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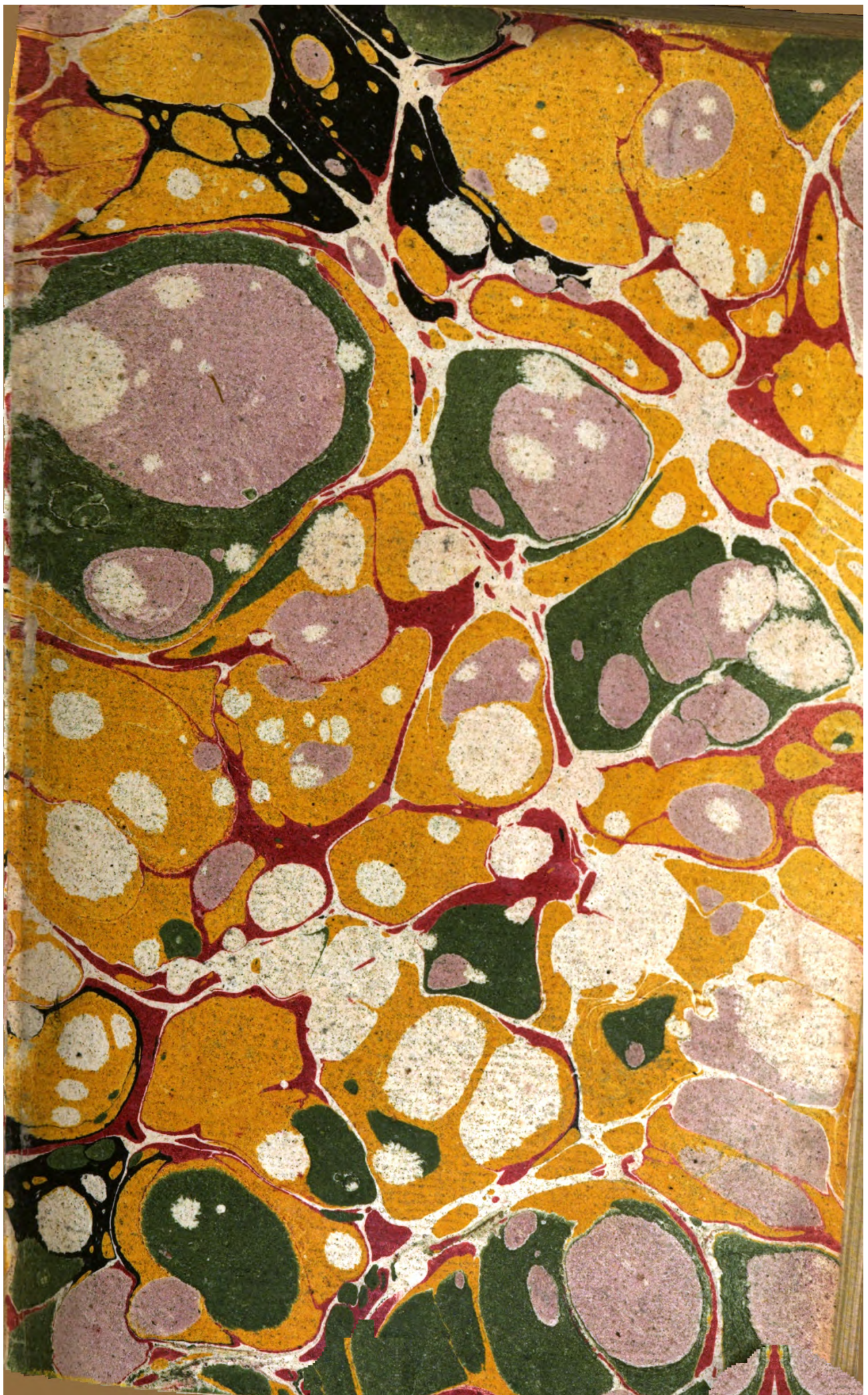
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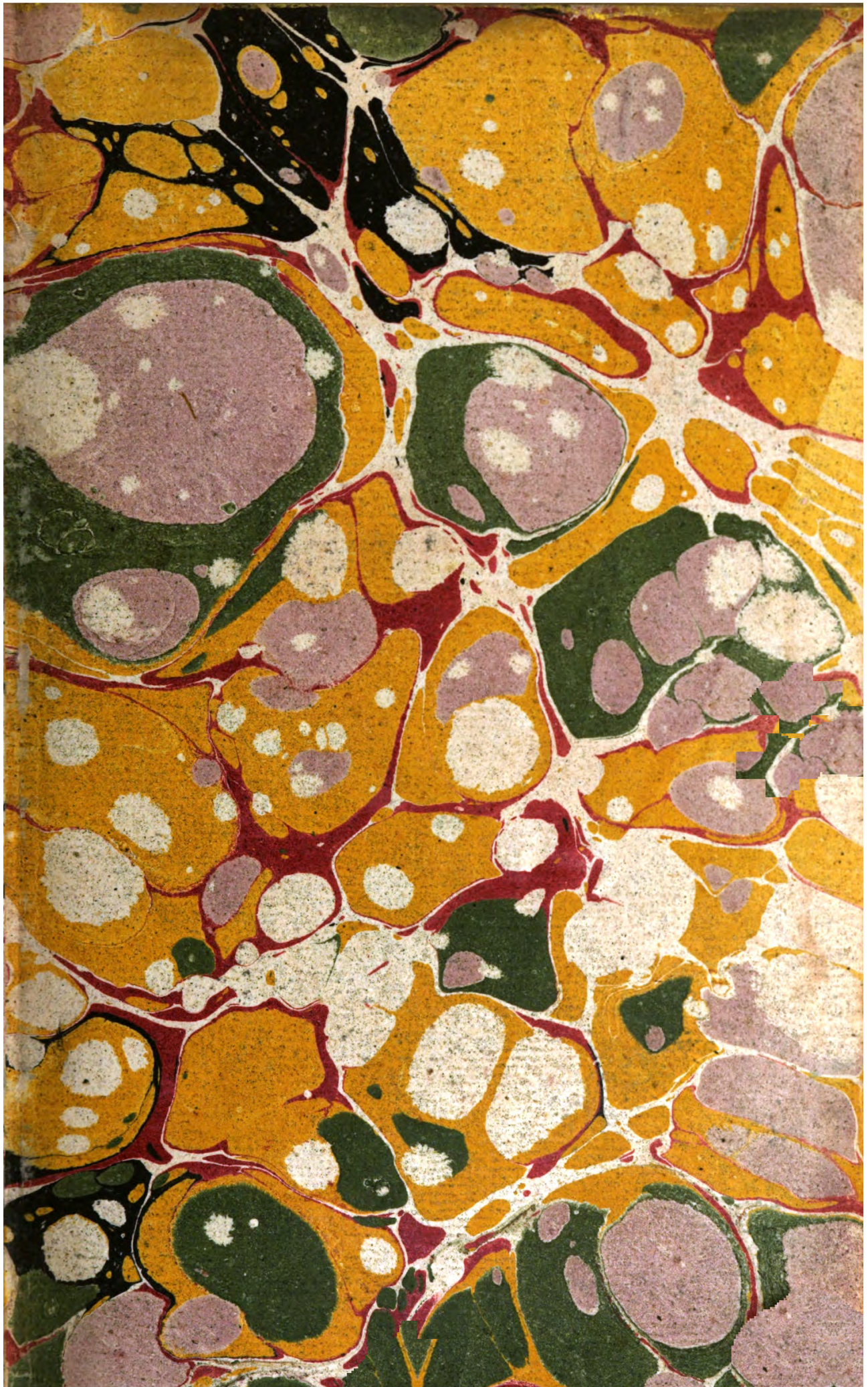




BS. 8°  
D 164.

*A Present from the Author*







BS. 8°  
D 164.

*A Present from The Author*



A  
GENERAL DEFENCE  
OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE  
REFORMATION,  
IN A LETTER

T O

The Rev. JOSEPH BERINGTON.

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BY THE REV. JOHN HAWKINS.

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*Opinionum Commenta delet dies ; Naturæ Judicia Confirmat.*  
CICERO.

*Faxit Numen ut vel æterno ego silentio inter non scribentes  
delitescam, vel semper ut virum ingenuum, veræque Philosophiæ  
studiosum decet, scribam : Veritatis unicæ indagator ; absque  
omni styli acerbitate, mitis, urbanus, candidus ; ad id quod  
indecens est adeo non pronus, ut nec movendus.—Nugarum  
denique contemptor.*  
HODY.

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W O R C E S T E R :  
PRINTED BY J. TYMBS, AT THE CROSS.

M,DCC,LXXXVIII.



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## To the R E A D E R.

**T**H E following Letter was originally designed for the inspection of that Gentleman alone to whom it is addressed; as it was my wish, although I had declined all further controversy before the public, to continue the discussion in private, with a person so well qualified to pursue it, till we had each of us produced whatever arguments we might think most likely to throw any additional light upon so interesting a subject. It was drawn up immediately after the publication of his *Reflections*, and shewn to a mutual friend, who strongly objected to this design, as no less improper than useless. From a persuasion that, by declining the contest, I should let slip one of the most favourable opportunities that were ever likely to occur, of serving the cause of truth, he greatly urged me to resume the controversy. But as no fair answer had been made to my former *Appeal*, I saw no sufficient reason to alter my first determination. However, as some of my more particular acquaintance were desirous of seeing what reply could be given to Mr. Berington's animated *Reflections*, and often pressed me to communicate the manuscript to them, I have been induced, for their satisfaction, to print off a few copies of it, to prevent the trouble and inconvenience of getting it transcribed: and in the course of the impression I have added many new observations, which I presumed would render it less undeserving of their perusal.

From the occasion on which this Letter was written, it may perhaps seem rather to relate to a personal controversy, than to contain any real investigation and defence of the Reformed Religion. But it will, I trust, be readily perceived that this suspicion is entirely groundless; and that both the intention and nature of it are really such as is expressed

## To the R E A D E R.

pressed in the title page. My reasons for printing so small a number of copies, and not exposing them to sale, are these: *First*, because I have hitherto met with no fair opponent who has been willing to rest the success of his cause on its own intrinsic merits: And *Secondly*, because I would not wish to call the attention of the *Public* upon the English Catholics, or excite any prejudice against them, at a time when they seem so well disposed to the civil establishment of this country, and are taking the most effectual means to convince the world that, whatever their speculative opinions in religious concerns may be, yet their sentiments in every respect are such as become the most faithful subjects, and peaceable members of the community.

*Barborne Lodge.*



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DEAR SIR,

WITH a mind perfectly composed, and a heart at peace with you and all mankind, I now sit down to commit to paper such observations upon your late *Address*, as occurred to me during an attentive perusal of it. From a person of your Abilities I must acknowledge that I expected rather a severe attack: but of a far different nature from that which you have judged fit to make. Such, however, as it is, I mean to review it in a spirit of friendliness and candour. Yet, as my reply is not intended for the public eye, I shall be less solicitous to check my feelings, if they should occasionally be roused beyond that pitch of calmness which I wish to preserve through life. Were I under any restraint in this respect, I should pursue the task I have undertaken, with less satisfaction to myself, and possibly, with less justice to my cause. If, therefore, there should appear in some of my remarks, a degree of earnestness and warmth, which a cool discussion of the Controversy may not seem entirely to justify, I only wish you to recollect, that I consider it as a most important subject of debate, in which you have taken many unfair advantages; and, likewise, that the impressions which the first reading of your Pamphlet occasioned, are still recent on my mind.

My chief object, in the following pages, is a fair examination of such of your *Reflections* as appear to me ill-founded or fallacious: Such, in particular, I mean, as regard the substance of the debate. With respect to your personal accusations of intolerance, and those several unpleasant charges which you have every where industriously thrown in, I shall notice them as they come before me; rather to exculpate myself, than to recriminate my accuser: For some of them are hurtful to that Character of Integrity which I have never forfeited, and which you cannot suppose me willing to relinquish without some regret.

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Whatever were your motives for engaging in this Controversy, whether to establish your own zeal for the Cause of Orthodoxy and serve your Community by depreciating *my* motives of action, or from any real conviction that I had mistated the questions in debate, I cannot see that you are justifiable in the mode of attack which you have chosen. To be treated with equity is the due of our most declared enemies: But this right you seem to have entirely overlooked. The “*Moderamen inculpatæ tutelæ*” which your Theorists require, was surely furthest from your thoughts; although the character of your neighbour ought at least to be held equally sacred as his possessions, or his person.—I only argue from the convictions of my own bosom. We certainly differ widely in some of our judgments.

In a wild-goose chase, he who leads the way must necessarily be followed through all his eccentric wanderings. This was partly my case in replying to the *Caveat* of Mr. *Pilling*; and should have claimed a certain share of indulgence, especially in those circumstances in which it was written, and for which I had, in some degree, apologized in my Preface. In reviewing your Pamphlet I have a more regular line to follow, and shall, therefore, have fewer calls to deviate from it: although it is by no means free from every unnecessary excursion.

You may most likely conclude, if ever you peruse this letter, that I still stand in need of some indulgence, both as to style and order. This is a point which I will readily give up. I have mixed too little with society, ever to write with elegance; and my education has subjected me to a variety of disadvantageous circumstances, the influence of which it has long been too late to counteract. Besides, I wish to write at ease, and rather to say true, than pretty things. You, I think, have given too much way to your imagination, in a discussion wherein, in my opinion, you should have been scrupulously afraid of imposing upon the judgment of your readers, by any deceitful ornaments of diction: and, not unfrequently, your “*wish is Father*” to your assertions. I therefore view them as a most illegitimate offspring. Burlesque and ridicule are not the proper criterions of truth or falsehood: but they are often the standard by which *the many* in society regulate their opinions.

opinions. Most men are apt to take their religious sentiments upon credit; and when they are pleased with the manner of a writer, to think that they are convinced by his arguments. But this delusion cannot be lasting, and the imposition must, sooner or later, be discovered; so that an attempt of this nature appears to me no less impolitic, than it is unchristian. Truth never is so amiable as when arrayed in her own simple garb: and though the meretricious ornaments of dress may captivate our attention for a while, and make even vice and deformity please, yet native innocence and beauty, however homely their attire, quickly re-assume their empire; and we are almost ashamed of the momentary homage which we paid to fancied excellence.

That I may leave no part of your *Reflections* without some reply, I shall follow them through every page of your performance; because I wish to meet your arguments, and not to evade them. As truth is the only object I have in view, so shall it be my only guide. Neither will I advance a single argument in which I suspect a flaw, or appeal to any fact, the reality of which I have the slightest reason to question.

PREFACE.—Your Preface is severe; and sets out in such a style, that you surely had little right to mention my “*trash and flippancy*” in the same pages. Whether your mode of writing, or mine, be most “*affected*,” or better suited to the investigation of truth, must be left to others to determine.—You tell me that you would not willingly “*add to the surfeit of the Roman Catholics of Worcester.*” Their stomachs must be truly squeamish, if they are surfeited with *one Work*, written, according to your own confession “*in the best manner*,” *one APPEAL*, and a few pages of *Remarks* which I published on occasion of so illiberal an attack upon their late Chaplain’s character, that they themselves disowned it in a public manner. This is a very ungenerous outlet! Do you really think the arguments, in favour of which you wish to prepossess your readers, deserve so gaudy an introduction?

You observe that such works as my *APPEAL* should at “*no season be permitted to pass by unnoticed.*” I am thankful for the compliment. Had it been such an effusion of obloquy, scurrility, and misrepresentation, as has since been

published against this Appeal, without any regard either to truth or decency, you, probably, would have judged a contemptuous silence its most proper answer, and have repeated with the poet,

“ I wage no War with Bedlam or the Mint.”

- But it was written with a moderation and fairness which gave your party just cause to be alarmed; and therefore you attacked it with the popular arguments of pleasantry and fiction. In this I think your *prudence*, rather than your *principles*, deserving of commendation. That there is “*sometimes*” fairness in my statement of your belief, you acknowledge. Were I sensible that it was not fair in every instance, without exception, I should be happy to retract it. As your charge is general, so likewise is my defence; and I again repeat, that I have no where reproached you with a single tenet, which you dare venture to affirm is not the tenet of your Church.

As to my *motive* for standing forth on this occasion, you “*presume*” it was to justify the step I had taken, years before, in relinquishing your communion; and that this was my “*first object*.” Presumptive evidence should always be admitted with caution. Those who are most intimately acquainted with my sentiments, and with the several occurrences of my past life, required no such apology; and those to whom I am unknown, must be very indifferent about them. My first apology was short; nor should I ever, probably, have thought of reviving the Controversy in any shape, had not circumstances pointed out to *me* the propriety of a further appeal, when I saw the Religion of my Country slandered with false reproach, and its principles so entirely mistated. You must, indeed, Sir, have been fully confident that your sprightly Reflections would be read, and that my more serious arguments were less likely to be perused, or you never could have hazarded the groundless conjecture, that it was my “*wish to aggravate*” the painful situation of the Roman Catholics in England; a charge that is confuted in every page of my performance.

If Dr. *Wharton's* LETTER might have been written in a “*less exceptionable manner*,” so also, surely, might Mr. *Pilling's*; which was much more calculated to keep alive the prejudices of the vulgar, than any thing either he, or I, had written.

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The days of *Elizabeth* were certainly stained with blood; and you seem to advert with pleasure to the supposed injustice and tyranny of her laws. On this subject, however, a "*Catholic historian*" (a) may collect materials for ever to little purpose. It is only in the colouring of his picture that he can hope to display his talents. But if truth, and fact, and candour, are his guides, you may rest assured that, after all his labours, it will prove but little to his credit.

I would not wish to recapitulate the horrors of the two reigns between which your historian would, probably, draw a very unfair parallel. But thus far, I think, appears from history: that the alterations in Religion made under *Mary*, were an act of power; and those under *Elizabeth*, a measure of authority. (b) If some of her laws were sanguinary and cruel, they may easily be accounted for by the trying circumstances in which she was placed. For had she not been under real apprehensions of being assassinated, or poisoned, the Parliament would scarce have passed an act for the security of her person. Considering the doctrines of *Sanders*, *Allen*, *Bristow*, *Parsons*, and the seminaries abroad, about deposing heretical princes; and how much the decisions of the Pope were then revered; can an impartial man be surpris'd either at her fears, or her precautions? Nor were the abettors of these strange opinions either few in number, or of low repute. "It is the common belief of Catholics," says *Bellarmino*, "that the Pope has, indirectly at least, a sovereign power over the temporals of Kings." Cardinal *Pole* was of the same opinion; and the contrary sentiment both *Baronius* and *Du Perron* assert to be heretical. "It is a doctrine," says this last-mentioned prelate,

(a) As I am frequently obliged to quote your own expressions, in order to convey my meaning in fewer words, I have every where distinguished them by the Italic character, and inverted commas. This general reference to your Letter evidently supposes that it is lying open before you, whilst you compare it with this Reply. Without this attention, many of my remarks would unavoidably appear both unconnected and misplaced.—I have, also, occasionally referred to some other of your writings; whenever any passage occurred, which I thought might either illustrate, or confirm, what you had advanced in this.

(b) Neve's Animadversions upon Phillips's Life of Cardinal Pole, page 484, 520. Ridley's Review of Ditto, page 324.

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“ which all parties in the Catholic Church have held, and the whole *French* Church, till the time of *Calvin*.” (a) He also adds elsewhere, that if the power of deposing princes, in case of heresy, is not given to the Pope, the Roman Church was not the Church of God, but the Synagogue of Satan. The contrary opinion, he affirms, is a breeder of schisms, a detestable doctrine, to oppose which he and his Brother Bishops were ready to sacrifice their lives. (b) Whether this was really a *Doctrine* of the Catholic Church, is immaterial: its being a professed *opinion* of many of the most eminent personages in it, was more than sufficient to justify the Queen’s alarms. (c) Neither could this Princess have any just suspicion that these great men, than whom few, surely, were more “ *habituated to the concerns of Religion,*” were but indifferently qualified to declare “ *what they were taught,*” and what was *then* the belief of that Church to which they had consecrated all their labours. (d)

With respect to the legitimacy of *Elizabeth’s* birth, you have given us a very peremptory decision, although, when this question was discussed, many worthy and able men were of a very different sentiment. And if, whilst the affair of *Henry’s* divorce was still undecided, any unfair means were used to influence the Universities and Theologians in his favour; the Pope and Emperor were still more active and generous. (e) Be this, however, as it may; the title of the Princess *Elizabeth* was generally acknowledged, although not “ *universally*” by the Roman Catholics, as you have asserted. Undeniable evidence might be produced to shew that this was far from being the case; since many who were executed, and whom the English Catholics still style Martyrs, refused, as well to acknowledge her for their lawful sovereign, as to reject the Pope’s arrogant decrees against her. (f) It is too late to pretend to inform us now what the opinions of these times were, when we find

(a) Jortin’s Life of Erasmus, tom. 2, page 41.

(b) Harangue au tiers Etat.

(c) Neve’s Animad. page 312, 319. Ridley’s Review, page 131, 219.

(d) Reflections, page 61, 68.

(e) Neve’s Animad. page 77. Ridley’s Review, page 35.

(f) Lord Burleigh’s “ execution for treason and not for rebellion,” Or, Bishop Gibson’s Collection of Tracts, tom. 3, page 145.

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them so clearly recorded in the several publications which were made at that very period.

I do not mean to exculpate all the conduct of *Elizabeth*. Let her, if you please, be vain, capricious, passionate: and be it granted that some “phantom plots” were possibly devised without sufficient grounds. Yet, during the ten first years of her reign, before the Roman Pontiff declared her illegitimate, and released her subjects from their oath of allegiance to her, she gave undeniable proofs of her moderation and equity. Even when repeated provocation had called forth her resentment, how much more regular, and less tyrannical, were her proceedings, than those of *Mary* under similar insults! On these subjects neither you, nor I, can have any thing new to offer. But I must observe, that the patriotic sentiments which you disclose in speaking of *James II.* should have led you to admit that many who suffered in *Elizabeth’s* reign, were justly condemned. Their coming into England to preach against the established worship, was in defiance of the laws of the realm: the violation of which, as it makes a king become a tyrant, so it also makes a subject become a rebel. (a) And the pretence of spreading the true religion of Christ will no more justify many supposed martyrs of her reign, than a like pretence would exculpate a sovereign, who, having power in his hands, should use it, in defiance of every established law, to introduce Catholicity upon the ruins of Heresy. The conduct of the Apostles in the first planting of Christianity was no precedent in their favour: As these were expressly sent to root out the superstitions of Paganism, and teach the knowledge of the true God, whilst the Lord “gave testimony unto the word by his grace, *Acts* xiv. in many signs and wonders.” But this was a special case, from which no conclusion can be drawn, without opening a door to the most destructive attempts of fanaticism. And the making to all mankind a tender of the blessings which result from the Christian Covenant, is, surely, of far other importance in the eyes of heaven, than the propagation of a few speculative tenets, unconnected with morals, and of very questionable authority.—In the situation in which *Elizabeth*

(a) State and Behaviour of English Catholics, p. 73, 1 Ed.

was, she had an undoubted right to forbid the return of any such persons into her dominions, who might be supposed, with their foreign education, to have imbibed, and to be ever ready to reduce to practice, maxims which threatened the kingdom with destruction, and would, from the prejudices of the times, have authorised every most atrocious attempt upon her own person.

