

apostles, and bishops, authority to invent and find out ceremonies necessary to salvation. These errors crept into the Church when the righteousness of faith was not clearly taught. Some dispute that the keeping of the Sunday was not fully, but only in a certain manner, the ordinance of God. They prescribe of holy days, how far it is lawful to work. Such manner of disputations, whatever else they be, are but snares of consciences. For although they busy themselves to modify and qualify their traditions, tempering the rigour of them with favourable declarations; yet notwithstanding as long as the opinion that they are necessary doth remain, (which must needs remain where righteousness of faith and Christian liberty are not known,) this equity and favor can never be perceived nor known. The apostles commanded to abstain from blood; who doth now observe and keep it? And yet they that do not keep it, sin not; for undoubtedly the apostles would not burden the conscience with such bondage, but they prohibited it for a time, for avoiding of slander; for the perpetual will and mind of the Gospel is to be considered in a degree. Scarcely any canons are diligently kept, and many daily go out of use, even with those who defend traditions. Neither can consciences be assisted or consulted, unless this equity is observed, that is, that we know that canons and decrees are to be kept without the opinion of necessity, and that consciences are not hurt, though traditions be forgotten and be utterly set aside. Certainly bishops might easily preserve lawful obedience, if they would not compel men to keep traditions, which cannot be kept with a good conscience. They command priests to live unmarried; they receive none unless they swear in effect that they will not teach the pure doctrine of the Gospel. Our churches do not require that bishops should repair and re-establish concord at the expense of their honour, (and yet it would become good pastors so to do,) but they only require that they would release unjust burdens which are novelties, being received contrary to the custom of the Catholic Church. We will not deny, but that in the beginning some constitutions were grounded upon reasonable and probable causes, which yet are not