach, and never about worldly cares, or vain pride either care too much or altogether too frequently but of oftenest busy themselves with ecclesiastical needs, as befits abbots and men of monkish order.

Chapter 14. Of Monks

“It is right that monks, by day and by night, with inward heart, ever think on God, and earnestly call upon him, and, with all humility, regularly live,” and always separate themselves from worldly occupations, as they best may, and do, as is their duty, ever care how they best may propitiate God, and all that perform which they promised, when they took order; “to attend diligently to their books and prayers,” to learn and to teach, as they best may; and every pomp, and vain pride, and separate property, and useless deed, and untimely speech wholly to despise, as is befitting monks.” But it is truly an evil, as may be supposed, that some are too arrogant, and altogether too proud, and too widely erratic, and too useless, and altogether too idle in every good deed, and with regard to an evil deed, in secret profligacy, inwardly heartless, and outwardly indignant. And some are apostates, who ought, if they would, to be God's soldiers, within their minsters; such are those have cast off their shepherds (flocks?), and who continue in worldly affairs, with sins. It goeth ill altogether too widely. So greatly doth it widely become worse among men, that those men in orders, who, through fear of God, were whilom the most useful, and most laborious in divine ministry, and in bookcraft, are now almost everywhere the most useless, and never labour strenuously on any thing needful before God or before the world; but do all for lust and for ease, and love gluttony, and vain pleasure, stroll and wander, and all day trifle and talk and jest, and do nothing useful. That is a hateful life that they so lead; it is also the worse, that the superiors do not amend it, nor some conduct themselves so well as they should; but it is our duty to amend it, as we most diligently may, and to be unanimous for the common need, before God and before the world.

Chapter 15. Of Mynchens (Nuns)

“It is right that mynchens behave monastically, even as we before said of monks, and not associate with secular men, nor too intimately have any separate acquaintance with them,” but ever live according to their rule, and always separate themselves from worldly occupations, as they most diligently may.

Chapter 16. Of Priests and Nuns

“It is right that priests, and equally well nuns, live according to their rule, and preserve chastity, as they desire to dwell in a minster, or command respect before the world.”

Chapter 17. Of Widows

“It is right that widows earnestly follow the example of Anna, who was in the temple day and night, zealously serving : she fasted very often, and was devoted to prayers, and with groaning mind called to Christ, and distributed alms, oft and frequently, and ever propitiated God, as much as she was able, by word and deed, and has now for reward heavenly mirth. So should a good widow obey her Lord.”

Chapter 18. Of God’s Servants

Beloved men, hear, I pray, what I wish to say, through God's grace for the need of us all, understand who can and I pray you, beloved men, do as I enjoin; listen very earnestly to what I now say. To all Christian men it is much needful, that they follow God's law, and earnestly attend to divine instruction; and to men in orders especially it is of all most needful, because it is their duty earnestly both to preach and to exemplify God's righteousness to other men. Now will we earnestly enjoin God's servants, that they carefully bethink themselves, and, through God's support, love chastity, and humbly serve God Almighty, and frequently pray for all. Christian people, and that they diligently attend to books and prayers, and earnestly preach and exemplify God's righteousness, and that they enjoin frequently, as they may most diligently, that men in orders live according to their rule, and laymen lawfully direct their lives to their own benefit And if it happen that misfortune befall the people, through an army, or famine, through plague, or mortality; through barrenness, or storm; then let them earnestly consult how amends for this may be sought from Christ, with pure fasts, and with frequenting churches, and with humble prayers, and with almsgivings. And let them be always in harmony with themselves, and very unanimous, before God and before the world, so as it is written: Quasi cor unum et animam unam habentes. And if a mass-priest rightly direct his own life, let his reverence increase; and if he do otherwise, let him earnestly make atonement.

Chapter 19. Of Priests

“It is the duty of priests, in their shrift-districts, wisely and prudently to lead and teach the spiritual flocks, which they have to keep. They shall both well preach, and give good example to other men;” and they shall, at God's judgment, both give an account of their own deeds, and altogether of the people's whom, at God's hand, they have to keep; and if they shall have done aught, they may not flinch, neither for fear, nor for love of any man, from preaching righteousness and forbidding unrighteousness. Weak