You assert that, at *Elizabeth's* accession, the Catholics had it in their power to prevent her being established on the throne; a fact which you would find it no easy matter to prove. For it is the opinion of many respectable historians, that "ils eussent été accablés sous le nombre des Protestans, si leur zèle eut voulu agir". (a) The excessive rigours of the preceding reign had made men cautious and diffident of each other: but no sooner were the Queen's intentions known, than the strength of the Protestant party became apparent. Yet, admitting the probability of their success, what pretence could the Catholics have framed to justify their rebellion, when they were universally disposed to admit her title? Or with what view can you still, in the person of your Catholic historian, upbraid them with misconduct, or a pusillanimous spirit, in suffering "*the spurious offspring of Henry to mount the imperial throne of England?*" The truth is, that not only was her title to the crown generally allowed, but she was received with the applause of the far greater part of her subjects. Even the reformation in religion, which she introduced, was so far approved of, that out of near *ten thousand* beneficed clergy, not *two hundred* thought it requisite to resign their livings, or refused to accede to the Reform which she proposed: so reasonable and proper did it appear.

On every occasion you extol the loyalty of the English Catholics, with an enthusiasm that cannot fail to raise a smile upon the countenance of every reader who is even superficially acquainted with their Sentiments and history. (b)

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(a) Dictionnaire Historique. Caen. 1783.

(b) The same enthusiasm is apparent, whenever you have occasion to speak of your society. Your writers, we are told, are learned, solid, generous, and benevolent; and your people are "*honest, liberal, humane and generous—Loyal, sincere, and patriotic to a man.*" (Refl. pag 7. State and Beh. p. 138) Such general encomiums favour too much of panegyric, to be serviceable to any cause; especially as you have elsewhere done away this eulogy in the most effectual manner.

The very circumstances which you mention relative to their education, and their sense of the hardships under which they labour, must ever render them but feebly attached to any government of a different Religion from their own. And under such an influence, they can never give the same security for their allegiance that others can. Persuaded that their “*ease,*” their “*property,*” their “*life,*” is “*at the disposal of every villain;*” convinced that even death itself were preferable to the state of insecurity and debasement to which they are reduced (a); they must wish most earnestly for a sovereign of their own communion. And you do not, surely, mean to insinuate that, thus affected, they would not take an active part, were such a revolution likely to take place, and they could do it with any probable view of success. “*What man, when he either thinks himself ill used, or really is so, will not strive to gain redress*(b)? *When a prospect of relief opens, may not the wretched strive to enter*(c)—and be suspected, without injustice, “*of an habitual inclination to shake off the galling chain, whenever occasion should offer*(d)? Similar circumstances, Sir, must ever prompt to similar exertions! Indeed, to suppose it could be otherwise, is to suppose that they are not men, and that the usual motives which rouse even the worm’s resentment (e), have lost their influence over your Society. As you complain that they still, with reason, consider themselves as an oppressed and injured people, “*If they did not ardently look forward to any event that might give them relief, oppression must have deadened every feeling of nature.*(f) You should remember also, that you have given it as your own opinion, that “*that government which is best inclined to give you protection, has the only right to demand your allegiance*”.(g) I wish not to comment on the above extracts; but they were scarcely intended to impress your readers with any favourable ideas of that very cordial attachment you express to the civil establishment under which you live. In taking the oath of allegiance, the Body of Catholics has done every thing that can be required of them; and that they took it with sincerity, I have not the most distant doubt. Nevertheless, as that Body

(a) State and Beh. pref. page viii. (b) Ibid. page 14.  
 (c) lb. page 95. (d) lb. page 17. (e) lb. page 14.  
 (f) lb. page 15. (g) lb. page 43.



is not composed of angels, uninfluenced by the passions of frail mortality, I am still persuaded that, from their situation and sentiments, they cannot be esteemed cordial friends to the constitution of this country, nor be entitled to national confidence. It is impossible to set this subject in a clearer light than you have done, or to demonstrate my assertion more fully. You have shewn that their conduct has, in general, been irreproachable; and that they are therefore entitled to protection and relief. They, doubtless, are: as well as to the free exercise of their religion, and the liberty of educating their children as their conscience dictates, so long as they discharge the duties of citizens and subjects. But protection, and confidence, are very different claims; which ever must be distinguished, whilst interest and passion are likely to prevail, in the generality of mankind, over principle and professions. Nothing can be more just than the Bishop of Cloyne's reflections on this subject, in his Pamphlet on the late disturbances in Ireland: nor are they at all invalidated by any thing which his worthy antagonist Bishop *Butler*, or his other answerers, have produced against them. Between individuals and bodies, in this respect, no fair comparison can be drawn; and it is of Catholics as a body, only, that I am speaking. What *their* wishes or hopes must be with regard to all Protestant establishments, may, in a great measure, be determined by *our* own sollicitude to preserve the succession in the Protestant line—especially as the ideas of unity, heresy, and schism, with which the minds of Roman Catholics have been impressed from their very infancy, must operate in them with a peculiar force, and naturally excite those sentiments which you have delineated with so much truth.

Your whole Review of the English History bears striking marks of your partiality to your own cause; and many parts of it might easily be controverted, by a reference to original papers and records. I do not blame your zeal: 'tis natural. But if you expect to be credited upon your own bare word, I admire your confidence. Far also was this history of the *state and behaviour of the English Catholics* from giving general satisfaction to your own party. Both your political, and your religious creed, gave no small offence. And I recollect to have seen, myself, a manuscript address, designed

designed to have been sent to you, on that occasion, from some leading persons in your society, who so far disclaimed your *Catholic* principles, as to remind you of the fall of *Courayer*.

You have assured me that your *Reflections* have been read with great avidity, and that the sentiments you there express are universally applauded. Be not too sanguine. I have lately had occasion to converse with several of your communion upon this subject, who candidly acknowledged that many of your assertions were reprobated by some of their most respected and orthodox divines. They applaud your spirit, your motive, and the policy of your mode of attack: but they cease not to affirm that you have mistated the doctrines of your church, through a desire of conciliating the two parties. The abettors of your system, I confess, are numerous and respectable: and so are those who dissent from you. Many appear to wish that your statement of the controversy were the only true one; but yet maintain that "it was not this they received, neither were they thus taught."

Your digression upon oaths is just. The multiplying them on every occasion, is very absurd, and of most pernicious tendency. Yet those of supremacy, allegiance, and abjuration, are, by no means, so improper in the circumstances you mention—if, indeed, oaths at any time are necessary. The declaration against transubstantiation was enjoined by *Charles II.* who was always well inclined to the Catholics; and has, probably, been since retained, because it affords a more certain test, than perhaps any other, whether a person is really attached to the Roman persuasion, or not. The taking of the sacrament to qualify even for every petty office of command or trust, is, no doubt, a lamentable abuse, almost universally disapproved of. Yet as it is now become a law of the state, and with us there is "*no power above the law,*" it is not easy for those who most object to it, to get it repealed. Still, nevertheless, do I hope that all these observances and oaths are retained from other causes than merely from its being the view of our legislators "*to keep the Papists in a state of bondage,*" or because they have discovered any thing "*infamously base in the character of an Englishman.*" This is not the language of a dispassionate  
writer!

writer!—It is, in every sense, both unphilosophic, and disrespectful.

Bishop *Porteus* you call a “*Worthy Prelate*,” yet still consider him as a “*Windmill put into motion by some accidental blast*.” From whence the blast was dreaded, you are not ignorant. His Grace of *Canterbury*, as well as the Bishop of *Chester*, was well apprised that your people are perpetually accusing the reformed of heresy, and schism; and wished to inform his children of the motives of their dissent from the doctrines of *Rome*. You think that there are some things in his “*fretful gleanings*,” which no supposition can justify. Not having this performance by me, I do not know to what you allude: But as Doctor *Porteus* is, confessedly, a gentleman both of good understanding and exemplary life, it shews with what different eyes men are apt to see, according to the ideas or prepossessions they have imbibed; and should render them extremely cautious in passing their judgment on each other. Your notion of “*gratitude*” in the Archbishop for the powers he derived from Popery, is more ludicrous than just. Popery, in the light in which he considered it, had done infinite mischief in the world: for he viewed many of its abuses, and much of its pageantry, as totally inseparable from some of its tenets; inseparable in practice, as the experience of ages had shewn, whatever some Theorists “*in their wild musings*” may have imagined in their closets.—I know not of any French *Primate* who has left us “*Sermons against Protestants*:” But many of their *Prelates* have written against them with great severity and bitterness. So that I might here exclaim, with as much reason as you have done “*The Religion of Catholics is pure and evangelical; that of Protestants, base and antichristian!*” This is not argument, but declamation. I scarce can credit, when I turn to various passages in the *Reflections* now before me, that this can possibly be the language of him who professes to detest the man who is “*thus miserably partial to his own cause*.”

INTRODUCTION.—I do not question your having read many controvertists. Whether I have read as many, is immaterial. But did you, seriously, see Tradition entirely on your own side? The little that I have collected seems to tell me that if you did, you must have travelled that “*dreary journey*,”

*journey,*” with unaccountable prepossessions on your mind. And, as you assure me that you “*hate to read a long work,*” I am greatly induced to suspect that the “*almost impracticable*” difficulties of the road rendered you somewhat apprehensive of stumbling in the “*rubbish;*” and occasioned you to pay but little attention to the objects that surrounded you. The man who travels with disgust, is often apt to overlook the most natural and enchanting scenes.

You allow that in my Preface my sentiments were liberal: And that throughout “*the whole*” of my work, there was “*occasionally an appearance of moderation.*” If you had fairly noticed, in how few places I had written any thing that was severe, or which I had not attempted to extenuate; how many opportunities I had neglected of ridicule and satire; how much I had frequently said to soften the voice of prejudice against you; your “*good humour*” might have accompanied you somewhat further; and you would not have dared, in the face of conviction, to apologise for your asperity, by any reference to my Appeal.<sup>(a)</sup> The general complexion of my work was tolerant and christian; and such also has, invariably, been my behaviour towards that community of which I had relinquished the tenets; sometimes even to a degree of liberality, which has subjected me to the censures of the prejudiced and unthinking. But neither my writings, nor my conduct, have ever been modelled to obtain the suffrage of the party zealot of any description. Upon this account, I have never descended to calumny or misrepresentation. I have neither had recourse to antiquated legends, nor imputed tenets; nor have I appealed, for your faith, to a few obscure individuals of your society, whom ignorance or enthusiasm might have misled. But I trusted for your opinions, to the concurrent testimony of your most esteemed divines; and for your discipline, to the general practice of your Church. I knew no better vouchers.

NATURE OF CONTROVERSY. To Controversy I am, in general, as little a friend as you can be; and, probably, from the same considerations. But when old objections

(a) Reflections, page 98.

are revived, it may be sometimes useful to repeat the old replies. My sentiments on this head I had sufficiently detailed in my Appeal and Postscript, to satisfy any candid reader.(a) However, as you acknowledge that you have only read the far lesser part of my observations,(b) it must be expected that you are but very imperfectly acquainted with my opinions—Had I thus trifled with the public, you would have called it “trash” or “affectation.”

Circumstanced as Dr. *Carroll* was, I think it was laudable in him to come forward. Not knowing what *my* motive was for appearing in the Controversy, it was rash in you to judge; and no less unjust, to endeavour to prejudice the judgment of others. Scarce will the public give you credit for the fairness and impartiality you boast of, when they see, almost at every page, your conduct at variance with your pretensions. The reasons which induced me to reprint Dr. *Wharton's* Letter, were, by no means, those of private friendship. I was engaged to it by the persuasion of a person, of whose integrity and talents you entertain the highest opinion.(c) But there is so little truth in your assertion that we “*had agreed to quit our old communion,*” that, long after his arrival in *America*, I was entirely ignorant what course of life it was his intention to pursue. I knew him, when in *England*, to be in a state of suspense and anxiety; irresolute and wavering: Yet I had not even the curiosity to enquire, at his departure, what was likely to be his final determination.

When I conformed to the established Church, I certainly did NOT mean to break from my former connections. I foresaw, indeed, that this would happen in some degree; neither is it of this that I complain. But yet I had reason to hope that the more liberal and affectionate of my former friends, when they saw that my conduct was no discredit to the society which I had joined, nor a reproach to that which I had left, would, after a time at least, restore me to their amity and good wishes.(d) Those who, al-

(a) Appeal, 199, 212, 312. (b) Reflections, page 96.

(c) Preface to State and Behaviour, page x.

(d) I must here beg leave to refer you to the pages 303, 310, of my Appeal, where I had anticipated all your observations on this subject.

though

though they disapproved my resolution, could yet allow that my motives were perhaps "*sincere as the heart of innocence,*" might have received me with some indulgence. Whilst you talk of such "*bonds of union*" as exclude from all "*advantages and endearments,*" those who chuse to worship God in a way they think most rational, it is impossible there should ever be any harmony in society. If no one may dissent, in speculative points, from the faith of his infant years, and act in consequence of this dissent, without being deemed to turn his back upon it, in the light of one who "*deserts*" his colours, religion must ever be considered as a faction: And, however absurd the establishment may be, in which by accident a man is born, to this he must adhere through life, as if contracted to it by the indissoluble ties of fealty and allegiance.—A sentiment equally repugnant to reason and Religion! You told me some years back, when first apprised of my "*desertion,*" as now you term it, that the step I had taken should never make me forfeit your esteem.<sup>(a)</sup> Have you really kept up to this friendly assurance? Do you thus *reflect* on all whom you esteem and love? Or wherefore do you so ungenerously abjure in public those sentiments which, in private, you frequently have avowed both to myself and others?

The "*Romantic notions*" to which you allude, were chiefly indulged with respect to my own family. From these indeed, beloved as once I was, I might have looked, with reason, for a different treatment. But, irreproachable as my conduct has been in their regard, the whole of their behaviour has been unnatural and cruel. . . . May the evils I have thence suffered, be never returned upon them!

Nor do I see why, although a person must derive his chief happiness from his integrity, and the "*approbation of his own conscience,*" yet he may not also indulge the innocent wish of retaining the good will of those amongst whom he has long lived in habits of intimacy. The fear of this unpleasant dereliction should not prevent his following the impressions of reason: But yet he may lament, without deserving either check or censure, that such prejudices should

(a) In a Letter, dated Carlton, 1780.

deprive him of some of the greatest comforts of his being. However “*rapturous*” his considerations may be, however spotless his integrity, the kind offices of friendship may occasionally be serviceable to sweeten the bitter cup of affliction, and to smooth the rugged paths of life. For, with all our boasted happiness and enjoyments, there is scarce on earth that vacant being, to whom either the sufferings of others, or some untoward circumstances of his own situation, have never given pain; whose heart was never a prey to grief or disappointment!

CELIBACY. Your Reflections on this subject are uncandid. For you cannot be a judge how “*easily*,” or with how many struggles, “*cold argument made its way through all the strong habits of education* ;”(a) Neither have I denied that it is the duty of each individual of your communion, to submit to the discipline of your church. But I merely asserted that those who, from conviction, withdraw from its communion, are very improperly considered as still obnoxious to its discipline. As to my own particular case, it is no secret in your society, that long before I left your Church, several of its tenets had appeared to me of very dubious authority; and that I was only engaged in the *service* of it, by the misconduct of those ecclesiastical superiors, whose duty it was rather to have prevented the sacrifice of so unwilling a victim. For the truth of this, I am not afraid to appeal to the most respectable persons in that community with which I was thus unfortunately connected, who are still living; and who cannot refuse to testify, that I had delivered into their hands a long memorial, in which I complained of such ungenerous usage, many tedious years before my return to *England*. These were circumstances peculiar to my situation, which you should have respected; and which would have sufficed to account for a much less honourable plan of conduct, than that which I have pursued. But motives of delicacy and propriety have always prevented me from holding forth so unpleasant a detail to public view. How ill, alas! has my friendly reserve in this, as well as in some other points, been requited to me?(b)

As

(a) Appeal, 309.

(b) Utinam tibi perinde nota esset atque mihi est, totius negotii ratio! tribus verbis, fat scio, causam hanc apud te peroravero.—

Ad

As to the *ESSAY* which I published on Celibacy, in 1781, I am satisfied with the general arguments I there produced, and wish for no other Apology. "You *disliked the work*" and thought it both indelicate and confused: But the critics of the day spoke of it in the most flattering terms of approbation.(a) With respect to "*love and music*" I shall leave you to enjoy your own speculations; and only observe with *Bayle* (b) that it is "Un lieu commun trop rebattu, et trop usé. On l'a tourné en cent manières". How could the generous apologist of *Heloïsa* stoop so low, to bespeak the suffrage of the populace?(c)

Ad pueri non tam puerilem responsonem, quum tutor debuerit exosculari . . . haud aliter incanduit, quam si pugno cæsus esset. Et homo alioqui lenis, ut videbatur, ingenii, hic impotens iræ vix manus pudore continuit, sed miro supercilio appellavit nebulonem.— Superfitione arbitror peccasse, magis quam malitiosa voluntate: Sed quid refert pereuntis, stultitia Juguletur, an perverso studio?— Ne N. N. resiliat a cæptis, nihil illi non permittebatur . . . favebant et arridebant omnes.— Per lusum et incogitantiam annus fere totus effluxit . . . Alioqui non abhorrebat a pietate; sed cantionibus ac ceremoniis non perinde capiebatur . . . Hæc quum illi patres non ignorarent, debuerunt ultro subvenire puerili vel inscitæ, vel incogitantæ.— Docebat alius hunc esse Satanæ morem, ut in tali articulo omnes technas, omnes dolos admoveat, quo supplantet Christi novum tironem: hunc conflictum si fortiter sustineret, cætera fore prona et jucunda.— In summa, vicerunt improbitate; adolescens, et animo abhorrens, et verbis reluctans, coactus est capistrum accipere. Litteris fallebat captivitatis tædium, donec casus insperatus spem salutis ostenderet. Quamquam autem libera esset conscientia, sciretque se voto adacto non teneri . . . illud interim dedit . . . hominum superstitionum invincibili offendiculo, ne vestem mutaret. Non hic disputabo de votis monasticis . . . quum Sabbatum, autöre Christo, sit constitutum propter hominem, non homo propter Sabbatum . . . Hic valebit votum, cum puer illecebris, fucis . . . reclamans, in laqueum pulsus est? . . . O Leges! Mittamus hæc: Ubi est humanitas, ubi sensus communis? Quid inhumanius quam objicere cuiquam suam calamitatem, in quam aliena malitia præcipitatus est? . . . Ubicunque vixi (dicam enim de me arrogantius, sed tamen vere) probatus sum a probatissimis, laudatus sum a laudatissimis." Erasmus to Grunnius, and to Servatius. The work from which this quotation is extracted, has but lately fallen into my hands; but it contains the substance of the memorial which I mention, and as nearly as I can recollect, almost the same expressions. See Appeal, p. 216.

(a) Monthly Review, February 1782.

(b) Article, *Reihing*.

(c) Appeal, page 208, 216.



Is marriage, Sir, the only convenient refuge from “*the rigid discipline of Rome?*” (a) Remember that of *Martial*,

“*Quare non habeat, Fabulle, quæris,  
Uxorem Themison? habet sororem.*”

How much this was the case in ancient times, I have shewn from the concessions of Catholic writers: (b) How often it is the case at present, I wish not to enquire, and still less, to publish——Though men are nearly the same in every age. A *Bon Vivant* (and many such there are who do not “*renounce*” your discipline) who is fond of company, and cards, and mirth; who indulges in a liberal glass, and enters without remorse into all the more dissipating scenes of life, may talk at leisure of his vows, his breviary, and the mortification of his appetites: But there are few, believe me, even amongst yourselves, who give him credit for his single life; and who, whilst perhaps his penitents are in extasy at his knowledge and his virtues, do not look down upon his vain pretensions, with a mixture of contempt and pity.

That there is not “*much encouragement given to Profelytes by the English Church,*” can afford no room for surprize, if it be remembered that, forsaken totally by their former acquaintance and protectors, they have seldom any friends to bring them forwards: And that the party they have abandoned is incessantly endeavouring to prevent them from being held in that estimation which they may, perhaps, deserve. Their character and views are either misrepresented, or rendered suspicious, by some indirect insinuations; and it is made a point to bear them down by the confidence of hazarded assertions, or by an insidious appeal to the powers of pleasantry and burlesque. At any rate, however, this can reflect no censure upon them; and should rather be esteemed a mark of their disinterested motives. Whereas, the “*warmer cordiality*” of Catholics, and the hopes of being “*rewarded,*” may, possibly, be some inducement to such as profelyte to the church of Rome. In a former work you had assured us that “*in proportion as a man loses all sense of religion, and becomes immoral, he sees before him a better prospect of enjoying all the privileges of the established Church,*

(a) Appeal, page 208. (b) Essay on Celibacy, page 90, 91, &c.

and

and is "in the road of ease, of honour, and preferment." (a) From whence the hopes of a vicious and dissipated convert can arise, in a church where little encouragement is given, from "a lurking suspicion" of the purity of his motives, I cannot conjecture; nor shall I presume to reconcile the seeming contradiction of these various reflections.

No one, you say, has advanced, during the course of this debate, what "has not been said a thousand, and a thousand times before." What inference would you draw, supposing this were actually the case? Still may a subject be presented in a more favourable point of view: a treatise may be published in a more comprehensive, as well as more commodious form: objects that lie scattered over a vast extent of surface, may be collected into a nearer prospect. And if some have shewn how much can possibly be said or written on the subject, another may, perhaps, convince his readers how little need be said, to say enough. Moreover, the writings of Chamier, Albertinus, Claude, Pajon, Dallæus and Kemnitius, are not easy to be met with, and have never yet appeared in an English dress. You will tell me that their arguments have all been answered: And so they have. For a determined controvertist will always offer some reply to the most conclusive reasonings. But between answering, and confuting, the distance is immense. I have seen your Bellarmine, Arnauld, Nicolle, Pouget, Scheffmaker, Wallenburg, Bossuet, Challoner, and others, in whose authority your people most confide; and have been astonished at their prejudices, and the weakness of their reasonings. These also you have read: and their abuse of scripture and the fathers has certainly not escaped you. But as you judged their conclusions right, you probably may have thought, that it little mattered from what kind of syllogism they deduced them (b).

With regard to my opinion of the importance of this Controversy, you wish to charge me with inconsistency:

(a) State and Behaviour, page 132.

(b) "Paveant illi, non paveam ego," (Jeremiah, c. 17, Vulg. Ed.) said the learned Rector to his parishioners, in a dispute concerning the pavement of his chancel; and they wisely acquiesced in this decision of the scriptures. The texts which are alledged by the above-mentioned writers are, frequently, as little to the purpose; and yet they are often admitted as perfectly conclusive.

an imputation which I had both foreseen,\* and obviated. The long discussions into which the learned writers have entered, whom I have quoted, need not disquiet the generality of Christians. And yet they are of real importance to those who are on the search; dissatisfied with the belief of their first instructors, though scarcely knowing by what arguments to convict it; decided in their defection from the tenets they once were taught and now reject, yet undetermined whether they may safely join that party which they had ever learnt to view with detestation. The rooted prejudices which you suppose to exist in the mind of every Protestant without exception,(a) and the impressions raised by the hideous phantom of Popery, are equally raised in that of every Catholic, at the sounding words of *heresy, apostacy, &c.* which are re-echoed in those abridgments of Controversy with which they are most familiar. The “bloody and fearful tales of the maiden aunt”(b) which lull the babe to sleep, a charge which seems the favourite topic of all your modern apologists, have little existence but in their own imagination: or may, at least, be alledged on both sides with equal propriety. For, that Catholics entertain more just and liberal sentiments of Protestants, than Protestants do of them, is not the certain fact you represent it.(c) Have you not, yourself, assured us that even your Priests are “bred up in the persuasion that, when they come to England, they are to meet with racks and persecution; and land as in the enemies country?” and that “a man truly orthodox flies heretical company, and fears to be contaminated?” Besides, do you not, in your Colleges and Convents, offer up your prayers for the English, as for a nation over-run with “heretical depravity?” Do not all your Catechisms assert that heresy is an *obstinate* error in matters of faith? Do not many of your most eminent writers give such a character of the reformers and their doctrines, and, by an obvious inference, of the doctrines and practices of all who have shaken off the yoke of *Rome*, that they cannot fail of being considered by your people in general as a set of deluded fanatics, without

(a) State and Behaviour, page 4.

(b) Usher's “Free Examination” Dublin, 1774, page 61.

(c) State and Behaviour, page 126.

Church, Ministers, or any settled rule of belief? Whoever reads the controversial writings of your late Bishop *Chaloner*, than whom few since the Reformation have been so universally looked up to by your Society, will necessarily, in proportion to the credit he gives his assertions, both pity and detest us. (a) Nor can it well be otherwise. For he has told his tale with so much plausibility and seeming fairness, that few of your community will dare to question what he has once affirmed, or think it possible he should mislead them.

From the specimens which you have given in your several publications, of your partiality to a favourite cause, you must excuse me if I cannot admit you to be properly qualified to pronounce decisively, either on the substance of the present controversy, the merits of the combatants, or on the strength of that attack which you so prudently affect to despise. For although you wish to be considered as wholly unconcerned in the debate, the natural bias of your wishes is so imperfectly concealed under the language of philosophy and candour, that your "*Sentiments*," when unsupported by proof, will be of little weight. Should you even think that the superior evidence of your religious principles entitles you to view yourself as the sturdy "*oak that never bowed to the storm*," yet should you also be reminded that the "*tender reed*" has often risen superior to all the vain efforts of the tempest, whilst the stately timber that seemed to defy its blast, has been rent asunder, notwithstanding its boasted strength.

DR. WHARTON.—His tract has all the merit you ascribe to it. But if you "*believe him*" sincere, why, in the same breath, throw out insinuations the most injurious to his character, or intimate your persuasion that "*he could have written just as prettily on the other side*"? How forward many are still to injure him in the opinion of his former friends, appears from the Postscript superadded to the London edition of *Dr. Carroll's Work*, and a republication of the same,

(a) See, in particular, his "*Grounds of the Old Religion*"—"*Short history of the first beginning and progress of the Protestant Religion*"—"Touchstone of the new Religion:" as also "*The Papist represented and misrepresented*," with its Answer by Doctor *Stillingfleet*, in the third volume of *Bishop Gibson's Collection of Tracts*.

with some pretended additional evidence, even after these surmises had been generously contradicted by the leading gentlemen of the Worcester Society. Does this dark assassin of the memory of a respectable Ecclesiastic deserve the indulgence he has met with? As for the "reports" which, by the bare mention of them, you have yourself contributed to circulate, they possibly might be true, with little discredit to his integrity. It is not equitable to expect a perfect consistency of conduct in a mind still undetermined. Opinions that have long been harboured, are not relinquished without some struggle: and in this irresolute state, a man is exposed to act by turns both with and against his conscience; whilst his conscience is ever shifting, as it is actuated, in various moments, by opposite views and determinations. As he had his doubts, so also, probably, he had his fears. And the apprehensions of malevolence and ridicule "make deep impressions on the stoutest minds, and will often prove an overmatch even for uncommon resolution and conviction". (a)—His character and conduct had conciliated to him the esteem of all his acquaintance in England: and I was happy to learn, that since his arrival in America, his merit has been publicly acknowledged in the most unequivocal manner. (b)

Mr. PILLING.—Of this gentleman's *Caveat* I have given my opinion at large.—You knew him abroad an obstinate disputant. His reply to Dr. *Wharton* was, I think, as deficient in point of argument, as of "address and fashion:" And the victories which he had gained in Flanders over a prostrate enemy, made him too confident that his triumph would be equally secure in a land of freedom. Whatever were his hopes in this respect, it would be an insult to common sense to admit, in direct contradiction to your respective writings, that his religious sentiments are the same as yours. Do you believe, like him, that no man of common sense can possibly stand out against the irresistible evidence of the Catholic religion—that the revealed law of Christ is impervious both to our senses and understanding? Do you also tremble lest God should deny his sanctifying

(a) *State and Behav.* p. 117.

(b) He has been honoured with the degree of Doctor, and his situation is, in every respect, most comfortable and pleasant.

grace to all such as are not in the visible communion of the Roman Catholic Church, *however invincible their ignorance?* (a)

DOCTOR CARROLL.—He did well, as I have before acknowledged, to circulate his work in America: his duty required it of him. But it was imported into England; and, by the contrivance of some nameless editor, was sent abroad in so questionable a shape, that the Roman Catholics of this city, no less than myself, thought it necessary to make a “*Few Remarks*” upon it. Even in its original form it contained some inaccuracies and fallacies, which I then pointed out; and which neither you nor he can do away. He asserts that Roman Catholics read *without censure or hesitation* whatever controversial books they please. This is notoriously untrue, as Mr. *Pilling* has confessed. “*La défense de lire les livres Hérétiques,*” say the *Conférences D’Angêrs*, a work of great repute, “est générale: elle comprend les prêtres comme les laïques; les personnes éclairées, comme celles qui ne sont pas instruites . . . Mr. *Collet* (de fide, cap. 1. sec. 2) ne reconnoit pas de légèreté de matière dans la lecture des livres hérétiques. Le Pere *Antoine* estime que quinze lignes et peut-être moins, suffissent pour faire un péché mortel. . . *Sanchez* exige un peu plus qu’une page in folio et in quarto, pour qu’on encoure la censure . . . On en doit conclurre qu’il faut bien peu de chose pour tomber dans la réserve sur cette matière.” Such, Sir, is the *present* discipline of the Roman Church.—Dr. *Carroll* also maintains, that it is *of faith* that the prerogative of infallibility resides in the “*Body of Bishops agreeing with their head, the Bishop of Rome.*” This is denied by all the Gallican, and, I believe, English Divines; who hold that the Church in a general Council, may define and judge without *his* concurrence; and that *his* assent to their decrees is by no means requisite.—He is eager to shew that the article of Pope *Pius’s* Creed, which asserts that no one can be saved without holding the true Catholic faith which is there delivered, professes nothing which is not contained in the public Liturgy of the Protestant episcopal church. Is not this a glaring misrepresentation of

(a) See some *Strictures* on this pamphlet, in the *Monthly Review* for December 1785.

the fact? (a)—He labours to demonstrate that all those who with sincere heart seek true religion, are *members of the Catholic Church*, and not *heretics*; and this he gives as the *unanimous* doctrine of her divines. In what then consists that *holy and inflexible incompatibility* which *Bossuet* attributes to the Catholic Church; that *holy delicacy* which constitutes her *the most intolerant of all christian societies*, and which he so pompously extols, as her peculiar privilege? (b) Or with what right do Catholics ever indulge in distressful feelings, or affect to pity, or even shew a coolness to those whom they ought *unanimously* both to consider and treat as members of the same church with themselves; unless they are persuaded that the far greater number of them would not renounce their opinions, though they should discover them to be *contrary to the doctrine of Christ!* The conduct of a Christian society is undoubtedly the best comment upon the spirit and nature of its belief.

Are these the "*beauties*" you admired in Dr. *Carroll's* work, which my Remarks have only served to bring more "*strikingly forward?*"—His address is temperate; and both his language and sentiments, in general, benevolent and friendly: but he is not, on that account, entitled to general credit for whatever he pleases to advance. Neither must his erroneous statement of facts pass by unnoticed, in compliment to the integrity of his heart. My strictures upon his *Address* were few; but they were pertinent and unanswerable. The schemes that he was meditating for America will never be admitted by Rome. Will that mother church, do you think, acknowledge that she has greatly departed in her discipline "*from primitive simplicity?*" Will she confess that any private bishop has a right to give the Liturgy (c) or Mass "*in the language of the people,*" when her last general council has pronounced *anathema* against all who dare assert that such an alteration would be proper? (d) These "*brilliant*

(a) See Dr. Wharton's "Reply to an Address to the Roman Catholics of the United States of America" Philadelphia, 1785.

(b) Sixième avertissement sur les lettres de M. Jurieu.

(c) "Ab ecclesiæ exordio consecratum est hoc nomen (Liturgia) ad significandum sacrosanctum corporis et sanguinis Christi sacrificium." Catechif. Montepes. tom. 6, p. 314.

(d) "Si quis dixerit lingua tantum vulgari missam celebrari debere, Anathema sit." Con. Trid.

*ideas*" of Dr. Carroll were those of Courayer, who died under the imputation of heresy, and the censure of his church (a).—I long to hear the further progress of this American reformation. To remove all the "*extraneous matter*" that had crept into the Church of Rome is indeed a laudable *attempt*. It was what Luther happily contrived to *realise* in Europe.

RELIGION OF CATHOLICS RATIONAL.—That I have known you for many years with a certain degree of intimacy, is very true; and, in the course of our acquaintance I dare aver that you never discovered in me those intolerant sentiments and absurdities which you now "*suppose*." Your having amongst you "*men of strong sense*" I never can have questioned; since in my writings I have borne ample testimony to their erudition, integrity, and virtues. Neither have I any where represented the *religion* of such men as a mass of folly. I have only asserted that much absurdity has always resulted *in practice* from some of the tenets of your church; and you have, in plainest terms, allowed the same. If ever I have expressed my meaning with some severity, it is upon the ridiculous pageantry alone of your religion as it is practised in Europe, that my censures fell. But, to much of this very pageantry must every one conform who remains in your communion. Many of its laws of discipline, and various practices resulting from them, are undeniably absurd; and some are highly grievous and oppressive. No less than yourself I was a "*miserable exile*" for more than twenty years, (b) and in a closer state of bondage; I therefore speak from observation and experience. Let every fair allowance be made, as well for the introduction of them, as for their not being cancelled; yet they are a burden upon the conscience, which no man has a right to impose. The duty of prayer is important; that of mortifying the irregular appetites is acknowledged; contrition for our offences, with unfeigned purpose of amendment, is necessary: But do these considerations justify the precept of reciting daily the ecclesiastical office, of abstinence from flesh on certain days, and many other of your observances,

(a) Relation historique et Apologétique des Sentimens et de la Conduite du P. Le Courayer. Amsterdam, 1729.

(b) Preface to State and Behaviour.

under



under the severe penalty of damnation? Let such injunctions as these be deemed both suitable and wholesome; and grant them all the merit you would wish to have ascribed to them---But should every failure in such observances of discipline deprive a person of his right to Christian Communion, unless he makes his confession to a Priest, and acknowledges a fault, for which he scarce can be sincerely sorry? You will tell me that his crime was not the trifling omission I complain of; but his contempt of that authority by which these precepts were enjoined. Vain subterfuge! which with all the *Philosophy of your Religion* you can never reconcile to reason. This, Sir, amongst other considerations, first put me upon examining the nature and extent of ecclesiastical authority; and this, as it is now assumed by the Church of *Rome*, even with *Veron's* Restrictions, I still think unsupported and tyrannical.

The "*idle authors*" I have consulted, are such as are most generally respected by Catholic writers---the "*trash*" I have collected, has been derived from such sources from whence all religion must be learnt. It would please me much to see a fair reply to what I have thence, with no small labour, gleaned. To revile is a far easier task than to confute. Do you mistrust the goodness of your cause?

How far you ever "*molest*" us in our religion, will appear when I come to review your Reflections on TOLERATION---Suffice it here to observe, that I have no where in my writings thrown out so severe a sarcasm against your worship, as you have done, in this very paragraph, against the religion of your country; which, with all your boasted forbearance, you scruple not to represent as "*naked, poor, and varying with every sun that rises.*" Let me remind you also, that the *powers that be* are ever entitled to a peculiar degree of respect. A Protestant in *France* could not reasonably suppose that the same licence of expression would be tolerated in him against the worship by law established, as a Catholic in the same kingdom might lay claim to with respect to the reformation. This, Sir, is nature: it is also equity.

Let Catholics live and think "*as their fathers did before them,*" and the whole of their religion would

assume

assume a very different face from what it wears at present. What those who went immediately before them thought, is little to the purpose; for as St. *Cyprian* justly observes “ Si quis de Antecessoribus nostris vel ignoranter vel simpliciter hoc non observavit vel tenuit quod nos Dominus exemplo et magisterio suo docuit, potest simplicitati ejus venia de indulgentia Domini concedi; nobis vero non poterit ignosci qui nunc a domino admoniti et instructi sumus.” Error, Sir, though ever so ancient, ought to be forsaken for more ancient truth: and our only fathers with respect to religion, are Christ and his Apostles. The motive you here suggest to your society for adhering to their parents creed, is the successful argument which baffles all the zealous labours of the missionaries in Pagan or in Mahometan establishments.

That the Roman Church is “ *the mother*” of all others, is so indeterminate an assertion, that it is difficult to ascertain how far you wish it to apply. *Antioch*, *Jerusalem*, and *Alexandria* are certainly more ancient sees: and the Greek Church has also in its favour a succession and extent beyond what *Rome* can boast of. You call it, I know, schismatical; because it has always opposed the unjust pretensions of the Latins, from the times of *Acacius* even to the present day. But *Jure an injuria*, heaven only can determine: though *Rome* originally began the separation, by assuming a groundless jurisdiction over an independent Bishop.

A like accusation of schism is also implied in this part of your letter, against all the Reformed Churches of the Christian world. The importance of the charge requires me to consider it with some attention: and if I go into a larger detail on this subject than your brief statement of the fact may seem to warrant, the same must plead my apology. We doubtless have been accustomed to consider this weighty question in very opposite lights: but were the case impartially stated, it would, in my opinion, stand as follows. It long had been observed with deep concern, that various abuses had silently crept into the Christian worship in the days of ignorance and barbarism, which the ambitious and interested views of some men, and the vices of others, continued to support and propagate. In the 16th century they were grown to such an enormous height, that they

they called aloud for a reform. On this occasion, those whom the Church had intrusted with the ministerial power, were applied to in order to stop the progress of corruption : But they refused to lend their aid.(a) It therefore became a case of extremity, in which the founder part of the Christian Community, or that at least which visibly sought to reduce back its worship to the primitive standard of the Gospel, made such a stir in favour of a reformation, both in belief and morals, as heaven was pleased to bless.(b) The struggles and confusion to which an attempt of this nature must naturally give rise, when scripture and reason were the only arms which the reformers had to oppose to power, bigotry, interest, and the most inveterate prejudices, I have elsewhere briefly accounted for.(c) In the natural course of things it could not otherwise fall out. Yet, whoever will ponder with an unbiaſſed mind, upon the circumstances which attended the rise and progress of the reformation, will be amazed at its incredible success.

But notwithstanding this wonderful success, and the singular combination of causes which speak so loudly in favour of this extraordinary revolution, various prejudices are incessantly called up to represent it in the most unfavourable light. Amongst these, nothing has been more frequently urged, or with greater plausibility, than the want of a proper mission and vocation in the reformers to correct the abuses that prevailed, even upon a supposition that these really existed in the degree that is usually asserted. *Moses*, it is said, and the Apostles, when sent to reform the world, were commissioned from above ; and supported the doctrines they taught, by the supernatural prodigies which they were enabled to perform :—Why did not a similar attempt in another period require a similar interposition of providence ? To this a reply is easy. *Moses* and the Prophets were sent to root out idolatry, and the sacrifice of human victims ; to teach the worship of the true God which was almost obliterated on earth ; and to establish a new covenant with man-

(a) Sleidan. *Fra Paolo*. Du Thou. Claude, “*Defense de la Reformation, tom 2.*” Seckendorf ; or, the Acts of the Council of Pisa, which called for a reform both in faith and morals.—Richer.

(b) See Robertson's *History of Charles V.*

(c) Appeal, 193.

kind, at a time when it was otherwise to be feared that the distinctions between vice and virtue would be for ever obliterated on earth, and every hope of immortality and heaven sunk in oblivion. The Apostles also were deputed, not only to convert the Jewish people, but likewise to bring the Gentiles to salvation, by means of a dispensation equally unknown to either; to proclaim the abrogation of the Ancient Testament; and to set up an entire new form of worship—Whereas, the Reformers did not even pretend to publish a new law or covenant, and only attempted to recall the popular belief and practice to that original form which these very Apostles had delivered. To this no extraordinary vocation was required, nor any peculiar degree of sanctity in the instruments which Providence appointed to bring about its benevolent purposes. For how often were its merciful designs upon its favourite people accomplished by the means of rulers who seemed rather fitted to destroy their very name on earth, than sent to call them back by any wholesome severities to the ways they had forsaken?

You think the reformers were scarce to be justified in a single step they took. Were this even really the case, which I am by no means disposed to grant, (a) yet would it merit but little attention: since it is a rule laid down by all men of sense, “*Qu’il faut juger de la manière par la manière, et du fond par le fond: et qu’ on ne laisse pas de se rendre a la verité, lors même qu’elle est mêlé de quantité de faussetés* (b).” Many occurrences may be irregular in their first outset, and yet must be admitted to be just and equitable in their prin-

(a) The scenes of tumult and wild confusion which then prevailed, as well as the bitter zeal and exertions of the Reformers, will easily be accounted for, and excused, by any who shall read the learned Brandt’s impartial “*History of the Reformation in and about the Low Countries.*”—There are in human nature certain limits, beyond which it cannot be strained; there are certain points in which patience will give way to despair. These points were now arrived; these limits were exceeded: and the savage conduct of those who opposed the Reformation was almost sufficient to justify every measure which despair could dictate. Let those who read Dodd and Bossuet, Maimbourg, Fleury, and Challoner, remember also the names of Burnet, Brandt, Sleidan, Seckendorf, and Mosheim. It is impossible to form an equitable decision, unless both sides are admitted to a patient hearing.

(b) *Logique du Port Royal.*

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ciple ; and in cases where the public utility is concerned, mere form may often be dispensed with, with great propriety. Besides, this is a point in which at present we have no concern. For although such as cause any revolution in a government, either ecclesiastical or civil, without sufficient reason, may be guilty of sin and rebellion ; yet when this change is fully settled, it would be equally unlawful to attempt any further alteration, or to endeavour, upon this pretence, to subvert the establishment that has been adopted.

If the views of some who joined in this great attempt ought, as you insinuate, to raise a prejudice against the undertaking, the universal corruption that reigned in the Old Church, and the acknowledged resolution which the first reformers professed to correct all abuses, were at least an equal argument to render mankind suspicious of the truth of such doctrines as the then established clergy professed, and incline them to examine the proposals of their new teachers. A tradition derived from their former pastors immersed in ignorance and vice, deserved but little confidence : And the contagion was too widely spread for a few exceptions to be of any avail against this argument.

As to an ordinary mission for this peculiar purpose, they could not derive it from those whose errors they purposed to correct : but in default thereof, they proceeded in virtue of that commission which Jesus had left to the Apostles to preach his doctrines incorrupt and pure, and to prevent the progress of error and deception. In this sense they even acted under the authority of that church in which they had received their orders. For she gave them power to preach the Gospel of Christ, an injunction which she could not recall : and whilst they strictly adhered to this, they could not be said to exceed the bounds of their warrant. Indeed, to little purpose was the law of Christ promulgated, if we were not allowed to follow it, unless so far only as our regular leaders should think proper to approve it. I do not mean to enter here into a discussion concerning the validity of the English orders, or the succession of their priesthood, which F. *Courayer* has established with as great a degree of evidence as the thing admits : but I speak of the reform at  
large

large (a). In extraordinary exigencies extraordinary measures must sometimes be adopted: and necessity will often justify a proceeding otherwise irregular and blameable. *Mark*, ii. 24.—Nor is heaven pledged to interfere visibly, where the ordinary assistance of its providence suffices.

At the time of the Reformation, if right and reason had been respected, the uproar and disturbances which followed accidentally from the stern resistance of those who then managed the Christian republic, might easily have been prevented. But the interests of unity and truth, when weighed against prejudice and long possession, were little likely to bear down the balance. A large body of Christians doubted whether indulgences, in the only sense in which they had long been dispensed, were authorised by the word of God; and had seen how infamously the doctrine had been prostituted to the destruction of every religious principle, and the scandal of human reason (b)—They could not be persuaded that there existed a middle state for departed souls, whence prayer and money could deliver them (c)—They were unable to comprehend how any further *sacrifice* was requisite, when all agreed that our whole ransom had been already paid (d)—They disbelieved a physical and corporal presence in the sacrament; because they could neither conceive it possible, nor any way discover that it was revealed (e)—They wished to worship in a language that was understood, that their homage might be rational, and reach the heart—They desired to receive the sacrament in the manner that Christ had evidently appointed it, and as the whole church had generally practised for more than a thousand years (f)—They thought that as auricular confession was neither enjoined nor practised in the ancient church for various

(a) Upon the nature of a church, the creation and power of the English bishops, how far their authority depends on the king, &c. there are some striking reflections suggested in the 39th section of the sixth chapter of Chillingworth.

(b) Appeal, 166, 288, 362.

(c) “*Quisquis admittit animas purgari in die judicii per flammam conflagrationis,*” says one of your most noted Controversists, “*defendit purgatorium in sensu sanctorum.*” White, *de Medio animarum statu*. Appeal, 317, 319, 334. (d) *Ib.* 50, 164,

(e) Chillingworth, chap. 4, § 46, tenth edit.

(f) Cardinal Bona *de reb. Litur.* Appeal, 227.

mortal sins not subject to *public* penance, and that as absolution was never given in any form that implied a judiciary act, it only could be considered as a declaration of pardon upon complying with the gospel terms; and that it was moreover liable to various inconveniencies and abuses (a)—Notwithstanding their respect for authority, they apprehended that an infallible guide to truth was neither necessary nor granted; and that, all things considered, *oral* tradition was less secure than *written* revelation—They thought that ritual laws and points of discipline, however proper, were rather penal than truly binding on the conscience, in a variety of circumstances (b)—They scrupled to pay a religious veneration to images and relics; because they were witnesses of the abuses with which this practice was ever accompanied, and also knew that you yourselves did not pretend that such a practice ever was commanded (c)—They doubted whether they were justified in praying to departed spirits, because the scripture was silent on that head; and not being constituted our mediators, it was questionable whether they could hear us (d)—They rejected the supreme authority and jurisdiction of the Pope, because the whole world had long experienced how destructive his pretensions were to the peace of society, and the interests of true religion (e)—Moreover, they were convinced that on all these points they even had *tradition* on their side. And yet, for these doubts, these scruples, these apprehensions, these convictions, the Roman Church spurned them from her society on earth, and secluded them from the communion of the Saints in heaven, as far as her unjust decrees could prevail. She turned them out from her bosom, and then insultingly enquired the reason why they left her: although in the beginning *their only*

(a) Erasmus in Act. 19, 18. Appeal, 136, 141, 144, 150.