is the shepherd at the need of fold, who will not with his cry protect the flock that he has to keep, (unless he otherwise can,) if there any public robber begin to rob. There is none so evil robber as is the devil himself; he is ever [busy] about that one thing, how he, among men's souls, may most devastate. Therefore must the shepherds be very watchful, and earnestly calling, who have to shield against the public spoiler. Those are bishops and mass-priests, who shall defend and protect the spiritual flock with wise instructions. Therefore he may not flinch, if he will secure himself, neither for love nor for fear, from saying to men what is most right. Nor may he flinch either before the lowly or the powerful, because he doeth naught, if he fear or be ashamed to speak righteousness. Ill will he fare, if through his lack of energy, the flock perish, which he has to keep and himself along with it. Though any of our shepherds neglect but one sheep, we desire that he pay for it; but what, at God's awful judgment, shall then betide those shepherds, who cannot keep those spiritual flocks, that Christ bought with his own life, and which it is their duty to keep, if they can, but, through ignorance, can neither lead, nor instruct, nor heal them rightly. With what do we expect they shall then pay for them? Woe to them then, that they ever undertook what they could not keep. Lo, how can one blind man lead another? How can an unlearned judge instruct another? Woe then to them who undertake a spiritual flock, and can neither take care of themselves, nor of the flock that they should keep; and woe to those who can and will not. Alas alas, there are many of those who unrighteously desire the priesthood, as it may seem, chiefly for vain pride, and for craving after worldly gains, and know not that which they ought to know. Of whom the prophet spake, and thus said: *Wae sacerdotibus, qui comedunt peccata populi, et rel* 'Woe to the priests,' he said, 'who devour and gorge the sins of the people.' &c. Such are those who will not, or cannot, or dare not warn the people against sins, and correct sins, but desire nevertheless, their monies for tithes, and for all church-dues, and neither lead them well by examples, nor instruct them well with preachings, nor well heal them with penance nor intercede for them with prayer, but seize from men's gettings whatever they can grasp, just as greedy ravens do from the corpse, wherever they can light upon it. It is all the worse when they have it all, for they do not dispose of it as they ought, but decorate their wives with what they should the altars, and turn everything to their own worldly pomp, and to vain pride, that they should do for the honour of God, in ecclesiastical things, or for the advantage of poor men, or in the buying of war-captives, or in some things that might be for lasting benefit both to themselves and also to those who give them their substance for the favour of God. It is therefore very needful, that he who hath ere done amiss, henceforth make amends diligently; because, understand who can, much it is and great that the priest has to do for the people's need, if he will justly propitiate his Lord.

Much is the supplication, and great is the hallowing, which sendeth away devils and putteth them to flight, as often as baptism is performed or housel hallowed: and holy angels hover there around, and protect the deeds, and, through God's powers, support the priests, as often as they rightly minister to Christ; and so they always do, as often as they earnestly, with inward heart, call to Christ, and fervently intercede for behoof of the people; and, therefore for fear of God, rank is discretely to be acknowledged in holy orders.

O beloved, solemnly are we commanded, that we should earnestly admonish and teach, that every man incline to God, and turn from sins. The saying is very terrible that God spake, through the prophet, con-

cerning those who should preach righteousness to God's people; those are bishops and mass-priests; He spake concerning them: 'Clama necesse est quasi tuba,' et rt. 'Cry aloud, and raise up thy voice as loud as a trumpet, and announce to my people, that they turn from sins:' but if thou do not that, but silently neglect it, and will not announce to the people what is needful to them, then shalt thou, on doomsday, answer for all those souls which perish, because they have not the instruction, and the admonition which they need.' This saying may be very monitory to all those who are appointed for the purpose of preaching righteousness to God's people; and people have also much need that they be mindful of the saying which is afterwards uttered. He the prophet, saith afterwards: 'If thou preach righteousness to the people, and thou cannot incline them to righteousness, then thou, at least, securest thine own soul; and he who perpetrates wrong, and will not desist, shall have therefore eternal punishment' That is, that they shall then go to hell, with soul and with body, and with the devil dwell in hell torments. Woe to those who there shall dwell in torments, better were it for him that he had never become a man in the world, than that he became one. There is not the man living who can recount all the miseries which shall await him, who falleth wholly into those torments; and it is altogether the worse that no end thereof cometh ever to all eternity.

Chapter 20. To Priests

O beloved, understand yourselves, and love and honour God Almighty above all other things, and zealously keep his commandments. And love each other righteously, and be a help to each other, before God, and before the world. Live hence-forth a regular life, attend your churches, and observe your canonical hours always at the appointed time. Instruct Christian people diligently, and heal them diligently.