(b) See page 25 of this Letter.

(c) Appeal, 135, 314, 321, 328, 329, 342.

(d) Appeal, 316, 326.

(e) “Comme les décrets des Papes étoient toujours suivis de séditions et de guerres affreuses, tous les souverains redoutèrent de les avoir pour ennemis, parceque si par leurs sentences ils ne pouvoient donner des Royaumes, au moins, pouvoient ils les remplir de troubles et de Confusion.” Bossuet Défense du Clergé. Liv. 3. chap. 23. Appeal, 97, 20.

wish was to be tolerated by her, or not to be fulminated by her anathemas. (a)

In such extreme necessity what else could be expected, than that they should form themselves into a regular society upon the pure principles of the gospel, which even those who departed from them allowed to be genuine and unaltered. Indeed, your great *Nicolle* has asserted in his *Préjugés Légitimes*, that even if that church had been heretical and idolatrous, and had driven all true worshippers from her bosom, still we should not be justified in forming a society apart; but must have been contented to dissent in silence, without ministry, or any exterior form of worship. But this is an opinion evidently contrary to every principle of religion and good sense. If the doctrines of the Roman Church were erroneous, and her discipline corrupt, the consent of nations, and the duty of every man to propagate the genuine doctrines of Revelation, were a sufficient call to those who undertook the reform; as well as a full justification of those churches which reclaimed their natural inherent privilege. And, as in her resided ultimately all ministerial power, as in its source; whoever she appoints, in such extremes, to the exercise of it, has all the mission, and power, and titles, that are requisite: For to the church the promises were made, and the keys were given; and she deposes whom she pleases to use them. Those who admit that a woman may administer baptism, can scarce refuse to the church a power of conferring orders, which are not a sacrament, but only a legal grant of jurisdiction—an adoption into that society which she has established to dispense the word of God. (b) Upon this principle it was that  
Protestants,

(a) Bossuet Sixième Avertissement.

(b) Nothing which I have here said, goes to prove that the episcopal is not the ancient and proper government of the church, derived from the apostles; or that episcopacy is not of immediate divine right and institution: But only, that in case of necessity where no bishops can be had, the ordinations of Presbyters may be valid, and there may be a truly catholic church without any episcopal ordination or succession. For necessity will often make that act valid, which schism will not. Such Bishop Burnet assures us was the opinion of those who formed the articles of our Church, as well as of the body of our clergy for half a century after. See Burnet on the 23d article, and Bishop Sherloek's "Vindication," in the third volume  
of



Protestants, when rejected from that religious association to which they had been united—denied the participation of the sacraments—solicited to follow her corruptions—urged to submit to her decisions at the expence of truth—compelled to teach what they did not believe, and practice what they could not justify—saw themselves obliged to appoint a ministry to superintend the instruction of the people; to baptise, break bread, and announce the terms of the Christian covenant. Without this, the gospel ordinances would soon have been forgotten, and ignorance and vice have reigned without control. If an hundred people were cast away on a desert shore from whence they could have no communication with Europe, must they not assemble together, and appoint directors to provide for the preservation of their religion? Where a magistracy or ministry is already established, *their* authority is requisite to form either a religious or civil association: but when these combine to trample under foot those laws and that establishment which they were appointed to enforce and to preserve, they justly forfeit that authority with which they had been entrusted for the public good. If the commanding officers in a city that is besieged, are meditating to betray their king and country into the hands of an enemy; would not even an uncommissioned private be justified in his refusal to obey them, and be applauded if, with the concurrence of those who retained their fealty, he assumed the command himself, rather than see his country subjected to a foreign yoke? Neither could he, in such circumstances, be said to fly in the face of authority; as his *first* allegiance was due to his sovereign, and his secondary duty to the vicarious officers of his appointment was no further enjoined, than as it was connected with the former. This was nearly the case and situation of affairs at the beginning of the reformation; and therefore the supreme authority was transferred to those who were willing to exert it in support of such truths, for the maintenance of which all authority was delegated from Heaven. It is the unanimous assertion of the fathers, that the true Church is there, where the true faith is maintained; and by this test

of Bishop Gibson's Tracts, page 410, 432. The same is evidently at this day the sentiment of all the foreign reformed churches.

alone

alone do we wish to be tried. To say that we set up a new religion, is false : for how can that be a new religion, which remains in the possession of what the apostles taught, and what all our ancestors, in the purer ages of the church believed before us? In this respect, that only should be accounted ancient, which was at the beginning. Our religion cannot be deemed new, unless you shew that it is essentially different from that which Christ established. Till this is proved, our separation from the true church is but ideal. We separated ourselves indeed from the Roman Bishop : But an union with him can be no proof of a pure faith, since many Popes have not only erred themselves, but have been rejected from Catholic Communion : and in some essential points, the *Gallican* has long dissented from the *Roman Church*. But we did not even so much reject the communion of your Church, as refuse to communicate with her in those respects, in which we esteemed that she had renounced the communion of the apostles. So that there was rather a division *in*, than *from* the Church. On both sides the separation was equal ; but the guilt must fall on those only who were the causes of this unfortunate schism. To conclude, as some have done, that because the Church to which we were united in exterior worship was once the *true Church*, she therefore must be the same at present, unless we can assign the moment wherein she ceased to be so, is a palpable abuse of argument. As well might it be asserted that because a man was once a child, therefore he is so still, unless we can ascertain the precise moment of the change : or, that a person is not in a deep consumption, because we know not when the consumptive habit first began.(a)

It has been the case with the Christian Church, as well in the times of *Dioclesian*, who boasted that he had *Annihilated the Christian Superstition*, as in that of *Arius*, to be lowered to a state of desolation, little inferior to that of the Jews in *Babylon* or *Egypt* : but yet the Church subsisted, although its exterior appearance was so greatly reduced. So also did the *Jewish Church*, though overspread with errors

(a) Appeal, 134, 136, 200, 276.

and

and corruptions, till it was abrogated by a new dispensation. Why then may not the Christian establishment be still supposed to exist, sufficiently visible to all, notwithstanding it was darkened with vice and error? For it still remained a Church in the apostolic sense of the word ;(a) still it adhered to the apostles creed, which the Council of *Trent* declares to be “firmamentum unicum contra quod portæ inferi non prævalebunt.” Should therefore the Gates of *Hades* prevail in every other respect than this, still would the promises of Christ subsist unshaken. The more the sacred truths of religion were obscured ; the nearer she was apparently reduced to the brink of destruction ; the more conspicuous was the providence of heaven in her preservation.(b) If ever there was on earth a true Church, we are the lawful successors of those who composed it, and inherit all its privileges ; as we hold them by right of consanguinity of faith, the most indisputable of titles. And if we cannot make these titles all so good, in some particular instances, as might be wished ; it is at least unreasonable in *you* to litigate them : because *you* have set aside our principal evidence without sufficient reason, and have often, by your penal laws, prevented many from appearing in our cause, who were best disposed to favour it. Should you contend that we are not the same Church as subsisted before the sixteenth century, because we differ from it both in tenets and in ceremonies ; this would only shew more forcibly that the visible society from which we then were severed, was not the Church which the apostles planted, since it differed essentially from that, both in the form and substance of its worship. Much indeed of these it still retained : but also much had it added to them. The foundations it still adhered to ; but had built upon them *hay*, and *wood*, and *stubble*, by inducing novel practices and tenets. And as it required the compliance of all its subjects, we were reluctantly compelled to refuse obedience. Our apology is therefore founded on indispensable duty. It is true that all this supposes, that the doctrines which the Roman Church imposed were unscriptural, and her discipline unjust. But this we contend was actually the case ; and by

(a) Reflections, page 37.

(b) Appeal, 292.

this

this alone must the contest be decided. If then we next are asked from whence the mission and authority of our ministers are derived, we answer with our master, (a) by proposing a more familiar and obvious question, "does the doctrine which we teach proceed from heaven, or from man? So likewise, to all your ill-grounded accusations against the reformers, our people might reply with the blind man recorded by St. John, "whether he is wicked I know not: but I was blind, and now I see." For, whatever were their *motives*, even you cannot help acknowledging that the *event* of their endeavours has proved of great advantage to morality and true religion.—I will likewise, in addition to what I have said above, beg you to remark, that although in our Blessed Saviour's time such irregularities and confusion had been introduced by the Romans into the Jewish church and priesthood; such manifest deviations from what God himself had established, with regard to the appointment of his ministers and the duration of their office—Yet he did not consider their appointment null, notwithstanding it was so irregular and illegal; nor charge them with apostacy, nor withdraw from their communion.

The method in which the ancient Fathers conducted their arguments, whenever they brought a charge of schism against any set of men who withdrew from the exterior communion of the church, is another precedent which your writers frequently quote, in justification of their own mode of reasoning against Protestants. Because the fathers, when disputing with the *Donatists*, *Novatians*, and *Luciferians*, argued from the succession of their churches, their multitude, glory, extent, and the actual possession of those doctrines which they had taught without interruption from the days in which they were first promulgated to the world; so *they* also mention the fancied *notes* of the Roman Church, as an irrefragable testimony in favour of her pretensions. But these two cases have no resemblance with each other. And I allow that with just reason such *presumptions* were adduced against the above-mentioned schismatics, because they were but a small handful of men in the corner of Africa, who had separated from the main body of the church, under the most frivolous pre-

(a) Matt. 11, Luke 30.

texts. They neither accused it of any capital errors, nor were they themselves, in general, accused of any. They objected only to it some trivial differences in discipline, or upbraided it for not rejecting from its bosom some whom they thought unworthy of being admitted to catholic communion. This was a circumstance which gave manifest weight to those arguments which the fathers so fairly and so forcibly urged against them. But in their disputes with the *Macedonians*, *Eutychians*, *Arians*, or *Nestorians*, these same fathers saw themselves obliged to shift their ground. The attention was no longer drawn to those *prejudices* or presumptive arguments, which now were often but little in their favour: and they had recourse to scripture and to reason; because they mutually accused each other of material errors—a charge which could only be confuted, or made good, by a reference to the law. Hence when *Auxentius*, the Arian Bishop of *Milan*, besought the Emperors *Valens* and *Valentinian* not to permit the peace of the Christian world, and the *unity of six hundred bishops*, to be disturbed by the factious spirit of a few contentious persons; these few derided their pretended peace and “unity of impiety,” and contended that an agreement in doctrine was a much better title to *Catholicity*, than the consent of nations, antiquity, succession, miracles, name of *Catholic*, &c. which the Arians appealed to. (a) Even in those cases wherein the orthodox fathers laid claim to this presumptive evidence, as manifestly deposing in their favour; yet they candidly allowed that if it could once be clearly shewn that truth was on the side of their opponents, this alone was to be preferred before every other consideration: *Præponenda est*, says *S. Augustin* against the Donatists, *omnibus illis rebus quibus in Catholica teneor*. (b) And, in fact, the Christian writers in every age, as may be seen in *Augustin*, *Chrysostom*, *Lactantius*, *Tertullian*, *Jerom*, &c. have maintained that the church to which the promises of Christ were made, was that alone

(a) On the universal prevalence of Arianism, both in the East and West, see Chillingworth, chap. 6, sec. 42. or those several passages which Claude in his “*Défense de la Réformation*,” Part 3, ch. 4. has cited at large from the writings of *Jerom*, *Hilary*, *Gregory Nazianzen*, and *Athanasius*.

(b) *Contra Epif. Fundam.*

which

which held the Christian doctrines, however it might be reduced either in number or in splendor: For “they have not the inheritance of *Peter*,” says St. Ambrose, “who have not *Peter’s* faith.” (a)

Nor was the true church restrained to those whom your writers affect to despise under the appellation of *Berengarians*, *Valdenses*, *Albigenses*, *Petrobusians*, *Henricians*, *Wickliffites*, *Hussites*, &c. although these were often amongst the purest and most generous members of it. (b) But it consisted also of thousands whom age, ignorance, or simplicity, had rendered, in some degree, strangers to its corruptions; who believed what they thought was true, and practised what they thought it might be innocent to tolerate; who despised the subtle distinctions of the schools, and chose rather to submit to the heavy yoke of the Roman discipline, than begin a revolution which they could not support—waiting till Almighty God, in his own good time, should take in hand his own cause. In short, it consisted of all those who so readily embraced the Reformation; and who never can be said to have departed from the whole then existing visible church, since they themselves formed no inconsiderable portion of it. Neither, from the same reasons, can it be justly asserted that they joined any other: since it was only the “faith of Peter” that they professed to follow, unadulterated with the vain devices of men. Yet as the true worshippers were often comparatively few, and unconnected with each other,

(a) Ambrose de pæn. lib. 1, ch. 6.

(b) It is not therefore from these alone that we look for our chain of tradition, as you have invidiously suggested in your late *Life of Abeillard and Heloisa*. But as in ancient times “the enemies of orthodoxy have often been charged with crimes, which to have committed coolly and systematically, seems not to have come within the sphere of human depravity;” so likewise have many of its more modern enemies been cruelly traduced. And we may say of many of these dissenters from Rome, as you have done of Arnold of Brescia, that “we should perhaps be disposed to admire their characters, their principles, and views, if their lives had been recorded by unprejudiced historians, and not brought down to us in the blackest colours which party, bigoted zeal, and enthusiasm could lay on.” For not to have been recorded by impartial historians, or, from a partial spirit, to have this testimony neglected or set aside, is equally unfavourable to their memories.—Where will you point out more excellent characters than those of John Huss and Jerom of Prague? See Lenfant.

it would have been no less useless, than dangerous, to oppose the torrent : For the *multitude* is at all times too deeply immersed in the pursuits or amusements of a worldly life, to pay any serious attention to the concerns of religion and truth. Hence they frequently were satisfied to lament their thralldom in secret, whilst they strove to purify their own faith and lives ; pursuing in practice what they thought most adviseable upon the whole, and trusting to heaven for the rest.—In such circumstances, to step forward and take an active part, requires a strength of mind of which few are capable. Of this timidity we have a remarkable instance in *Erasmus*, who declared that although *Luther* had written all things in the most unexceptionable manner, yet he had no inclination to die for the truth. “ I follow,” says he, “ the decisions of the Pope and Emperor when they are right, which is acting religiously : I submit to them when wrong, which is acting prudently : and I think that it is lawful for good men to behave themselves thus, when there is no hope of obtaining any more.” The same was also the case with many others. (a)

That there were thousands of persons in every part of christendom who only waited for an occasion to declare themselves in favour of a reform both in faith and morals, appeared evidently from the rapid progress which the reformation made. When these errors were pointed out more distinctly, and there was a visible society to join, they hastened from all parts to become its members. And why may we not affirm that there were thousands in Roman Catholic countries who did not partake in the corruptions that had been introduced, when we read that in the kingdom of *Israel*, schismatical as it confessedly was, where altar was erected against altar, and from whence none were permitted to repair to Jerusalem, yet there were seven thousand persons whose chief worship must have been that of the heart ; and who never bowed their knee to *Baal*, even when all their governors, both spiritual and civil, were infected with idolatry. Still had they an hundred prophets whom *Abdias* hid in the caverns : And by means of these few thousands was the church and true religion preserved, although even

(a) See Jortin's Life of Erasmus.

*Elijah* knew them not, and concluded that he was left alone, whilst all others had forsaken the covenant of the Lord, and were partakers in the general corruption.

The whole dispute relative to our separation from the Roman Church must then be reduced to this simple question; which of the two churches had truth on its side, and taught the genuine doctrines of christianity? All other objections against our separation are illusions; and this is the only point to be determined. And though this plea is subject to abuse, and may seem to justify the schism of every conventicle on earth, yet it is equitable in itself; and may possibly be urged with truth in one case, although in a thousand others it might be unjust and false. For the question is not, what may be *pretended* by separatists; but what can be fairly *proved* (a). If this is really the case of the reformed, then neither want of mission, miracles, nor orders—no irregularities in the *manner* in which the change was wrought—no *prejudices* whatever can lawfully be suggested against it, or be of any weight. But, that the Church of Rome was over-run with abuses, and corrupted in its head, ministers, and form of worship—That its supreme pastors had usurped an undue authority over their flock, and assumed a lawless jurisdiction over the persons of their sovereigns, and the allegiance of their people—That the inferior clergy, no less than the dignitaries of the church, were generally immersed in ignorance and debauchery—That though they professed a life of continency, yet many of the bishops allowed their clergy to keep concubines, on paying a certain sum of money by way of compensation; which tax of *concubinage* was levied even upon the most regular (b)—That the veiling of a nun was only dedicating her to public prostitution, since convents were "*propatula ut ipsa loca veneris*"—That the swarms of mendicants with which society was infested, were guilty of every kind of profanation, extortion, and excess—That dispensations were granted for almost every crime, and

(a) See the "Difference of the case between the separation of Protestants from the Church of Rome, and the separation of the Dissenters from the Church of England," by Dr. Clagett, in the third volume of Bishop Gibson's Collection of Tracts.

(b) See Concil. Juliobonense, in 1080, apud Richard; or the 91st amongst the "Gravamina" of the Germanic Body.



relaxations from every most sacred tie—That sacraments, benefices, masses, orders, were publicly sold to such as could best afford the purchase—That true religion was oppressed beneath a load of unmeaning ceremonies and ostentatious pageantry, as well as debased by a multiplicity of superstitious practices—That false pieces and acts were often forged to support these several enormities—That fictitious miracles and relics were brought forward, visions and apparitions feigned, to feed the credulity of the populace—That the Scriptures were undervalued, and the study of them greatly discouraged . . . That all this, I say, was real fact with respect to the far greater part of the Christian Society, and had been so for ages, may be abundantly proved with a detail painful to insist on, from the writings of *Cassander, Erasmus, Clemangis, Fleury, Wesselus, Wicelius, Alvarez Pelagius, Gerson, Campegius, D'Espence, Richer, Petrarch, John Bishop of Saltzburg, Baronius, S. Bernard, &c.* as well as from the various embassies, petitions, and complaints, which were presented to the Council of *Trent* by princes, bishops, universities, and states of your own communion (a). That this is rather the dark side of the picture, I am willing to believe: but if there can be any faith in man, these features, however strongly marked, exhibit but too true a picture of that depravity into which the christian world was then sunk. Now, in opposition to all these unquestionable attestations, what signify your pretended *notes*, on which *Bellarmino* and *Nicolle* so much insist? Although even these are contested by the reformed, upon the most solid grounds (b). From all which clearly follows what at first I proposed to demonstrate, *viz.* that we never went out from your church in the sense in which you object it; that we never separated ourselves from the visible Church of Christ; and that in refusing to submit to your unequitable terms of communion, we did nothing which we cannot justify both to God and man—nothing which the circumstances we were in, and the deplorable state of religion, did not render of indispensable necessity. If all this, therefore, be allowed its proper weight,

(a) See my "Essay on Celibacy" page 90—Appeal, 171, 193, 202, or Brown's "Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum."

(b) This subject is discussed with great detail in the first volume of *Bishop Gibson's Tracts*.

it must I think be admitted, that neither the specious name of peace, the love of unity, the authority of councils, the respect to the powers that were, the fear of persecution, the prejudices of the times, nor any other pretext, were a sufficient reason to exculpate those from promoting the Reformation to the utmost of their abilities, who were convinced that a reform was requisite; and that it was never likely to be brought about by any of those pacific measures which had already so often proved unsuccessful.

UNION OF CHURCHES.—What means you would wish to propose, in order to bring about this most desirable coalition, I am wholly at a loss to conjecture; since you seem to think it evident that it can never be settled by any appeal to Scripture and antiquity. Were common sense alone to be consulted, I should really imagine that the controversy might quickly be decided. But what is common sense to one, is often folly to another. However inclined we may be to concord, or whatever be the temper of our mind, we can never hope to come to a right understanding, till some mediator, sufficiently authorized by your church, shall set forth its genuine sentiments in so fair a manner, as not to require a new comment on them in each returning age; and till she shall allow the christian world to reject both from their creed and discipline, whatever either the written Scriptures, or the dictates of plain reasoning do not warrant. The walls of separation which divide us, are but thin; yet they keep us as effectually asunder, as if we were surrounded by adamant rocks: for the *inflexible incompatibility* of your church, and her *holy delicacy* (a) will always prove a bar to any concessions we might hope for on your side. An infallible church will not easily condescend to treat upon any footing of equality with a set of fallible men, who have only the evidences of natural reasoning in their favour.—My ideas of your religion were never so confused, as since I have seen your late publication. For if the general sentiments of Catholics are really such as you have represented them, the universe must hitherto have been unacquainted with your tenets; and even catholics themselves must see with wonder in the eighteenth century, that their *declared* opinions were never understood before. How grateful ought

(a) Bossuet, *Avertissement sur les Lettres de M. Jurieu.*

they not to be to their modern Apostles, for having at length so kindly unveiled to them the hidden meaning of their old traditions!—Can you conscientiously deny but that *many things which you have advanced in these Reflections, and which they now so much applaud, would, only a few years ago, have shocked almost the most enlightened amongst them?* And what more than this is requisite to establish my assertions?

The language of my Appeal, I must again repeat, you have much misconstrued. Never have I attacked your religion unprovoked: but I have endeavoured to remove the deceitful shades which your writers constantly study to throw over the reformation, from a false appeal to what “*their fathers thought before them.*” If ever I have said what you here alledge against me, it was with various qualifications, over which you have industriously spread a veil. (a) Some few passages I might perhaps, upon a review, be inclined to alter; because I would not wish to introduce even one harsh epithet, where a softer term would equally convey my meaning. But the language of my opponents would have justified a less courteous retort, and more frequent recriminations. What! shall we be perpetually accused of wanting common sense and honesty; of wilfully impugning the known truth, and obstinacy in error? (b)—Shall we be incessantly charged with the *poverty, nakedness, and instability* of our Religion?—Shall we be reproached, in every flying pamphlet, that our Church *is no Church*; our Ministers, *no Ministers*; our Tenets, *Unscriptural*? (c)—Shall you insinuate that you view “*with pleasure*” the “*serious and well directed efforts*” of the dissenters to subvert the established Church (d)—Shall you upbraid us with being still “*supremely intolerant*” (e)—Shall the whole fabric of the reform be represented as built upon the *wilful* misrepresentations of its first abettors, (f) who are traduced and vilified on every occasion “*per fas & nefas*”——and shall nothing be passed over in our replies to such repeated insults? 'Tis true, that “*after the way which you call HERESY, so worship we the God of our Fathers,*” (g)

(a) Appeal 276, 333.

(b) Appeal, 366.

(c) Address to the Protestant Dissenters, by the Rev. Joseph Ber-  
rington, page 34.

(d) Ibid. page 41.

(e) Ibid. page 54.

(f) State and Behav. page 5.

(g) Acts. 24, 14.

believing

believing all things that are written in the law, and in the prophets :” Yet you have no other accusation against our religion, than the Jews had against *St. Paul*. And therefore, though you should call us “pestilent fellows and ringleaders of a sect,” we have this confidence in our common cause, that you can neither injure *it* nor *us*, by the harshest appellations you have it in your power to bestow. Yet, notwithstanding all this unmeaning declamation, and no little *personal* abuse, where have I once descended to such intolerant language?—Even with respect to your discipline, what have I said, which you have not confirmed? Although you must be conscious that, had I been so inclined, I might have written with much greater asperity, without departing from the truth. Often have I been requested to compile from the *Alcoran* of the Cordeliers—the *Conformities* of the life of S. Francis with that of Christ—the *Confessions Catholiques de Sancti* by *D’Aubigné*—the *Jesuites Sur L’Echaffaud* by *Farrige*—the *Provincial Letters of Paschal*—the *Perils of the latter times*—*Cressy’s Church History*—the *Lives of the Saints* by *Surius* or *Metaphrastes*—the *Biblia Mariæ*—the *Chronicum Deiparæ*—the *Marian Pfalter* of *S. Bonaventure*—*Discipulus, de Miraculis Mariæ*—the *Speculum Exemplorum*—the *Menologium Cisterciense*—*Salazar* on the *Proverbs*—the *Life of Mary A-la-Cocque*, and forty other similar Treatises which I could name, a ludicrous collection of fanaticism, blasphemy, and buffoonery : And from these I doubtless could have drawn a tale of mirth, which must have extorted a smile even from the most rigid muscles. But as I had evidently other views, so I pursued far other measures ; and sought throughout, to do as much justice as I could to my own cause, with as little injury to yours, as was consistent with equity and truth. The plan, perhaps, was not politic ; but it was christian : And this I thought of greater consequence. Let even your own “*forbearance*” be compared with mine—and the universe be judge of our respective claims!

CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS. As you profess yourself an enemy to all kinds of establishments, you must, of course, sincerely reprobate your own, which is of all others the least comprehensive and tolerant. Yet what would become of *Rome*, and even of several of those tenets by which your unity and government are upheld, if your ecclesiastical establishment

lishment were once divested of its connections with secular advantages and power? Mr. *Paley* has, I think, thrown some lights upon this much controverted subject, which are not beneath your attention. I have considered his arguments at leisure, and they have strengthened me in the opinion that, in the present state of society, some establishment or other is absolutely requisite, to prevent those greater evils that would otherwise most certainly ensue.<sup>(a)</sup> Amongst the *Dissenters* of our own country, the want of some legal provision for the clergy, as well as of some kind of *test*, seems to be attended with a variety of inconveniences. I have been credibly informed that, notwithstanding they seem so free from every species of control, yet *Orthodoxy* is as much talked of in the several subdivisions of their society, as it is amongst the divines of the national church; and that every most illiterate person of either sex, who contributes his half crown to the maintenance of the minister, thinks himself intitled to make inquiry into the *soundness* of the doctrines which he teaches. A few individuals, indeed, of that denomination, refuse to be under any kind of restraint in this respect; and in pursuit of what they deem the truth, are little solicitous even about those opinions which have, in every age, been esteemed most sacred by the general voice of mankind. But these I have also found to be greatly blamed by the dissenting society at large, however justifiable they may appear in the eyes of their own peculiar flock. And it is this very *liberty* which they assume, that is often “*the bane of concord and of fraternal amity*” amongst them.—Neither can I conceive why an *ecclesiastical* establishment in a Protestant country, is any more “*a monster*” because each man is there at liberty to chuse his own religion; than any particular form of *civil* government, which a majority of the inhabitants may agree to adopt, in a land of most perfect freedom.<sup>(b)</sup> This is a topic on which it were easy to enlarge for ever. Many sensible and pertinent reflections relative thereto, may be found in the writings to which I have referred; and these, much

(a) Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Book 6, Chap. 20.

(b) See Sturges, on Church Establishments. Cadell, 1779.

as you may have already seen, you would perhaps do well to reconsider.

If we have our "*tests and creeds*," so also have you the creed of Pope *Pius*, the declaration against *Jansenius*, and various practical doctrines, to which such of your clergy as will not subscribe, must actually "*starve*," in the literal acceptation of the word. Neither are our articles, like your's, articles of faith to which *all* must conform, or be *anathema*: since with respect to the laity, at least, they are but articles of peace and doctrine. For the maintenance of good order and decorum, we are subject to various duties, regulations, and restraints, the inseparable consequences of social life: but they are not imposed as a burden upon the conscience. The *belief* of these *articles* is not so necessary, as to exclude from a federal right to christian communion such as do not think them *all* conformable to revelation; nor is an exact compliance with these *duties* enjoined under so severe a penalty as the loss of God's grace and favour, and the forfeiture of all the privileges annexed to the Gospel covenant (a). Let it not be inferred from this, that it is my wish to inculcate that no laws enacted by any human authority can really affect the conscience, and that they are all to be considered in no other light than as mere penal injunctions. I am fully persuaded that our obedience to them should be *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake* (b). Nevertheless, I am equally convinced that the jurisdiction of human establishments only reaches to external actions, as connected with the well-being of the Community; and neither extends to a man's

(a) On the difficulties which concern the Articles, Athanasian Creed, &c. see the several works of Dr. Synge, Archbishop of Tuam, particularly in his "*Gentleman's Religion*" part 1, § 33. part 2, § 2, 22, 23, 37, with his "*Appendix*" to the same: Also his "*plain and easy method whereby a man of moderate capacity may arrive at full satisfaction in all things that concern his eternal salvation*," second edition, pages 36, 46, 51, 59, &c. In the writings of this truly pious, liberal, and judicious Prelate, I think any impartial man may find sufficient motives to settle both his belief and practice upon the most comfortable and solid foundations; as well with regard to the Christian Revelation in general, as with respect to that particular establishment which has been adopted by the English Church.—See likewise, on the Articles, Dr. Tottie's "*Charge to the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Worcester*," Oxford, 1772,—"*Appeal*" page 364.

(b) Romans, 13, 5.

private *opinions*, nor to his private *conduct* in any other way than this. Whoever professes himself a member of any society, has made a virtual compact to observe its laws—violation of which it therefore has a right to enquire into, and to correct: And for such a disobedience, individuals may often be highly guilty in the sight of heaven. But so far as this disobedience reaches the *conscience* of the offender, it is an action which is to be pleaded at that tribunal only, to which alone it is by its very nature amenable. Even that authority which the Christian Church has received immediately from heaven, extends no further than merely to exclude from her exterior communion those who reject the *Christian Covenant*, or refuse to comply with the duties it imposes. In every case wherein a transgression of the established laws interferes not with the public peace, nor disturbs the order and harmony of society, it cannot in any shape, or under any pretence, become the concern of the *Civil Magistrate*; or be subject to any such jurisdiction (by whatever persons it is exercised) as is derived from the *Civil* power. Now it is an unquestionable fact, that the non-observance of several of your ritual laws, and even a *secret* dissent from any speculative tenet of your church, will often, by the ingenious scheme of your church-discipline, expose a person who is in every other respect most truly orthodox and blameless, not only to spiritual censures, but even to corporal punishment.(a)—If this is not assuming a dominion over men's faith, as well as an unjust control over their actions, I know not what is. Yet both with regard to your clergy and laity, you have so far extended the divine commandments, as to make them embrace a variety of ordinances indifferent in themselves, though according to you, of no less rigorous obligation. Such is the whole code of your Laws relating to abstinence, fasting, sanctification of holy-days, annual confession, and other similar duties, which are now become so many necessary *parts* of your Religion; and the omission of which, none of those reasons are deemed sufficient to excuse, which would be admitted in the members of any other Christian Society, even by the most scrupulous. In short, from your high idea of Church Authority, as

(a) Appeal, 309, 359.

as well as from the prevailing notion of the extraordinary merit of conforming to the "evangelical counsels" of poverty, continency, and obedience, you have rendered burdensome and galling, that yoke of religion which our Blessed Saviour pronounced to be light and easy; and have raised the arbitrary devices and traditions of men, to a level with the positive institutions of God himself. This, Sir, it is, which constitutes an essential difference between your establishment and ours; and which gives the latter, in every light, a most decided preference.

Amongst Protestants, you say, hardly two men think alike. This is equally applicable, in *your* society, to such as dare to think at all: And upon that account it possibly is, that *Paris* is "*perhaps the most unbelieving city in the universe.*"(a) Indeed, that there is as little real union of sentiment amongst Roman Catholics, as amongst other Christians, I believe to be a certain fact; although your writers are ever ready to qualify with the softest names whatever differences happen amongst yourselves, and term those things *Scholastic difficulties*, which, when applied to us, they scruple not to call *divisions* on most material points. What we denominate *sects*, you call *Schools*; although in truth they are just the same—*Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur.* The *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, the *Dominicans* and *Jesuits*, the *Scotists* and the *Thomists* differ as much from each other, as the *Calvinists* and *Arminians*, the *Dissenters* and the *Episcopalians*, the *Methodists* and the Clergy of the *established Church*. We all agree, like you, in articles of doctrine; although we each explain them in a different manner. And if in our disputes we sometimes call each other by uncivil names, so do you also with as little ceremony: For a *Jansenist* will often call a *Molinist*, *Pelagian*; whilst a *Molinist* insists that he is a *Calvinist*, or a *Nevatian*.

To this I might add that the ancient dispute about the Pope's infallibility, though now sunk into oblivion, or that which still subsists concerning the extent of his pastoral jurisdiction over the whole world, are questions more important in their consequences, than the generality of those which are the subject of controversy amongst the reformed. Even

(a) Life of Abeillard.



*Ballarmino* himself has reckoned up no less than *six and twenty* schisms in your Church, in which it had sometimes two, and sometimes three, and sometimes no distinguishable head at all. Were these divisions not as prejudicial to unity, as some errors are to truth? Consider only that between *Urban 6*, and *Clement 8*, who for many years were mutually excommunicating each other as *Schismatics, Apostates, and Blasphemers*, whilst each had saints and miracles to support his cause. This very question concerning who was, or ought to be, Christ's vicar on earth, has caused more scandalous dissensions in christendom, than any one single point has ever occasioned amongst the different societies of Protestants. And the ambitious claims of that first magistrate, who was appointed to preserve peace and union amongst Christians, has given rise to more disturbances and bloodshed, than all the virtues of your more moderate prelates can atone for.

The *instability* of our belief, I shall have occasion to consider under another head. This favourite Bugbear of your Polemics is but a maukin fit to frighten children, who are neither acquainted with the nature of your pretended unity, nor with the security or rational grounds of their own belief.—But as you have in this place introduced an assertion no less false than artful, *viz.* that each man at the reformation received power to build “*his own faith upon his own bible,*” I must beg your patience and attention, whilst I endeavour to unfold the fallacious idea on which it is grounded. To give a comprehensive answer to all that is implied in this vague charge, is not perhaps in the power of language. But as my only object is the discovery of truth, I would rather expose myself to any other censure, than that of eluding, or of running through in a precipitate and superficial manner, an objection which by many of your party is thought to be unanswerable.

The difficulty which is meant to be conveyed by this captious imputation, I apprehend to be as follows—That since the illiterate and lower class of people can never examine, judge, and determine concerning the authenticity of the books of scripture, the fidelity of the version which they use, and the meaning of such passages as are obscure; and since even the most learned, as daily experience shews, will  
greatly

greatly vary from each other, in that system of belief which alone they think deducible from them ; therefore those who do not allow of an infallible guide, must certainly hold that *each* man is at liberty to explain his bible as to him seems best, without consulting any other authority or interpreter. I have already met this objection in my Appeal ;(a) but shall now pursue the argument somewhat further, and endeavour to set it in the fairest light.

With respect, then, to the inquisitive and learned, I must observe that, whether Catholics or Protestants, men will assume the privilege of thinking for themselves, when any difficulties occur, in spite of all professions of implicit faith : And that no Christian will be persuaded, in compliment to any human authority, to embrace any tenet which he thinks evidently opposite to the written word of God. However far he may deviate from the general opinion of others, he knows that he must stand or fall to that judge alone, who alone can witness the sincerity of his researches, and the purity of his obedience. Nor is this any more an argument against the sober use of reason, than it was an argument against the doctrines of the Messiah, that they were impugned by thousands. Subscriptions, tests, and creeds might indeed have restrained his language in a land of religious intolerance : but they can never stifle conviction, or secure an unfeigned assent.

From habit and early prepossession, a man may even perhaps believe that he really assents to whatever his Church teaches, although he is ignorant what its doctrines are. This may be an useful expedient to silence those doubts and scruples which reason will often suggest against such tenets as may appear unscriptural or improbable ; but it can never be the faith that is required of a rational being. All the "*extravagant abuse of power*" in the Church, and the no less wild *abuse* of reasoning in the darker ages, were owing to no other source than this blind submission of judgment ; whereby the people gave implicit credit to what their pastors taught them, although they neither examined, nor thought themselves at liberty to examine, whether they did not lead them astray. The personal infallibility of the Pope, his superiority

(a) Page 82, 87.

over a general council, his *indirect* authority at least over the temporals of secular princes, were once the common belief of whole nations, for no other reason than because Christians were then taught, that following the directions of an infallible Church, they could not err; and because, from this persuasion, they had no means afforded them to detect the fallacy of their belief. Had the tenets they had imbibed been even more destructive and immoral, the case would still have been the same. The individual would easily have reconciled them to his conscience, because they were taught by all his ecclesiastical superiors, from the parish priest, to the supreme vicegerent of God; and because they were inculcated, as far as he could judge or trace them, by the general voice of the Christian world. Yet would his conclusions be equally erroneous, his morality corrupt, and his belief destructive. 'Tis surely a mistaken, and most pernicious tenet!

Indeed this notion of an infallible direction to truth in every speculative point, is flattering to human pride; but it greatly weakens the powers and energy of the mind, and exposes it to scepticism and infidelity. It is much easier to fit down in a careless acquiescence to one single article of belief, however difficult to credit, and subject to illusion, than to search the scriptures in quest of truth; although this is a study which the more deeply we engage in, the more shall we be persuaded of our own ignorance and weakness, and the more solicitous to draw down by prayer and purity of life, those gracious helps which the best informed stand often most in need of. And after all, our certainty and security will increase in proportion to the validity of our reasons, and not to the confidence of our assertions: So that without any infallible direction, they may rise as high as the nature of the subject, and the present state of man, will admit. It is moreover remarkable, that those who speak most lightly of the bible, are ever willing to appeal to it, even for reasons to justify their trusting to another guide—So natural is it to believe that no opinions which it may be their wish to establish, are likely to gain admittance, unless supported by the evidence of scripture. An happy prejudice in it's favour, which no fallacious reasonings can destroy! Thus, Sir, to the learned inquirer who must *think* for himself, however well

well inclined to conform to the *language* of others, your guide is useless, and can neither add stability to his opinions, nor firmness to his faith: for judgment is a passive faculty, which, like a mirror, must reflect according to the object which is presented to it. Hence the unity you boast of, is but an unity of communion amongst yourselves; and means no more, than that all who think as you do, are members of your society—that whilst they agree with you in sentiment, they are free from all variation and instability—and that if your belief is right, they follow an unerring guide. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that the seeming unanimity that reigns amongst you, is owing rather to the force of your internal polity, than to any real agreement in opinion. For there are many in your church who, for the sake of decorum and a quiet life, comply with all its ritual laws, and yet consider the whole system of religion as a mere political engine.—Your unanimity is surely not more perfect than that which reigns amongst the deluded sectaries of *Mahomet*: and yet you would scarce suffer this to be alledged as a proof of the superior excellence of their belief.

As for the unlearned, if they have but common sense, and will pay the same attention to this concern, as they do to others in which they are warmly interested, they have means sufficient to enable them to ground a rational faith, in every country where the christian religion is professed and preached; and where every person is at liberty to inquire, object, and determine, as the motives of credibility direct him. The laws of moral duty, and the leading doctrines of revelation, are obvious to the inquiries of *all* who are supposed capable of judging of the church's claim to infallibility; which, even in your more favourable statement, requires more arguments to prove it, and stronger faith to believe it, than any doctrine delivered in the New Testament. Whether we adhere to Scripture, as a sufficient guide to all necessary truths; or to oral tradition, as the sole depositary of revelation; we must ultimately depend upon the preponderance of motives which render either system credible. So far, therefore, the belief both of Protestant and Catholic is precisely of the same nature; attained by the like steps; and resting upon similar motives. And when either of them has convinced himself that the creed he has embraced is that which has alone the  
sanction

sanction of heaven, still this can make no alteration in the nature of their respective faith, or in the firmness of their adherence to it. For as *Holden* justly observes, “ sicut impossibile est ut quisquam credat, vel assensum prebeat rei cuiusque quia a deo revelatur, nisi existimaverit et cognoverit deum illud revelasse ; ita impossibile est ut majori certitudine credat aliquis ea quæ dicuntur a deo revelari, quam qua cognoverit deum ea revelasse : ” and again, “ Cuilibet vel sensu communi prædito apertissime constat majorem certitudinem habere non posse quemcumque assensum fidei etiam divinæ, quam habeat assensus mediæ, quo hujusce objectum assensui applicatur. (a) This doctor does not pretend, with the generality of your divines, to prove the divinity of the Scriptures from the consent of the universal church, and the authority of this unanimous consent, from Scripture ; which, with all their *salvos*, is “ *per fugium circulare et orbis turpissimus* : ” but he establishes a *divine* faith upon natural certainty and evidence. (b) And therefore, according to his own principles, our faith may be as divine and as secure as yours, resting entirely on the validity of the proofs on which it is built. Faith is not an infallible certainty of any speculative truths ; but a firm assent to a divine revelation, as soon as it is proved to be such by motives of credibility. And hence it is, that we may be bound to believe the truth of many propositions which we cannot comprehend. The assent of our understanding must ever keep pace with the degree of evidence by which the revelation is made credible ; and Almighty God gives no infused or supernatural faith to any, unless by furnishing their understanding with such inducements as are sufficient to persuade them to believe. A conclusion can never be more certain than the premises on which it is built. And if we are led to your church by motives which are only highly probable, we can only believe its doctrines with the same degree of assent. A strong persuasion may likely increase our confidence ; but presumptuous confidence is often the most effectual bar to the admission of reason and truth.

If the argument you use, in favour of an unerring guide, from the various sectaries in England, has any force, you

(a) *De resol. fidei.* page 26, 27.

(b) *Ibid.* page 155.

should

should observe that it is equally strong in the mouth of a Jew or Pagan, against Christianity itself; and is, in fact, calculated to destroy all revealed religion. For, if he asks the *Arian*, the *Socinian*, the *Protestant*, the *Roman Catholic*, the *Baptist*, or the *Quaker*, they will each return him a different answer. Must he thence conclude that christianity is but an uncertain phantom? The divisions, Sir, which subsist amongst us, are no more an argument against our rule of faith, than the various heresies which sprang up even in the apostolic age, were an argument against the truth of the apostolic doctrines. If they are still in communion with us, they do not differ in essentials: and if they hold opinions essentially different from ours, they as much belong to *Rome*, as they do to us. Besides, if diversity of opinions on any subject is a presumptive proof against its certainty, what can be more uncertain than your infallibility? What can be more questionable than your traditions, about the interpretation of which your divines have always so much differed?—The objection you have here stated may even furnish a much more plausible objection against your doctrines; since each of these different societies may conclude, with equal reason, that the *Roman* union of belief is but a groundless boast, confined entirely to its own subjects, whom it keeps apparently connected by the dread of its anathemas, and the assistance of the secular arm: Whereas *all* other Churches upon earth, however divided in opinions and opposite in interests, are yet unanimous to agree that the doctrine of an unerring guide is neither revealed nor reasonable; and that it is even contrary to that general tradition, to which its abettors so confidently make their appeal. And, in real fact, this is a most striking evidence in favour of the Protestant rule of faith; which a *Mahometan* or *Jew* must naturally prefer to every other, from the simple consideration that what forms the very basis of it, namely, the divine original of the scriptures, and their purity and freedom from all material errors, is acknowledged even by you. Neither do you pretend to build one article of your faith upon any text or passage in the divine writings, which Protestants read differently from your own expositors.—And it little matters to the solidity of this conclusion, what is the motive that has engaged you to receive them.

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The many and serious evils that have been occasioned in the Christian world, by the numbers of sects and parties which have started up, are truly a lamentable consideration. For these divisions have been highly detrimental to the cause of religion in general, and have occasioned much perplexity and uneasiness to such individuals as have been sincere inquirers after truth. But it should seem, nevertheless, that all this wrangling and disputing might easily be settled by a very obvious method. That we should all agree even in such points as by many are judged to be important, is not to be expected: but much even of this importance might be overlooked, if we could but come to a fair understanding with each other. The method therefore which I would propose, is this: *That we should be satisfied to agree in such things as are, and ever have been esteemed sufficient, by every Christian Church, to entitle an infidel returning to its bosom, to a full participation in all the rights and privileges of the Christian Covenant.* For whatever has *no where*, or at *no time*, been considered as a part of the profession of an adult person at his admission to baptism, cannot, *in the judgment of the Universal Church*, be looked upon as necessary to qualify a man to be a true member of her society—or, in other terms, be a fundamental part of the Christian covenant, and entitle him to salvation upon the Gospel terms. Now, the profession that *any* Church has required on such an occasion, was, that the *suppliant* should renounce all sin and wickedness, should promise obedience to all God's commandments, and should confess his honest and sincere belief of those articles which are expressed in the Apostles creed. And what more can be required to a right of *continuing* in its communion, than a faithful compliance with those very terms upon which it professes to *admit* its members to it? From all which I conclude, that as even the Roman Church, to this very day,<sup>(a)</sup> requires none of those things to be believed or practiced, which Protestants object to; none of these things can therefore be necessary to constitute a person an orthodox member of her society. If God does not require them, why should she? Whence does she derive an authority to make the pale of Christ's Church more narrow than the Apostles left it?

(a) This is clearly evident from its ritual, and the form of baptism which is there prescribed.