Chapter 21. To Priests

Teach Christian men earnestly and frequently right belief, and that they may know the distinction of their Christianity and their baptism. One faith there is in one true God, and one baptism we have, which we should righteously hold. He righteously holds his baptism, who holds God's commandments and eschews the wicked precepts of the devil; and he violates his baptism, and foredoes himself who breaks God's commandments, and follows the wicked precepts of the devil God Almighty is, nevertheless, so merciful, that he will be merciful to him who turns from sins, if be, with inward heart's repentance, turn to penance, and earnestly amend what he did unrighteously. The medicine of a sinful man is that he confess and earnestly atone, and ever cease from sin. Let us ourselves do as is much needful to us hold God's commandments, and set example, and earnestly preach to the flock that is committed to us. By zealously obeying God, we shall thereby somewhat benefit other men. How can any man benefit another, or intercede with his lord for another, if he have himself greatly offended his lord? How can we also intercede with God for other men, unless we so guard ourselves, that we do not offend him. But let us propitiate God Almighty with pure thought, and, as well in words as in works, and in all deeds, perform his will; then may we both well benefit ourselves, and all Christian men.

Beloved men, do as I, for love of God and Saint Mary, beseech you; remember me in your praying, and help me, as I much need, and be ready to me for our common need, as often as I desire to have you. It

behoves you to be ready to me both far and near, whichever I desire; and this, at least, I desire, that we henceforth, at some time every year, assemble together for our common need. Do well yourselves, and well teach those whom ye have to teach, that they earnestly do good as much as they most can; then ye well help those whom ye teach, if they are willing to follow your instructions, and, at least, render yourselves secure. God Almighty and Saint Mary help us, and support us all, that we may so guide both ourselves and those whom we have to guide, as may be for the benefit of us all. '

Chapter 22. Of Laymen

It is right that men in orders direct laymen how they shall most rightly hold their conjugal state. It is a proper life, that a bachelor continue in his state of bachelor, until he take a wife in lawful maiden matrimony; and have her afterwards, and none other, as long as she lives; but if it happen that she dies, then is it most proper, that he thenceforth remain a widower; though, by the apostle's leave, a layman may, for need, marry a second time, but the canons forbid the benedic-tions thereto, which are appointed to a first marriage; and penance is also appointed for such men to do; and it is forbidden to the priest to be, in the manner he ere was, at the marriage, when a man marries again, or to give the benediction, which belongs to a first marriage. By this it may be known that it is altogether not right that a man take a wife or a woman a husband oftener than once; and, at all events it is too frequent, if it take place a third time, and altogether sinfully done, if it take place oftener: and though a wife be allowed to laymen, yet it is necessary that they understand how she is allowed. Let not laymen at feast-tide and fast-tide have connexion through concubinage with woman, no more than men of sacred orders may at any time.

Chapter 23. Of Men in Orders

To men in orders is fitting all chastity, because it is their duty to forbid every unchastity to all other men, and of all chas- tity, if they do rightly, they ought in themselves zealously to set an example ; for it is very terrible, that they, who should preach righteousness to all Christian men, and also give a good example, are some become an example for perdition rather than for benefit : those are the adulterers who, through holy orders, have entered into an ecclesiastical marriage, and afterwards broken it. To no minister of the altar is it allowed to marry, but it is forbidden to every one; yet there are now altogether too many who commit and have committed adultery; but I pray, and, for love of God, earnestly command, that this may cease. To a layman every woman is forbidden, except his lawful wife. Men in orders are some so deceived by the devil, that they marry unrighteously, and foredo themselves by the adultery in which they continue; but I earnestly pray, that this deadly sin may henceforth carefully be abstained from. The church is a priest's spouse.

Constantine the great emperor assembled a very great synod in the city of Nice, for confirmation of the true faith. At that synod there were 308 bishops gathered from many nations, and they there published the true faith, and established then, in manifestation thereof, the mass creed, which is widely sung, and the church services they excellently directed, and many other things, regarding both God's servants, and God himself. They said there all unanimously, that it was right, if a minister of the altar, that is a bishop, or a mass-priest, or a deacon, married, that he forfeited his order for ever, and should be excommunicated, unless he should repent and the more deeply atone. Four synods were assembled on account of true faith with respect to the Holy Trinity, and Christ's humanity. The first was at Nice, and the second was afterwards at Constantinople; there were 150 bishops; the third was at Ephesus, of 200 bishops, and the fourth was at Chalcedon, of many bishops together: and they were all unanimous in all those things, which had before been established at Nice, and they all for ever forbade all marriage to the ministers of the altar. Let them now, who are to that degree daring, that they condemn God, and the decree of so many holy men as were assembled at these synods, and everywhere since, think what reward they may expect for themselves, and indeed they need not expect, but know for certain, that