To this the only answer is, that all these things are sufficiently implied in the one article of "*belief in the Catholic Church.*" But I shall shew hereafter from the most authentic documents, that to believe *in* the Church is no part of a Christian's creed; and that this article has a very different meaning from that which you would willingly affix to it. If this one article be alone sufficient, why is not this alone proposed; or why is not the profession of Pope *Pius* tendered at baptism? This certainly is more comprehensive and explicit than any other creed which had appeared before it. But to oblige your *Neophytes* to assert that the Church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all Churches—that all things delivered and defined by the sacred canons and general councils, should be professed under pain of anathema; without determining which those councils and canons are—and that all this, with the various tenets which these have introduced, is included in that faith, *out of which no man can be saved . . .* would be an innovation which even the *Catholic* world is not yet tutored to put up with.<sup>(a)</sup> However a man may even afterwards *explain* the articles of his baptismal creed, still this does not interfere with his right to Christian communion, so long as he honestly professes his belief of them in the very words in which they were stated to him at the time of his admission. The *Comment* which he judges it incumbent on him to make upon these words, can only be settled in his own conscience. And if he secretly cherishes any thing in his heart which is inconsistent with this profession, and cannot be reconciled with it, he must answer it to heaven. Of his words and actions only has man a right to determine. And he must seek for truth with sincere enquiry, as well as pursue, both in word and action, the peace of that establishment under which he lives, at his own eternal hazard.—Further than this, every person should be left in the undisturbed enjoyment of such speculative explanations of the words of scripture and his creed, as his own conscience may warrant. Such terms alone should in general be used, as revelation has adopted: or at least it should be an avowed principle not to be held to any *interpretation* of

(a) See Dr. Syngé's "Charitable Address," pages 7, 16, and the Creed of Pope Pius.



scriptural expressions, which appears inconsistent with any plain scriptural doctrines. This is certainly a principle to which every person who reasons, does in fact adhere. It should therefore satisfy the scruples of the most timorous conscience, that our Church has declared, that *nothing is to be required of any man*, (a) which cannot be proved from the written law : And consequently, whatever ideas or explanatory comments any particular person affixes to some of its *declarations* or expressions ; yet if this sense is either inconsistent with other parts of its articles or creeds, or is plainly contradictory to scripture, or obviously clashes with the evidences of natural reason, he may be confident that this is not the sense in which either his assent or subscription is desired. Many, therefore, have I known, who from full conviction admit sincerely the general doctrines of Christianity, as proposed by the English Church ; and yet esteem themselves as no ways held to receive those arbitrary explications by which they are so often disfigured. So true it is, that perhaps no two men on earth ever saw the same object precisely in the same point of view. Can we doubt but that the eunuch, and the keeper of the prison, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, made a sufficient profession of their faith, to constitute them true believers ; and to entitle them to the communion of all Christian societies ? (b)

In the most interesting concerns of life, the bulk of mankind must necessarily be guided by the judgment and opinions of others ; and will always be inclined to follow the direction and sentiments of those whom they esteem for their wisdom and goodness. Why should they not be in some degree under the same influence with respect to religion ? Nay, in reality, it ever is so, as well in your society as ours : For there are few who conform to the tenets of either, from any better or more reflected motive. This is a natural prejudice which ever has, and ever will prevail : And which, when joined to an upright heart, a moral life, and a

(a) Article, 6.

(b) Acts 8 and 16.—How far, and in what respects a person may, for the sake of peace and unanimity, conform to the general practices of any Christian Establishment, under which he may chance to live, may be seen in the third part of Dr. Synge's "Gentleman's Religion."

sober use of that reason which God has given him, will more surely guide an humble Christian both to truth and to salvation, than any implicit reliance on an infallible teacher, which is at most a very obscure and uncertain tenet. The evidence of this position is so undeniable, that some of your best writers have seen themselves obliged to admit the general principle. Yet as the application of it seemed to clash with some other parts of their favourite system, they have mostly found it requisite to qualify it with some *proviso*, to soften the concession. "Qui rebus divinis assensum præbent," says *Holden*, page 23, "propter testimonium dei revelantis, sibi applicatum mediantibus rectorum ac pastorum suorum institutionibus & disciplinis, hi quidem . . . dum . . . certissimè ei inhærent fidei divinæ quam hoc modo receperunt et tenent, constat horum fidem tutissimam esse, ipsosque in rebus fidei securos, *Modo* sint membra illius societatis et ecclesiæ quæ veritatem omnem amplectitur et docet:" the plain English of which is, that those who are finally proved to have been in the right, will clearly see that they have not been misled!

Besides, this persuasion is dangerous to the interests of society, and the happiness of the human race: For, as you have observed, (a) when "once you lay hold of a man's conscience, you may lead him where you will." If, therefore, any crafty or designing villain in your Church, (and where is there a society without a *Judas*?) should wish, for private ends, to instill into the minds of those who consider him as their appointed guide and father, any maxims destructive of their principles or morals; to what scenes of iniquity might he not gradually conduct them! And instances are not wanting in history, wherein undue advantages have actually been taken of this persuasion. When a person has been long habituated to submit his own lights and reason, and proceed with a confidential security in his teacher's guidance, how easily may he be persuaded to adopt the most criminal measures, even before he suspects their evil tendency or consequence? Whereas another, who is taught on every point to reason and examine, is not so readily imposed on. A wolf in the clothing of a sheep is always to be feared; but is

(a) *State and Behaviour of the Roman Catholics*, 165, first edition.

never so truly dangerous, as when apparently sent amidst the fold by the shepherd's own direction.

Whatever arguments can be brought to shew the uncertainty of a Protestant's faith, as grounded upon Scripture, are no less applicable to the Roman Catholic tenet of tradition. For it equally demands time, talents, and combination, to trace the traditions he finds delivered by his pastor, through all the steps that can render him secure that they are genuine and incorrupt: since even you must grant, that not only individual bishops, priests, and doctors, but very numerous assemblies of men, nay, even entire kingdoms and provinces, have often mistated, mistaken, or disguised them. (a) And many of your present tenets have been floating about in the imaginary spaces of the universal church, till your divines or councils have thought proper to call them gradually into a visible existence; and then, with a certain semblance of unanimity, agreed to give them an ideal pedigree, to support their high pretensions. I say, *in the imaginary spaces*; for where else can these traditions have existed in such obscurity, as to have been unknown to many of those who have held the most distinguished places in the christian church? Where can they have slept for ages in undisturbed repose, unheeded by those very guardians to whose peculiar care they had been consigned?—If the apostles knew them to be revealed, why did they in their writings omit to mention them even in the slightest manner? And if *you* received them by oral revelation, how came you to be so faithless to your trust, as not to teach them in every age with a degree of *visibility* which none could question? (b)

From all this it is manifest, that a prudent determination in favour of tradition requires as much discussion, as it does to form a system of belief from the Scriptures only. These

(a) Roman Catholic divines, I believe, are generally agreed that at Ephesus, One Hundred and Thirty-five Bishops— at Rimini, Four Hundred—in the reign of the tyrant Basiliscus, Five Hundred—at Constantinople, Three Hundred and Thirty eight—at Francfort, Three Hundred—in the days of Donatus, Four Hundred, swerved in their declarations or subscriptions, from tradition and truth; or at least did what was abundantly sufficient to mislead the ideas of those whom they were appointed to edify and instruct. See “*Abregé chronol. de l'hist. Eccles.*” Paris, 1768, vol. 1, page 227, 265.

(b) See some excellent reasoning on this subject in Chillingworth, chap. 4, § 18.

it is each person's interest to investigate. He knows, from the universal consent of all christian societies, that they are genuine and incorrupt : he sees that in many points they are clear : and in those that are less so, he interprets them according to the best of his power ; paying a just deference to the general opinions of mankind, yet placing his chief reliance on the promises and goodness of Almighty God, *Luke xi. 9*. In this case, he can only be exposed to one single source of error, namely, the obscurity of that word which was dictated by the holy spirit to be his guide and comfort, the light by which he was to walk, the rule of all his conduct ; and which, the same divine instructor had promised to explain. Whereas, in consulting tradition, before he can discover what it is, and prove it to have reached him genuine, he has a thousand difficulties to encounter, a thousand sources of error to apprehend, from time, ignorance, prejudice, or malice.

With respect to *written* traditions, before a proper discernment can be made, each christian must consult the original repositories of them—he must be secure he has the genuine readings—be acquainted with the learned languages—be skilled in history, both sacred and profane. He must be deeply versed in the knowledge of mankind—be possessed of critical ingenuity and skill ; and have a thorough insight into the idioms of different tongues, as well as into the customs and manners of ancient nations. He must be able to distinguish what was only abuse or prejudice, from what was doctrine and belief. He must turn over the voluminous pages of the fathers and councils, and comprehend the precise meaning of doctrines and decrees which often are conceived in terms equivocal and obscure. He must reconcile opposite passages, clear up apparent contradictions, and be secure that the various writings which have either been lost, or wantonly destroyed, did not contain a different tradition from that which was to be collected from such as time, and injury, and accident, had spared. He also must be assured that they have not been mangled by the ignorant or officious zeal of some inquisitorial corrector (a). In a word, he must both *be* and *do*, what scarce

(a) How justly this is frequently to be apprehended, may be seen in the " *Index Expurgatorius Operum Erasmi*," in the tenth volume of

scarce a single person since the creation, either *was*, or *did*.

Besides, have we not reason to believe that many of the fathers who preached and wrote so much, indulged themselves often in the use of figurative and hyperbolical language, to excite the attention, and work upon the passions of their hearers? Or rather, since they sometimes have acknowledged that this was frequently the case, can we be persuaded, that by construing such rhetorical expressions in a literal sense, a variety of misconceptions have not ensued?—These were, no doubt, the motives which engaged our famous *Chillingworth* to insist so much that every thing beyond the Bible, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable, consequences of it, could never be held by any, but as a matter of opinion. And as he had seen *with his own eyes*, “Popes against Popes, councils against councils, some fathers against others, the same fathers against themselves, and a consent of fathers in one age against a consent of fathers in another age;” so, after a long and impartial search of the true way to everlasting happiness, he was forced plainly to confess that he could find no “rest for the sole of his foot, but upon this rock only.” (a)

It must also be remarked, that in many of the points which are now controverted between the Reformed and Roman Churches, we are not disputing about questions which have always been held, taught, and delivered down, whether by written documents or living voice, in clear unequivocal terms, of which the exact import was known by all who conformed to the practices built upon them; but about *doctrines* which, even according to yourselves, (b) have been *gradually*

of his works. “You may here behold Erasmus,” says Dr. Jortin, “delivered into the hands of the theological-barber-surgeons; all over bruised, mangled and deformed, and appearing like Deiphobus in Virgil, or like an antique battered statue, or like the traveller in the Gospel who fell amongst thieves, or like Job upon the dunghill, persecuted by his wife, his friends, and the devil. These inquisitors have not only censured the Epistles of Erasmus, but those of his correspondents who had said civil things of him.” *Life of Erasmus*, vol. 2, page 283.—Many of the ancient writers have doubtless undergone a similar fate. See Appeal, p. 130.

(a) Religion of Protestants a safe way to Salvation, ch. 6, § 56.

(b) De purgatorio apud priscos nulla vel quam rarissima fiebat mentio . . . aliquandiu incognitum fuit . . . Cum itaque tam sero receptum

*dually* developed and more openly explained in the course of ages; and about *practices* which, at most, only prove that *something* was believed and done in early times, which served for a foundation to your present creed and discipline. So the existence of a purgatory, in the modern acceptance of that tenet—the divine precept of auricular confession—the corporal presence of Christ in the Sacrament, &c. may seem to have the current of tradition in their favour. But this apparent tradition, when duly canvassed, will be found too indeterminate and vague, to establish any of these doctrines with clearness and precision. This must readily be acknowledged by every one who will seriously and fairly consider the confusion and indistinctness that reigns in the language and ideas of the far greater part of mankind. The testimony of tradition can only bear witness to matter of fact, and not to opinions; which may, indeed, be sometimes presumed from facts, but not with sufficient evidence to serve as a foundation for *certain* faith. And therefore, little stress can ever be laid upon the equivocal practices and institutions of any society, in order to ascertain the precise doctrines and belief which have been maintained by it. Hence, although Protestants receive the sacrament in a posture of adoration; yet it does not follow from hence, that they adore the bread—They call it still *the body of Christ*, yet they do not believe in transubstantiation; and only call it so, because as *S. Augustin* remarks, “Sacraments, from their similitude to those things of which they are sacraments, often assume the names of the things themselves”. And in another place, “It was not said that the rock *signified* Christ, but that *it was* Christ; for thus the Scripture usually expresses itself, calling the things that signify, like those that are signified. (a)”—Even you yourselves are extremely unwilling that Protestants should form their notions of your religion from the practices which prevail, and have prevailed for ages, in all your most flourishing establishments; or from the language which is used in most of your devotional writ-

ceptum fuerit ecclesiæ, quis jam de indulgentiis mirari potest, quod in principio nullus fuerit earum usus.” Fisher against Luther. Could this tenet have been inculcated from age to age, and yet be never mentioned by any of the primitive fathers, either Greek or Latin?

(a) Appeal, 372.

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ings. (a) But whatever concessions we may make in favour of mere *language*, it is certain, that under the shelter of that obscurity with which the quibbles of the Schools had involved all human literature, even many novel doctrines were introduced. And if the opinions of *Berengarius* met with an opposition which proved their recent origin in the eleventh century; (b) the form of abjuration which was prescribed to him by Pope *Nicholas* and 113 Bishops, shews that even *they* entertained but very imperfect ideas of the tenet which they wished him to adopt. (c)

That this should frequently be the case in your Church, is extremely natural. For some of your most illustrious theologians and saints have occasionally set forth it's tenets with so much obscurity and unfairness, that it must be nearly impossible for their people to ascertain what their real opinion was. Thus Cardinals *Capisucchi* and *Cajetan*, as well as *SS. Bonaventure* and *Thomas* assert, in express terms, that the cross and images of Christ are to be worshipped with the same adoration of *Latria* which is due to God himself; that all images are entitled to the same kind of worship as the original they represent; and that this is the doctrine of the councils of *Nice* and *Trent*. This sentiment *Capisucchi* supports by the testimony of many Doctors, Professors, and Cardinals, and in a work which is honoured with numberless approbations; though, at the same time, it is an opinion highly disapproved of by *Bossuet*, in a treatise no less esteemed, and published with the sanction even of *Capisucchi* himself. Now, without entering into any of the niceties of the School, whether, for example, "The representative image, as representative, be representatively one and the same thing with the thing represented;" I only wish to ask the simple question, whether, upon any account whatever, or in any sense attainable by persons of plain understanding, it be lawful to pay *divine* homage to the Cross of Christ? And yet these are the men on whose oral deposition your people are to depend. (d)

(a) Appeal, 316. Tracts, vol. 3, tit. 9, p. 94, 96, 190, and Ib. tit. 12.

(b) Life of Abeillard, p. 25.

(c) Appeal, 42. (d) The evasions and subterfuges of the Bishop of Meaux on this subject, may be seen in Bishop Gibson's Tracts, vol. 3, page 131. See also the pages 19, 62, 222, 236, 383, of the same volume.

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With what face, then, can *Holden* assert that no Protestant can prove the scriptures to be the genuine word of God, so clearly and completely as not to leave room for the possibility of mistake; or, in what sense can you reproach the most illiterate mechanic with being free to build his "*own faith upon his own bible,*" when it appears most evidently, that he has the same security as you have for the scriptures he receives, and a far more easy rule for their right interpretation, in every point connected with his happiness or salvation. For he may find many *helpers to his joy*, though none presume to have *dominion over his faith*, 2 Cor. 1, 24. This surely is not interpreting his bible with no other guidance than his own capricious whim. For in this, as in all other inquiries, a Protestant must conform to every rule which reason and prudence dictates, proceeding with the utmost diffidence and caution; and what can a Catholic do more? Is it not by the *private* spirit that you chuse your Church, and submit to tradition? In your system therefore, no less than in ours, the most unlettered mechanic determines for himself; and if he does not build his faith upon *his own bible*, yet if he embraces his religion from reasoning and conviction, he builds it upon his *own private judgment*. Judges we all are, and Judges we must be in one sense or other. But as we all determine in our religious concerns at our own expence and peril, this is, and ought to be, the most effectual curb upon the presumption of our inquiries. And therefore mere private spirit, or wanton caprice is equally dangerous to all; whether it be indulged *in* the road that leads to salvation, or only whilst we are seeking to *discover* the road which is to conduct us to it.—Thus, Sir, it is, that your writers are for ever misinterpreting our doctrines, and then pretend to shew the absurdity of them. Our tenets with regard to private spirit, the supremacy of our sovereign, Salvation through faith alone, &c. have all been equally mistated and turned to derision. They first erect a Phantom of their own, and call it Protestancy; and this they make it their glory to defeat: Whereas our real tenets have not the least connection with this pageant of their creating, and cannot be the least affected by its fall.

But Protestants may still mistake the sense of Scripture in places that are obscure! This I am willing to allow; though

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not in such a manner, as to endanger their eternal welfare. You, on the contrary, assert that even with regard to the most intricate points, a Catholic can never err. But *cannot* admits no proof, neither does it lie open to argument; since in such a state of mind almost any plausible assertion will bear the weight of evidence. You further urge that if the Scriptures were meant as a rule of faith, it is absurd to grant that in many places they are so indeterminate, that none can be certain that they have attained their real meaning; which constitutes the written word a revelation unrevealed, a light involved in darkness—and consequently a very uncertain guide. (a) I apprehend, however, that this seeming difficulty arises only from a wrong conception, both of the nature and design of the written Scriptures. For with respect to *all* mankind, whatever is not sufficiently clear, was not intended as a revelation. To a Catholic this can create no difficulty, as it is exactly the case with him in respect to every passage in Scripture which his Church has not explained; and many there doubtless are, which it will never attempt to unravel. How many controversies are there, in which it never has been able to determine what its own traditions are! Did it dare venture to define what was the use or nature of indulgences, even at a time when the whole christian world was over-run with abuses derived from the misapplication of this very tenet?—This is a consideration which ought to engage you to admit with us, that it is by no means necessary that every controversy which can arise, should be decided; but that it is sufficient, to make good the promises of Christ, if the church is guided into *all* such *truths* only, as the nature of his covenant requires to be made known. If all religious debates whatever must necessarily be determined without appeal, is it not a cruel neglect in those to whom this supreme authority is delegated, not to set forth an infallible comment upon the whole *written*, as well as *oral* law, and settle at once the complete code of their religion, beyond the reach of doubt or cavil? There

(a) Such arguments as are connected with the subject you have treated, I take the liberty to introduce whenever they cross my way, as if they really had been objected. My apology for so doing is obvious. We are not, I hope, contending either for applause or victory; but only seeking for truth and mutual information.

are several things in the sacred writings which require no other assent, than a general acquiescence that they are such as God has declared; but to which we are not called on to attach any *clear* idea. Let us then believe that there are some relative distinctions in the one only God—that Christ is his Son—that he and the Father are one—that the Father is greater than the Son of Man—that Christ was born of a Virgin, of the holy Spirit—that he was truly God, and truly man, &c. because we must be sure that these propositions are, in some sense or other, strictly true; since they either are asserted in the most unambiguous terms, or appear so clearly to follow from a comparison between the various passages wherein *Jehova* and *Jesus* are mentioned, that the scriptures seem in every other system perfectly unintelligible. But let us neither endeavour to develop these doctrines, nor presume to account for them, nor build any fancied system on them, nor draw conclusions from them which possibly the premises may not warrant, nor require of others to see them precisely in the same light that we do, and explain them exactly according to our own conceptions; nor injudiciously transfer the apparent opposition of the terms we use, to the subject itself which we consider. For it seems to me, I must acknowledge, the height of absurdity to affirm that we clearly perceive a contradiction between terms which we confessedly do not apprehend, or about which our various apprehensions must unavoidably be widely different.—And hence it is, that we daily see several persons assent unfeignedly to the same general proposition, although each explains it in a different sense. Thus you and I believe the article of the “Catholic Church” inserted in the Apostles Creed, to which, nevertheless, we most assuredly attach a very different idea. The ubiquity and self-existence of God, without beginning or cause—the creation of the world out of nothing—the influence of the soul over our material organs—the phenomena of weight, elasticity, magnetism, electricity, motion, space—the existence of moral evil under a merciful God who could prevent it—liberty, free will, &c. include not only a variety of obscurities, but seeming contradictions. We are convinced most firmly that the planetary orbs are pendent in the vast expanse, without support or prop—that the earth is globular, and that we have *antipodes* and seas beneath us

—that in a right angled triangle, the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the squares of the two other sides, &c; Still what can be more evidently absurd, or less intelligible, than these assertions to an unenlightened peasant? Can even the most wise of men form any just conception of the memory, that vast repository of thought, in which ten thousand different ideas are laid up without confusion, and may be called forth at pleasure? To a man born blind what can appear a greater falsehood and absurdity, than that he can be represented to the life, by means of shades and colours, in the diameter of a sixpence, so as to be rendered present, in a certain manner, to his absent friends? Must not also the relation of distant trees, steeples, fields, and cities, delineated on the retina of the eye with perfect distinctness, in their proportionate size and distance, appear to him the grossest imposition? And yet we cannot deny but that he may, from motives of credibility, have a firm belief of these several facts; as well as a conviction that it is only the want of a proper organ to enable him to judge, which occasions all his ignorance and doubts. (a) From this it clearly follows that we *may*, nay, often *do*, assent to that, of which we can form no clear apprehension; provided the authority be undoubted, and the assertion plain. For motives of credibility may often induce us to agree to a simple proposition, at the same time that we are unable to apprehend, or frame any distinct conception of the things contained under the terms in which it is asserted. And this it properly is, in which *faith* consists; the very essence of which is totally destroyed by those evident deductions of reason which some modern metaphysicians expect to the belief of any position, however clearly contained in the revealed word of God; not considering that this requires nothing more, in things that are *above* our reason, than a general assent and acquiescence. *That* they are true, we cannot doubt—*how* they are so, we need not inquire. Nor does the precise import of them form any part of that revelation which was designed for us. Perhaps they were slightly mentioned, to keep us

(a) See, on this subject, some pertinent observations, in the Appendix to Dr. Synges "Gentleman instructed;" where he has also clearly pointed out the difference between such things as are *above*, and such as are *contrary* to reason.

diffident and humble, from a consciousness of our own ignorance, and the shortness of our views; and yet they were not detailed, or dwelt on, in a more explicit manner, because in a more explicit conception of them we have no concern. Let us ever bear in memory that, in the present world, it is appointed that we should only "know in part;" and that even with respect to natural religion, there are some obscurities which human reason can never so entirely clear up, as to completely satisfy a speculative mind. But, "such is the state of man:" And who shall dare, in the insolence of self sufficiency, to say to his creator—*why hast thou made me thus?*—Is religion to be the only subject in which we will admit of nothing which we cannot comprehend? An establishment may chuse what *test* it pleases as a cement of union, and each society has an acknowledged right to settle its own terms of admission; which in reality is nothing more than saying "we explain things thus, and if you are of the same opinion, we think alike; and will therefore go together." But *Civil* establishment has nothing to do with *Christian* communion. (a)

The considerations which I have offered in this section, do away, in my opinion, every difficulty relating to the obscurity of the scripture; at the same time that they shew

(a) Let it not be inferred from hence, that I think there is no connection in this kingdom between *Church* and *state*, or between our religious and civil establishment; because I am perfectly convinced that the former, when adopted by the civil power, is to be considered as blended with that civil establishment, which the body representative of the nation has chosen. Whether any church-establishment is necessary, or whether any particular one is equitable, is foreign to the present purpose. But whilst in fact it does subsist, and has the sanction of the legislature, it becomes a part of the constitution of the realm. And in this discussion we should rather argue upon what really is, than attend to any abstract *hypotheses*, which in the present state of things have no existence. This is a consideration not to be neglected when we read "Bishop Hoadly's refutation of Bishop Sherlock", and Dr. Campbell's late "Vindication," &c. addressed to the Bishop of Cloyne. These learned and estimable writers have, I think, both, occasionally lost sight of the true state of the question. Yet although for various reasons it appears to me incontestible that only the members of the church by law established can be sincere in their attachment to the "entire constitution" of this nation, still am I convinced that both with respect to toleration and "confidence," all Protestant Dissenters stand in a very different point of view from those of the church of Rome.

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the absurdity of appealing to *written* tradition, as affording a greater security than the Protestant rule of faith.—The system of *oral* tradition delivered down from father to son, without variation or change, even from the Apostles time, will be examined in another place, and demonstrated, I hope, to be equally chimerical.

INDIFFERENCE IN RELIGION. As to the knowledge or belief of speculative points not clearly set down in scripture, but only enforced by the decrees of councils and a presumed tradition, I must acknowledge it my opinion that *little is enough*; Nor do we wish to model our belief otherwise, than as we find it delivered by the Apostles. We consider the Christian scheme in a most comfortable, as well as respectable light; and the writings of our divines attest that we can both feel, and express our sentiments of this covenant of love and mercy, with as much energy as you. We wish, moreover, that all mankind were united in one great society, with “one heart and one mind.” But where have we taught that the truth which is in Jesus, may be a “*Cypher at the option of human wit?*” Many of the sectaries you mention, differ little from each other in essential points; far less than you from *Bellarmino*—or an *English Catholic*, from one of *Spain, Portugal, or Rome*. Besides the mere existence of God, they believe in the resurrection, the immortality of the Soul, a future state of Retribution, the divine mission of Christ, and the inspiration of the Scriptures, in every point wherein the sacred writers declare that they were commissioned from God to speak. These important truths were never known to *Plato* and the ancient world, as they are to us; neither were the rules of morality so perfectly delineated, or so clearly taught. Does the belief of these points reduce the benefits of Revelation to such a trifle as you would wish to represent it?—Are the millions of divine truths, and promises, and precepts, which all these several societies see clearly expressed in Scripture, and cheerfully acknowledge, but little more than what was known before to Pagans? Are they not in fact of infinitely greater importance, than the few questions about which they disagree—and this in words alone, most frequently, rather than in the substance of their belief?

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As to those particular questions you mention, respecting which a *few* individuals think themselves authorized to hold opinions which differ from the general sense of mankind, I will only say, that though I believe them to be erroneous, yet I do not think some of them so totally subversive of the Christian faith as you do : Especially as I am well assured that scarce any two persons, either in your Church or ours, affix to the same words precisely the same ideas. This is a truth of which we need no other vouchers, than the disputes between the *nominal* and *real* Trinitarians, toward the close of the last century ; (a) the various writings published on the *Quinquarticular* controversy ; (b) or the opposite opinions relative to predestination and grace, which were maintained by *Cajetan* and *Soto*, and which each pretended to support by the authority of the same Council, the *unerring* declarations of which they had both contributed to form (c) Since therefore with regard to questions which are in themselves abstruse, there reigns so much uncertainty, as well in the ideas, as in the language of the most educated men, Tradition is but of little use ; and we must rest satisfied with such a knowledge of them only, as Almighty God has thought proper to impart. Had he required them to be more explicitly believed, he would, I am confident, have revealed them in a more explicit manner. And if they had been designed to be received upon the authority of mere oral deposition, this testimony would have been both evident and unambiguous. Whereas, the higher we pursue your traditionary practices and tenets in the records of the Christian Church, the traces of them gradually appear more faint ; till having perhaps discovered some imperfect glimmerings of them in the fifth or sixth century ; if we venture to carry our researches further, they are generally found to elude even the most keen inquiry.

(a) See a Sensible Pamphlet, entitled " a Short View of the Tenets of the Tritheists, Sabellians, Trinitarians, &c." second edition, Johnson, 1780. And the " Candid Reflections" of Mr. Fawcett, on the same subject, second edition. Shrewsbury, 1778.

(b) Letters to Dr. Kippis, by Josiah Tucker, D. D. Dean of Gloucester, 1773.

(c) Fra. Paolo's Hist. Con. Trid. by Courayer, 4to. pages 386, 420, vol. 2.

Religion I think a matter of too much consequence to take it upon trust. And unity in belief I esteem desirable and preferable to variation, although it is not so essential, as to be preserved at the expence of truth. Thus also it may seem to us, that an exemption from all vice and failings would be preferable to a state of peccability; yet dare I not arrest that wisdom, which "reacheth with might from end to end, and sweetly ordereth all things!" And, as a possibility of deviating from the rules of perfect virtue is not destructive of all morality, so neither is partial variation destructive of all faith, and ruinous to the Christian system. We have as good a guide to faith, as to practical morality; and Almighty God has as little engaged to secure our understanding from all error, as our hearts from all possibility of defilement—Yes, Sir, I really am convinced that *truth* is in itself desirable, and that *schism* is a sin of deepest dye. It therefore nearly concerns both you and us, as we value our Salvation, to pursue the former, and to dread the imputation of the latter. It is not a false conscience, nor sincerity in belief that will alone exculpate us, unless we take all proper means to be enlightened. Ignorance will never be a plea for pardon; nor will the firmest conviction render us secure, unless we cautiously examine the ground on which we stand, and inquire, with impartial scrutiny, into the motives, either of our conformity or our dissent. But yet we know, with a conviction that no sophistry can destroy, that Almighty God will never impute to his creatures any errors or mistakes which they have been industrious to avoid, or to dispel, to the utmost of their abilities: More especially, if they have always kept their mind in a proper disposition to embrace the truth, by the practice of a virtuous life. Nevertheless, it does not follow from hence, that a *Mahometan* or *Pagan* is therefore upon an equal footing with those who are admitted to the *Christian* covenant. For although we are certain that no man will ever be blamed, or punished, for a defect in his understanding, or an error morally invincible—And notwithstanding it is equally certain, that all are bound to adhere to that religion, which, upon a fair inquiry, appears to them the best; yet, how far Heaven may reward them for their good meaning and honest

honest endeavours, we have no sufficient grounds to determine. (a) Not that we presume to assign any limits to the *uncovenanted* mercies of God ; but yet it may be affirmed without temerity, or any impeachment of his goodness, that those who are not members of the Christian Church, are not in the *ordinary* way to Salvation, nor have any certain *promise* to confide in. Great, therefore, and many are the advantages of the Christian revelation : And it is an unspeakable happiness to be *secure*, both of forgiveness upon our sincere return from sin, and of a reward which will surpass even our utmost wishes, if we do but comply with the terms of the covenant to which we have been admitted. For, whatever may be the opinion of some late writers, it is at least very uncertain, whether mere repentance entitles one who has offended, to full forgiveness ; and much less, to favour and reward : Since even “ sinless virtue can have no title to that superabundance of grace promised by Christianity.” (b) This might be shewn by a variety of reasons, drawn from the nature of God’s Government : And no one will believe that a life of perfect innocence, and a life of sin, however sincerely repented of, can ever, in the mere line of nature and equity, be considered as upon a perfect equality. This is a point on which I have the more insisted, because I have so frequently seen it asserted by your writers, that the tolerant opinions of Protestants give countenance to that kind of *indifference* with respect to religion, which seems to reduce almost to nothing the advantages of the Christian revelation ; and that they have adopted principles which tend to persuade mankind that truth is but in a small degree to be preferred to error, provided this be embraced with sincerity and full conviction.

If some men have thought proper to adopt peculiar sentiments which the generality of mankind have judged ill-founded, they are to account to Heaven alone for their motives. But how many have done the same in an infallible Church ? Whence, but from that Church, originated every heresy that arose before the æra of the reformation ? Nevertheless, opinions of this nature should certainly not

(a) Appeal, page 7.

(b) See Dr. Price’s fifth Sermon, “ on the Character of Christ, as Saviour of the World.”



be adopted without mature deliberation, and with the utmost diffidence: For as God can undeniably reveal more than we can comprehend, we ought ever to mistrust our own limited apprehension, and never seek to accommodate to our ideas the positive declarations of eternal truth, which ought to be admitted or rejected, not as our reason makes them clear, but as it makes the revelation credible. There are, as I before observed, in nature, a thousand phenomena apparently impossible, and inconsistent with some of our clearest notions: and yet we believe them real. So also would it doubtless be with respect to various seeming oppositions which we meet with in the Scriptures, if the terms which we have been accustomed to apply to *matter*, were equally distinct when applied to *spirit*. To withhold our belief on any article, merely because we cannot perfectly reconcile it to our own conceptions, which are often far from being perfectly distinct, or to certain other passages in holy writ with which they may appear to clash, is just as absurd, as it would be in a man born blind, or deaf, to deny the existence of sounds, or colours, and all the wonderful appearances dependent on them. That the *Rock was Christ*—that the *Cup was the New Testament*—that the *Seven Ears of Corn were Seven Years*—that the *Bread is to us the Body of Christ* &c, we cannot doubt, because all this is asserted. But that what was bread, is physically transubstantiated into human flesh, we do not credit, because this is an induction from the words of Christ which they do not warrant. Yet had he asserted even *this* in express terms, I should certainly have thought myself bound to believe it, notwithstanding all the arguments from reason which I now think so conclusive against it. And to require such a submission to a revealed truth, is no more an encroachment on the rights of private judgment, than it is an invasion of the same rights, when we object to a deaf person's determination respecting a concert of music, or refuse to a child the liberty of deciding upon subjects which lie beyond his knowledge and comprehension. Well do I know that the above concession may lead to abuse, and should be admitted with caution: But the principle upon which it is built, appears to me undeniable. And if once I could persuade myself that it must inevitably lead to those inconveniencies with which some  
sceptic

sceptic reasoners have thought it chargeable, my next conclusion would certainly be that all revealed religion was a mere matter of calculation, a system of which both the utility and the existence were highly problematical. It is not requisite, in our present state, that every cloud of hesitation should be entirely dispelled. But yet it seems essential to man's happiness, that there should at least be one point on which his faith and hopes might be immoveably established. Now, if the divine original of the scriptures, and their preservation in a state of purity and uncorruptedness as to all material articles, is not this *rock* on which our confidence may rest secure, we may be for ever *tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness*: (a) and all our belief and hopes, respecting religion, and a *future* life, as well as the duties of the *present*, will become unquestionable, probable, or uncertain, in an endless ebb and flow, according to the credulity or scepticism of the times.

That some may "*more than think*" that they find in scripture that *Christ* was but a mere man like themselves, I do not deny. But what is this to the firmness of my conclusion?—Is it uncertain that the Messiah is already come, because the Jews disown it? Is the existence of the Deity a matter of speculation only, because Spinoza, Vanini, and a *fictitious* Hammond have disbelieved it? I know, indeed, that even in your society, it begins to be a favourite maxim, as a presumed auxiliary to your modern system, that the divinity of the Son of God is not to be proved from scripture. But in this you inconsistently depart from that very tradition which you wish so anxiously to support; as may be seen in the writings of the fathers of the three first centuries, (b) as well as the authorities produced in the fourth and fifth, in the various works which were then compiled against the Arians. May this persuasion, however, gain daily ground amongst you. For when once your people see how totally you discard the scriptures, unless as an useful appendage to your unwritten code of faith, it is to be hoped that the ancient prejudices in their favour will again return, and that

(a) Ephes. iv. 14.

(b) See Burgh's "Inquiry into the Belief of the Christians of the three first Centuries" &c. York, 1778.

they will again believe in this respect “*as all their fathers did before them,*” in the purer ages of the christian church. With these *Fathers*, Protestants admit the divinity of Christ, because they think it revealed in scripture: and in thus explaining the text of the written word, they are convinced that they are supported by the concurrent sense of ages, and the testimony even of the *Roman* church—all which accumulated authority they think greatly to be preferred before the hypotheses of a few individuals, and a multitude of conjectural or specious reasonings, of which they cannot see the evidence.

The conclusion which I draw from the several considerations which I have here introduced, in answer to your two short paragraphs on *Church Establishments*, and on *Indifference in Religion*, is very different from your’s. For, whereas you finally infer that an unerring guide is requisite; it is only the necessity of circumspection, prudence, prayer, humility, and a virtuous life, that you seem to me to have demonstrated. There is no doubt but the belief of such a guide may settle a man’s opinion, if his submission is entirely blind and universal; or, to speak more accurately, it may prevent his holding any sentiment which is contrary to its decisions. Yet I think it a persuasion not to be deduced from scripture, irreconcilable with the plan of Christ’s instructions, and repugnant to the depositions of the most unexceptionable witnesses in every age. And what is the *written* deposition of the fathers, but the *oral* doctrines of the times reduced to a more solid form?

LIBERALITY OF CATHOLICS.—That there is still much intolerance on earth, is a lamentable truth. Had I questioned it before, the present controversy would have convinced me of my error; and that there still are many zealots on earth, who are perfectly qualified to be “*high priests of Moloch in the vale of Hinnon*” Some of those who have stepped forward in it, seem totally to have forgotten that religion was their subject, and that the person against whom they have borne *false witness*, was, both by his character and calling, entitled to some respect.—But it was his comfort to reflect, that when men begin to sling dirt about, it ever is be-

cause

cause they have no better weapon. Let them, therefore, if they please, continue to rail on in a stile congenial to their education and their feelings. I shall ever esteem religion a concern of too great importance to become the vehicle of personal satire, or to be made the subject of a controversial lampoon.

That your education is "*somewhat calculated to narrow the mind,*" and that your principles "*naturally generate rather an unfavourable idea*" of all other religious societies, you are willing to admit. How moderate have my conclusions been from such a concession! From men "*of little views, indolent or timid,*" as the *leaders* of your society are (a), and from a body of clergy "*broken by penury and the frowns of imperious patrons,*" whose minds, "*narrowed by bad education,*" are filled with early prejudices, and whose heads are only "*stored with theological lumber,*" what liberality of sentiment, what candour, what moderation, what tolerance can be expected? They leave us "*in the hands of an all-merciful providence!*" But yet they are perpetually suggesting their fears for our salvation; inculcating incessantly that we are estranged from under that happy protection, deprived of the usual means of grace and plea to favor; and that our *invincible ignorance* is our sole security. Such friendly sentiments entitle them to our highest gratitude.—As diffidents from the Church of Rome, you do not allow us to be walking in the paths of security; it is therefore but with an ill grace that you blame me for a similar assertion. For though we hope, and grant, that many of your society are in the way to heaven; it is not *because* they are Roman Catholics, but because they are virtuous men, acting with integrity according to the measure of light that has been imparted to them. This would have been the more benevolent interpretation, as it *was* the more obvious sense of the passage to which you allude (b). As for the argument of which your writers frequently avail themselves to prove that your's must needs be the securest way, because even Protestants allow that you may be saved in it, although you deny the same privilege to them, unless in some extraordinary cases; I will content myself with a quotation from *Chillingworth*, which I think alone contains a full reply.

(a) State and Behav, p. 129, 1 Edit. and Ibid, p. 162.

(b) Appeal, page 14, et seq.

“ Suppose,”

“Suppose,” says this acute reasoner, “I were travelling to London, and knew two ways thither, the one way safe and convenient, the other very inconvenient and dangerous, but yet a way to London; and that I overtook a passenger on the way, who himself believed, and would fain persuade me, there was no other way but the worse, and would persuade me to accompany him in it, because I confessed his way, though very inconvenient, and very dangerous, yet a way; so that going that way, we might come to our journey’s end by the consent of both parties; but he believed my way to be none at all, and therefore I might justly fear lest out of a desire of leaving the worst way, I left the true and the only way; If now I should not be more secure upon my own knowledge, than frightened by this fallacy, would you not beg me for a fool? Just so might you think of us, if we would be frightened out of our own knowledge by this bugbear.” (a)—I need not point out the application. In the same manner, the security of a Protestant is built upon such evident principles of reason, and such express declarations of revelation, that the above delusive sophistry of your polemics can as little affect it, as the arguments of a *Zeno* or a *Berkeley*, can influence a plain honest countryman to believe that he cannot move, or that the material world he sees before him is all ideal.

What you add about free inquiry, is nugatory and captious; very unworthy of him who so much insists upon “*a chain of reasoning strongly pressed upon the mind*,” (b) and who “*would not walk in a dark evening with a man who charged him wrongfully*.” (c) Alas! Sir, were I to make this my rule; with how few of your society could I safely trust my life, when once the sun was down?

Do Protestants still continue their researches after they are “*convinced that God has spoken?*” Or have I any where given you reason to suppose that this is what I mean by free inquiry?—A wrongful insinuation is near a-kin to a wrongful charge! That you are not allowed in catholic countries to discuss your doubts with the same freedom that we do, is a fact which I have proved. Till this is done away, ’tis useless to proceed any further in the argument. *Your freedom*

(a) Chap. 3, § 56. (b) Ref. Page 11 (c) Ib. Page 4.

of discussion, rational and inoffensive as it was, obliged you to leave your college, and still causes you to be looked on by many, with a suspicious eye—*Courayer's* would have led him to a dungeon, in spite of his learning, moderation, and integrity of life. And whoever forms his opinion from your writers, the most modern, orthodox, and approved, can never disallow but that many checks are in your society put to free inquiry. The publications of your adversaries are studiously kept from the knowledge and inspection of your people, with very few exceptions. And even in *England*, if the reasoning of your scholastics has any force, the same discipline ought to be in vigour; although, as I observed on Dr. *Carroll's* pamphlet, this is not always attended to, because, whatever their professions of faith, or pretences to submission may be, there is in *Englishmen* a spirit of resistance that cannot submit, without reluctance, to unjust prohibitions.

You ask what *liberty of doubting* we possess that you do not? I am amazed that, in the face of evidence, you should put such a question to me!—A person in your persuasion who has his serious doubts whether God has really spoken, or established any unerring tribunal on earth, and consequently at least wavers with respect to some points of your belief, which seem totally dependent on the manner in which this question is determined, ceases from that moment to be a Catholic—incur your church's censure—and must either abandon your society, or determine blindly to assent to all its tenets. He even incurs the major excommunication *ipso facto*, if he manifests his disbelief or doubt, by any exterior sign which may be noticed by a third person. And this is “de droit commun, according to your best casuists, fondé sur des canons et des constitutions qui ont force de loix dans toute l'Eglise.” (a) Is this the case with Protestants? If they really believe the leading doctrines of christianity, they may continue to act according to their conviction, or suspend their assent to any of the particular articles enjoined, till further researches or lights shall have settled their belief, without the least apprehension of being forced into a feigned compliance. (b) Whereas, in Catholic countries, where every point is already infallibly determined, discussion is entirely

(a) Conferences d'Angers. (b) Appeal, 309.

useless, and the very term is devoid of any real meaning. And in consequence of your discipline with regard to the paschal duties of confession and communion, there still subsists in every catholic country, a tribunal of inquisition, as real, though not as sanguinary, as those of Portugal or Spain. —In what, Sir, consists the freedom in which your people are indulged, when they are admonished by their pastors “de vivre dans une entiere soumission aux décisions de l’église, et de ne s’informer point d’autre chose, que de sçavoir ce qu’elle enseigne, ne pouvant se tromper en l’écoutant?” (a) Is this enabling them to satisfy every one concerning *the hope that is in them*?—Are not the grounds of her authority a far more material part of the inquiry?—Is not this the point that should be most repeatedly inculcated? And yet how tenderly was this ever mentioned, till in these latter days the general diffusion of a more rational spirit has evinced the propriety of a more equitable conduct! Yet still is this liberty of doubting or inquiry disavowed even by some of your modern apologists, who contend, that as a Roman Catholic is already in the old beaten track, he has no need to seek any further where the right road is; and that such alone who have left your church, need be solicitous about their faith—an argument of equal force in *China, Turkey, or Japan*, as it is in *Rome*!

REAL PRESENCE—If you acknowledge this to be a *weighty question*, and cannot refuse to own that it is involved in great obscurity, why not, in speaking of it, be satisfied with scriptural language alone? And wherefore require as a term of communion, that any should subscribe to your explanation of it? Much have I said on this subject, which you have *not* answered, and which is still new to many: for few have read *Albertinus, Daillé*, and *Claude*. And that your abridgments of controversy exhibit their arguments in a very mutilated state may readily be conjectured from the page before us, wherein, fair, open, and unbiassed as you profess yourself to be, you have given so very disingenuous an account of our belief. When we break and receive the bread according to Christ’s appointment, we verily *receive*

(a) See “Instructions for the new Converts of France,” by the Bishop of Viviers, cited in the Archbishop of Tuam’s “Charitable Advice.”

his body in the same sense in which our Saviour gave it to his Apostles, and also use the self-same language ; since, as *Theodoret* justly observes, “ Christ also changed the names, when to his *Body* he gave the name of *Symbol*, and to the *Symbol* the name of *Body*.” We hold that by the means of this commemorative institution, Christ is really, yet inexplicably, present to our souls—*You*, that his presence though *corporal* and *substantial*, is nevertheless only so far *corporal*, as still to exist in the Sacrament *after the manner of a Spirit*. Perhaps to those who have long been habituated to such extraordinary language, this may be expressive of some idea : But you must at least allow that there is apparently a far greater opposition between *your* terms, than ours ; especially as our twenty-eighth article so completely removes the least suspicion of any belief of a material presence. In short, our explication is sufficient to make good the words of Christ, to the truth of which your gratuitous comment is by no means requisite.—Indeed, Sir, you should be cautious lest writing to “ *amuse*,” (a) you injure the cause of truth, by giving too much to the “ *charms of language, and the novelty of imagination*.” The more your style is calculated to influence the reader, the greater should be your apprehension of misleading him. *Ornari res ipsa vetat, contenta doceri*.

With regard then to Christ's exalted body, we pretend not to know its nature, and still less to bring it to a level with our own frail flesh. But as we can form no idea at all of *bodies*, unless such as we see in nature ; when we deny that Christ is in the Sacrament *substantially* and *corporally*, we understand these words of *body* and *substance* in that only acceptance in which they can convey any idea to our minds. How can you require, as a term of Christian communion, that we should assent to these words, when you confess that we can have no apprehension of them, when applied to the glorious body of our Saviour ? You may as well require us to assent to a flash of lightening, or the report of a cannon, as require us to subscribe to words to which we can affix no meaning at all. By thus insisting on Christ's corporal presence in the very flesh in which he was born of the Virgin, you assume a right to determine on a subject on which reve-

(a) Reflections, page 15.



lation has afforded no lights to direct us ; you destroy the evidence of Christ's resurrection in a palpable body, and involve in the utmost intricacies, one of the most simple appointments of the Gospel. Could it be therefore equitable to cut off from your communion a large portion of the Christian Church, only for a nicety, a *manner* of presence, which neither has the Scripture revealed, nor do you profess to understand ? For this question seems so indeterminate, even since the solemn declaration of your last general Council, that some of your ablest writers scruple not to assert that it was then defined, that the accidents of bread and wine which remain after the consecration, are not mere *sensations* and *impressions* which God preserves in our organs, as some modern philosophers have conjectured ; but are *real* and *physical* beings, subsisting in a miraculous manner without any subject—and that this is essential to the very nature and idea of the Sacrament. (a)

You will probably observe that the train of reasoning which I have elsewhere introduced to prove the credibility of the doctrines which regard the *Trinity*, should equally be applied to that of *transubstantiation*, which, upon that account, should seem to be equally credible. But various reasons concur to evince that between these two tenets no fair comparison can properly be made: *first*, because bread and wine are the immediate objects of sense, upon which we therefore may be allowed to form a judgment, having certain *data* to direct us ; although we cannot presume to pronounce decisively upon the incomprehensible qualities of the Godhead which have no connection with matter, and to the investigation of which neither our ideas, nor our language, are in any degree adapted—*secondly*, because there is not the least foundation in Scripture for the belief of any *material* and *corporal* presence, and many passages by which it seems most evidently excluded—and *thirdly*, because the best of your own divines acknowledge that it is not clearly delivered in the sacred writings, and you chiefly have adopted it from oral tradition ; whereas we think it fully demonstrated that tradition does not favour it, and that even if it did, yet it

(a) Abbé Richard "Analyse des Conciles," Paris 1773. Article, Eucharistie.

would

would still be built upon a very ruinous and insecure foundation.