they shall have an evil reward, and God's anger sternly, because they so anger God, by living all their live in filth. Ministers of the altar I beseech, that they bethink themselves, and refrain from every filth; and let those, who before this had the evil custom of decorating their women as they should the altars, refrain from this evil custom, and decorate their churches, as they best can; then would they command for themselves both divine counsel and worldly worship. A priest's wife is nothing but a snare of the devil, and he who is ensnared thereby on to his end, he will be seized first by the devil, and he also must afterwards pass into the hands of fiends, and totally perish. But let every one earnestly help himself, the while he can and may; and let every man abstain from unrighteousness, then will he be secure against eternal punishment: and also he who shall continue in good deeds on to his end, shall for that have eternal reward. Now is the truth said to you, understand yourselves as you will. May God strengthen you to your own benefit, and preserve us all. So may his will be. Amen.

Chapter 24. Of All Christian Men

It is right that all Christian men righteously hold their Christianity, and lead that life which is befitting them, according to God's law, and according to worldly conventions, and diligently order all their ways by those things which they direct, who are able wisely and prudently to direct them; and this then is firsts of counsels foremost; that every man, above all other things, love one God, and steadfastly have one belief in him who first made us all, and with a dear price afterwards bought us. And also we have need earnestly to consider, how we may always most righteously hold God's own commandments, and perform all that which we promised, when we received baptism, or those who at our baptism were our sponsors. This then is first: that which we promise when we desire baptism (that we will ever shun the devil, and diligently eschew his evil lore, and always diligently renounce all his iniquities, and eternally deny all his fellowship, and evil courses immediately after, with true faith) truly manifests that we will henceforth ever believe in one God, and constantly love him above all other things, and ever earnestly follow his instructions, and righteously hold his own commandments: and then will that baptism be as it were a pledge of all those words, and of all that promise, observe it who will. And true is what I say, angels ever thenceforth watch every man, how he performs, after his baptism, that which he ere promised, when he desired baptism. Let us therefore call to mind, oft and frequently, and earnestly perform, that which we promised, when we received baptism, as is needful to us; and let us rightly order our words and works, and diligently purify our minds, and carefully hold oath and pledge, and frequently meditate on the great judgment, to which we all shall pass, and diligently secure ourselves against the raging fire of hell-torment, and earn to ourselves the glories and joys, which God hath prepared for those, who do his will in the world.

Chapter 25. Of the Church

It is right, that Christian men zealously hold Christianity with righteousness, and Christ's church everywhere zealously honour and protect. We all have one heavenly father, and one spiritual mother; she is named Ecclesia, that is God's church; and her we should ever love and honour. And it is right, that every church be in God's 'grith,' and in all Christian people's; and that church-'grith' stand everywhere between walls, and a hallowed king's hand-'grith' equally inviolate; because every church-'grith' is

Christ's own 'grith,' and every Christian man has great need, that he show great reverence for that 'grith;' because it is necessary, for every Christian man, zealously to love and honour God's churchy and frequently and zealously to attend it, for his own benefit; and those in orders especially should there oftenest serve and minister, and earnestly intercede for all Christian people. Then have ministers of the altar constantly to consider, that they, at all events, so order their lives as is justly fitting to the church. The church is rightly the priest's spouse, and with him who is ordained to the church, no man, who reckes of God's law, *has thenceforth aught to do, unless, through capital crime, he foully forfeit it, and then shall Christ's ^scir-gerefa' be informed of it, and thereupon direct and judge as the books prescribe. And no one should ever injure a church, or wrong it, in any way; but now churches are, nevertheless, far and wide weakly 'grith'd,' and ill served, and cleanly bereft of their old rights, and within stript of all decencies; and ministers of the church are everywhere deprived of their rank and power; and woe to him who is the cause of this, though he may not think so ; because every one is certainly the foe of God himself, who is the foe of God's churches, and who impairs or injures the rights of God's churches, as it is written: *Inimicus enim Christi efficitur omnis, qui ecclesiasticas res usurpare injuste' conatur, et ret.* And awfully spake Saint Gregory concerning him, when he thus said: '*Si quis ecclesiam Christi denudaverit, vel sanctimonia violaverit, anathema sit; ad quod respondentes omnes, dixerunt Amen.*' Great is the necessity for every man, that he strenuously secure himself against these things ; and let every friend of God constantly take care, that he do not too greatly misuse the bride of Christ It is the duty of us all to love and honour one God, and zealously hold one Christianity, and with all our might renounce every heathenism.*