In short, Sir, the circumstances in which this institution was appointed (a)—the language of the first Apologists, and early fathers (b)—the practices of the primitive ages (c)—the arguments adduced from reason (d)—the silence of the ancient writers in the *Arian Controversy*, (e) and of the *Pagans* in their attacks upon Christianity, (f) as well as various other motives which I have detailed in my Appeal, are to me most evident proofs that your Church has greatly varied in the substance of her doctrine, with respect to this memorial of our Saviour's passion. And a man must be enslaved indeed by unaccountable prepossessions, who will not allow a considerable share of strength to those arguments which have been so forcibly urged by the able ministers of *Charenton*, in their various replies to *Bellarmino*, *Du Perron*, *Arnauld*, and other your most noted writers. Would it not then be better for the sake of peace, and the interests of religion, that without insisting upon the terms of *real*, *corporal*, or *substantial* presence, propitiatory sacrifice, &c. we should all agree to this general declaration, that "Christ makes us partakers of his body and blood, by means of the symbols of bread and wine; that in the consecration, oblation, and partaking of these symbols, we offer to God that death which we commemorate; and that we consider this action as generally requisite to apply Christ's merits to our souls, and one of the chief means by which Almighty God, in the usual course of his providence, communicates his graces to mankind?"

Upon a similar plan, how easily might a truly *Catholic* system of religion be drawn up amongst Christians! Their canon of Scripture should contain those books only which all agree to have never been doubted of by any considerable part of the Christian Church—Their form of worship should be such as all allowed to be lawful, though all might per-

(a) Appeal, page 48, see also Ugolinus Differt. de Rit. in Cæna Dom. ex antiq. paschal. illust. Thes. Antiq. Sacrar, vol. 17. Tracts vol. 3, page 34.

(b) Appeal, pages 43, 224. (c) Ibid. page 45.

(d) Chillingworth, page 216. Appeal, passim.

(e) Appeal, page 255. (f) Chillingworth.

haps not think it adviseable to adopt—Their creed to contain such articles as all acknowledge to be revealed, expressed in scriptural terms alone—and whatever regarded discipline only, to be regulated by each national Church as circumstances might direct. Beyond the plain declarations of Scripture, every thing should be considered as matter of opinion only; and no consequences of opinions should be charged on any, which they positively disown. In fine, all curious, uncertain questions should be discouraged and disregarded, according to the advice of the Apostle, because they can only serve to “gender strifes.” This, with a sincere love of truth, and a mutual performance of such duties of charity as all Christians owe to each other, would unite them all in one communion and one society; and a variation in discipline would then be no more a matter of dispute, than a variation in language or in climate.—With hand and heart I shall ever be happy to promote so desirable a coalition!

RULE OF FAITH. *Veron's* rule of faith you possibly may have made it your duty to explain; but I dare repeat that most of your Brethren do *not*. At a public table in Berkshire, in the company of several Priests, I well remember to have been openly censured by one of the titular Bishop's Vicars, for appealing to its doctrine concerning indulgences. I had cited the very expressions of *Veron*, which were received by the company as heterodox, and “offensive to pious ears”;—and have many reasons to recollect the circumstance, as well as the countenance of the Zealots who composed the meeting. On this subject I had however acknowledged that this is the only creed to which a Roman Catholic need give his assent: but I have moreover added, and still insist, that the superstructure of practice which you have built upon it, has but a very slight connection with what *Veron* allows *may be believed*.

As you have not seen my Postscript, give me leave here to repeat a few questions which I had there proposed, Would any person who should through life refuse to address the Saints, or ever invoke the Virgin Mary—who should never strive to gain any indulgences either plenary or partial, because he doubted whether they were of any effect before God, as to the remission of the debt which is due to him either in the present or future life—who should refuse all  
kinds

kind of veneration to images, or respect to relics, unless such as Protestants pay to the pictures or remains of their ancestors and friends—who should deny that the Saints are mediators for us—who never should assist at prayers for the dead, or remember the “poor souls in purgatory” in his devotions, &c; would such a peasant for example, “following his plough” be deemed in the way not only to Salvation, but to Sanctity, as *Veron* assures; *et Salvus et Sanctus?* Tis not to me Sir that the Catholics are indebted for their double system of religion, but to yourself, and such like modern reformers of your faith, who seek to soften the rugged features of their ancient tenets, and accommodate them, as much as possible, to the general doctrines of these more enlightened times. You tell us now that it is “good and profitable” to desire the intercession of Saints; but does not the Council of Trent declare in general and most explicit terms that they are to be invoked, *invocandos esse*—And is not this imposed as a strict obligation on all your Clergy? If this decision of your Church may be interpreted as a *permission* only, where is the utility of her declarations, if they still lie open to such convenient and arbitrary comments?

You wish me to confine my remarks to *England*, and the manner in which Catholicity is practised here. If I could persuade myself that your plan of reformation would have any lasting establishment, it were well indeed to shut our eyes to the follies of times that are past, or those of other countries. But as this is greatly to be questioned; and even in *England*, many of your own party are determined, so long as they are Catholics at all, to remain Catholics of the old Church, your scheme will never be attended with any permanent success. The *English*, as well as other nations, are likely to drop back into the old beaten track, and will assuredly prefer the ideas and discipline of the major part of times and peoples, to the more enlarged views of a few *Sweetners*, who are nearly the same amongst Catholics, as were, according to your favourite historian, (a) the *Cavillatores*, *Semipagani*, and *Philosophatres* amongst the pagans. From hence arises the difficulty, when writing against your system, to know which way to point the attack, or with what arms

(a) Natal. Alexan. Hist. Eccl. tom. 5, dissert. 6.

to combat. Proteus-like it is for ever varying. What is demonstrated against an *Italian Catholic*, does not affect an *Englishman* — What is objected against a Catholic of the tenth or fourteenth age, is said not to touch the discipline or doctrines of the eighteenth. And yet all these ages, and principles, and practices, will certainly come round again, and the controversy may be carried on “in omne volubilis ævum,” without drawing a single line nearer to a conclusion. Remember what Dr. *Wake* asserted and proved against the Bishop of *Meaux*, with respect to the variations of his Church ; (a) and you will perhaps begin to apprehend lest your own *Reflections* should stand in need of some similar artifice, to render them more palatable to Rome. However, it is a real compliment to our religion, that the more learned and liberal your writers are, the nearer are their approaches towards the tenets of the reformed Church ; and the more they value themselves upon being able to represent their own doctrines as much like ours as the times will bear. Nor should it be forgotten that at the beginning of the reformation we only rejected the far greater number of your tenets and observances, in that very sense in which you are now so solicitous to excuse them, and against which only our chief objections lie. To insist upon the distinction between the old and new Tenets of your religion would lead me into a discussion which I mean not to pursue : but enough may be seen upon this subject in Bishop *Gibson's* collection of Tracts, to satisfy the most sceptical inquirer ; to justify whatever I have said upon this subject ; and to expose the vain subterfuges by which Dr. *Wake's* observations are endeavoured to be eluded (b). There are many in your own Church at this very time, as I have elsewhere hinted, who bitterly complain that good *old Popery* is so run down, by reason of the delicate scruples of this accommodating age ; and who lament that so many *Irrefragable, Angelical, Seraphical, Marian, Invincible, Subtile* Doctors, who had so long been considered as the main channels through which their several traditions flowed, should now be treated with as much neglect and

(a) Appeal 195—Mosheim, Cent. 17, sec. 2. § part 1. 13.—Collect. of Tracts, vol. 3, pages 51, 56, 124.

(b) *Ibid.* pages 87, 94, 114, 117, 119, 379.

contumely

contumely, as if they had been mere Children, and were totally unacquainted with the tenets of their Church.

What signifies a *liberty of thought*, in cases where a man is called upon to act? (a) Would the conviction of the absurdity of the legends in the Roman and other breviaries, justify the omission of them? Must not your clergy daily recite some or other of these wondrous tales as they occur in the usual course, under pain of sin, however his mind may scorn the credulous narration?—There are in your discipline many points which I approve sincerely, and which as counsels may be salutary and advisable; but when enjoined as precepts, they are tyrannical—An infringement of that liberty which the Gospel introduced, and which no human power has a right to abridge in any point in which the conscience only of the individual is concerned. (b)

*Veron* tells us, that though a Pope may err in his decrees of excommunication, yet he who disobeyes them sins mortally, and incurs the censure; and *Holden* asserts that the whole Church is bound to acquiesce in and obey his decrees, at least till a general council can be convened (page 152). And all his arguments tend to prove that he determines as sovereign pastor of the Church, whose edicts every obedient child must receive, and which no civil power has a right to interfere with, or control. Yet we are now told that no one need obey them, unless promulgated with the consent of the civil power; that without this condition they are of no effect beyond the narrow limits of his own peculiar district, &c. And beyond this we actually may observe, that in these reforming days, his menaces are laughed at, and his censures are held in defiance.

*Veron* asserts that a *general council* may err in its determinations upon any matter that chiefly depends on the testimony and information of men: Is this consistent with the unerring certainty of your traditionary doctrines?—He tells us that even those things which “*ex professo affirmantur et docentur*,” are not articles of Catholic belief, “*nisi proprie definiuntur tanquam credenda* :” Of what authority then are the mere *declarations* of these *honest men*, in which alone

(a) Appeal, 309, 358.

(b) See what I have said on the Article “Religion of Catholics Rational,” and Appeal 359.

nevertheless,

nevertheless, according to *you*, all the Church's infallibility consists?—He teaches that whatever your Church defines, must certainly be true, although the reasons by which it supports its declarations are inconclusive: Can this be reconciled with the idea of any supernatural direction from above?—In one place he asserts that the Church “*ex sensu omnium tum pastorum tum fidelium velut practice loquens,*” can never err; And yet in others he assures us that all *human* testimony is liable to mistake, and that all the practices even of the Universal Church, are not sufficient authority to enforce a single tenet, as an article of Christian belief.—He confesses that no doctrine which is *founded* on Scripture (an expression which in your creed is totally unmeaning) variously expounded by the fathers, can be an article of faith; and still how differently the most famous texts of the new Testament, which you alledge in favour of your doctrines, have been explained by the Ancients, is known to every person who is conversant, in the least degree, with their several writings.—In short, Sir, even *Veron's* famous rule, that “*great hinge upon which all your Religion turns,*” though professedly drawn up to reconcile Protestants to your opinions, is still too complicated to gain admission with persons of plain common understanding, however “*explained*” by the most ingenious of your Society.

With respect to our *security* and *certainty*, I have said, page 83, 86, 103, 294, &c. of my Appeal, whatever I think most forcible; and shewn, that absolute inerrancy is requisite to neither. I have as little doubt, and as much security about finding my way from my own house to the adjoining city, as I have of my own existence: and am no less certain that there was a Prince of *Wales* in *England* in 1787, than I possibly can be that either *Adam* or *Jesus Christ* ever lived on earth. Our security, Sir, is as compleat as yours—our faith in God as steady and unshaken—our belief in the sacred Scriptures as firm. With a confidential dash you have given my words a bold denial. But until you shall produce your reasons, it will ever be impossible to appreciate the motives on which your confidence is grounded.

To *moral* agents a *moral* certainty suffices, nor can they

have

have any other .(a) If this is not sufficient, how great ought not to be the alarms of a Roman Catholic, with regard to many points on which his happiness, his faith, and even his salvation in great measure depend! All these rest upon *uncertainties*; and where there is *uncertainty*, can there be security? The defect of a proper intention in one single bishop, or in the person who baptised him—the omission of the proper *form*, or application of due *matter* by the prelate who ordained him, may have thrown the whole boasted succession of your church into the utmost confusion. And that you have not an hierarchy without orders, a people without christianity, a mere shadow of a sacrifice, and an idolatrous worship of a simple piece of bread, is only probable in a greater or less degree. It is on probability alone that your own baptism rests, the security of your absolutions, the efficacy of all your Sacraments. Does not the whole history of your religion, the existence of your councils, and every single fact derived from tradition; does not the very being of a Church at Rome, the validity of each pastor's ordination, the orthodoxy of his sentiments, the existence and obligation of all the commandments of your Church, as well as rules of discipline, depend entirely, with regard at least to your people, upon motives of exceeding great probability? How many of the elections of your prelates have been made upon simoniacal contracts; how many are in every respect so perfectly irregular, that it is folly to believe they ever received the powers which they often presumed to dispense?(b) And whoever considers attentively, that amidst so many millions of *possibilities*, and even *probabilities*, (c) if *one* only has occurred in the course of ages, the whole fabric of your Church must fall to the ground, and all your security prove

(a) “ Ex sensuum externorum universali testimonio exoriri potest ea certitudo quæ ad eum quando que assurgat gradum, ut nequidem mathematica demonstratio certitudinem majorem, nec æqualem forsitan valeat efficere.” Holden.—As great as that two and two make four!

(b) Quæ tum facies sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ, quam fœditissima, cum Romæ dominarentur impotentissimæ æque ac fordidissimæ meretrices, quarum arbitrio mutarentur sedes, darentur Episcopi . . . intruderentur in sedem petri earum amasii pseudopontifices. Nunquam cleri eligentis, vel consentientis postea, aliqua mentio.” Baronius. An. 908. Thus also has it often been with other Bishops!

(c) Appeal, 203, 377.

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ideal,



ideal, will readily admit that all your certainty rests upon a very fallible and infirm support. Yet if under all these difficulties a Catholic can be sufficiently secure, so likewise may all Protestants, with regard to the stability of their faith; and infallible security and certitude are requisite to neither. I have shewn repeatedly, that a *possibility* of being mistaken is not incompatible with certainty; and I here scruple not to affirm, that your system is in great measure destructive of all the merit that faith can claim, by turning that into *science*, for the *belief* of which we chiefly should rely on God's veracity and goodness.—That any person whose faith and hopes depend upon such a variety of contingent and uncertain supposals, should presume to talk about the *safety* of his own ways, and the *insecurity* of others, is one of those inconsistencies in man which it were a fruitless attempt to endeavour to account for.

APOSTLES CREED. As for that Creed to which you would take your serious inquirer, I must observe with the learned *Mosheim*, that “all who have the least knowledge of antiquity, look upon the opinion of those who hold that it is a production of the Apostles, as entirely false, and destitute of foundation.” That it has come down to us “*unchanged*” during seventeen centuries, is notoriously untrue. *Ruffinus* tells us that the “Descent into Hell” was not in the *Roman Creed*, nor in any Creed of the eastern Churches: (a) And it was wanting in almost all the Ancient Creeds, as Bishop *Pearson* has demonstrated, for at least four hundred years. Neither is it mentioned by *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Basil*, *Epiphanius*, or *Augustin*; nor inserted in the professions of faith drawn up at *Nice*, *Constantinople*, *Ephesus*, or *Chalcedon*. The same may be said of the “Communion of Saints,” which was not inserted in any Creed either Greek or Latin, during the *four* first centuries. (b) And Dr. *Sykes* contends that even “the resurrection of the flesh” was not mentioned in any one Creed, in any part of the world, earlier than the fourth century, nor its belief required to be professed in the Christian Church. (c)

(a) *Expos. in Symb. Apost.*

(b) See *Pearson*, *Bingham*, or *King's History of the Creed*.

(c) See “an Inquiry when the Resurrection of the Body was first inserted into the Public Creed,” by Arthur Ashley Sykes.

There

There is no question but that from the beginning of the Christian establishment, some form of belief was proposed to converts, containing the necessary articles of the Christian faith: But that any particular form of words, in which this belief was to be expressed, was appointed, or generally received, is void of probability, and contrary to tradition. That any such formula was drawn up by the Apostles, is an opinion not started till near four hundred years after Christ. And though you have repeated the assertion with as much confidence as if it had never admitted of a doubt, the fact is sufficiently discredited by the manner in which it was first reported; (a) as well as by the strongest collateral evidence: for it cannot be believed that so important a fact, if true, would have been omitted by *S. Luke* in the History of the Acts of the Apostles. Moreover, no such Creed was ever appealed to by the ancient synods or writers: And had such a tradition really then existed, every Church would doubtless have held the same, without alteration or addition.—In all the most primitive Creeds, whether Greek or Latin, the first article expressed not only the *existence*, but even the *Unity* of God, against *Simon Magus*, *Marcion*, *Cerdon*, &c. as may be seen in *Irenæus*, *Origen*, and *Tertullian*. And there was a peculiar beauty, as well as energy, in the expression of “one God” during the first ages of Christianity, when this most essential article of its belief was so frequently attacked.

The Apostles Creed, as it now is called, was settled in its present form by successive gradations. Each Church assumed the liberty of proposing the fundamental articles of faith in its own terms, according as circumstances advised. The Creed which was proposed by *Philip* to the Eunuch, was short and comprehensive: others were longer and more explicit. The articles particularly insisted on, were the Divine Mission of Christ, the remission of sins by his blood, the resurrection to eternal life, &c. But some other points which the Apostles Creed now contains, were not inserted in the public professions of the Christian faith, for several centuries; and no otherwise form a part of *Apostolic* tradition, than as they are, like many others which might also

(a) See Bingham's “*Origines Ecclesiasticæ*.”

have been inserted, conformable to Christian revelation. That every Church in those days framed its Creed, as it did its liturgy, (a) without being restrained to any particular form of words, so long as it expressed the substance of revealed faith, is evident from the primitive records of the Church, the fragments of the Creed in *Irenæus*, and those which we find in *Origen*, *Tertullian*, and *Cyprian*. That which is produced by *Tertullian* as “*sola immobilis et irreformabilis . . . regula omnino una;*” beyond which “*nihil ultra scire, omnia scire est,*” (b) is different from ours; so that your observations are directly contrary to the faith of history. I will shew, moreover, that your *Inquirer*, however serious, would never be able to discover in this Creed an infallible guide, in your acceptation of the term: And that if you seek not to deceive others, you are at least deceived yourself.—How few, and short, and plain, are those tenets of mere belief to which, when joined to a virtuous life, the Scriptures have annexed the promise of Salvation! (c)

You grant, that “*by the word Church, Christians understand a Society making profession to believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and to govern itself by his word,*” and that it is of this society the Apostles speak. In this also it is that we affirm that *we* believe—the Church built by Christ, and composed of all such as make an ostensible profession of being members of the Christian covenant. We allow that this society will *ever be visible, will never cease to be, will never err* from that which according to the Apostles themselves constitutes its being. What more would you require of us? Nevertheless, that in the course of ages several most pernicious doctrines, as well as practices, should prevail even amongst the generality of those who profess the Christian faith, seems evidently foretold in various passages of the New Testament; and

(a) It may seem somewhat remarkable, that no Creed was ever even barely repeated in the Roman Church in time of divine service, till the year 1014, when it was brought into use, in compliance with the practice of the French and Spanish Churches. See Mabillon, *Comment in Ordin. Rom.*

(b) *De Vel. Virg. c. 1. And De Præscrip. c. 13, 14.*

(c) Deut. 10, 12. *Isai. 1, 16. Micah. 1, 6. Math. 10, 32--19, 16. Luke 10, 25. John 17, 3--20, 31. Acts 2, 37--8, 37--16, 31--17, 2, 31. Romans 10, 9. 1 Cor. 3, 11--15, 3, 12. John 4, 15.* See also the fourth section of the first Book of the second part of Dr. Taylor's “*Dissuasive from Popery,*”

that

that these predictions were fulfilled in the ages which immediately preceded the reformation, can scarce be questioned by any one who shall compare attentively the state of Christianity in those days, with that simple exposition of it which was left us by Christ and his Apostles. (a)

By our "belief in God" we testify our faith in his existence, and not particularly our belief *in what he teaches*, which necessarily follows from our faith in his very being—By our belief in the "Catholic Church" we declare that we believe sincerely in the divine mission of Christ; and that he founded a religious society on earth, which will ever subsist. We profess to believe in his name, to obey his laws, and to receive his doctrine, which though both sin and error may obscure, yet nothing shall ever destroy and obliterate. (b) And the belief in the church is no otherwise joined to the belief in the three divine persons, than it is to the communion of saints, the resurrection and eternal life, the forgiveness of sins, &c. with which last article it was even particularly conjoined in *S. Cyprian's* time, in the profession of faith which was then required at baptism. (c)—Hence all your ingenious remarks on this supposed connection are perfectly without foundation.

It is really striking to observe, how little consonant your ideas in this paragraph are to those of antiquity. You say, that *as you believe in God, as you believe in Jesus Christ, so also you profess to believe in the holy Catholic Church; that "the language is the same,"* and that this article is to be understood "*as the others are.*" Now the ancients particularly observed that the expression was varied, to shew that the meaning was totally different. "*Non dicit in sanctam ecclesiam, says Ruffinus; Si enim addidisset in præpositionem, una eademque vis fuisset cum superioribus: it is not said in the holy church, nor in the remis-*

(a) See page 41, as also the "Histoire de la Reformation" by Beaufobre, Berlin, 1785, Vol. 1. page 15, 33, and Vol. 2. page 143, 245.

(b) Appeal 292—That by "the Gates of Hell" which Christ has promised shall never prevail against his Church, nothing more can possibly be meant than utter ruin and destruction, has been too often shewn to need repetition. See Calmet, or Dr. Wharton's Reply to Dr. Carroll, page 26.

(c) *Credis in remissionem peccatorum per sanctam Ecclesiam. Cyp. Epist. 70. ad Epist. Numid.*

sion of sins, nor *in* the resurrection of the body : for if the preposition *in* had been added, it would have had the same force with what went before." He tells us, that these articles are to be believed in a *different* manner from the preceding ones, and that " by this preposition the Creator is distinguished from the Creatures, and divine things are separated from human." Nor is the remark at all misplaced: For by the first expression, we declare our belief in the Deity, our confidence and reliance on him in whom our faith terminates ; whereas by the second, as he most justly observes, we only assert our belief in the Christian dispensation.—*Non ut in Deum, sed ut Ecclesiam Deo consecratam.* The author of a sermon amongst St. Augustin's works also tells us, (a) "*Ecclesiam credere, non tamen in ecclesiam credere debemus.*" So that a particular stress seems to have been laid in those days, upon the omission of that particle ; which, moreover, we do not find inserted either in the modern Greek, French, or Dutch Creeds. It might also be added, that the word *Catholic* is not found in any Creed compiled in the three first centuries, and was only introduced by the Greeks, in opposition to the too narrow interpretation of the word *Church*, which some zealots already began to adopt.

But why should I have recourse to the *ancients* for a confirmation of what I advance, when even the catechism of the Council of Trent, out of which you are required to instruct your people, is so expressly in my favour? In this we are informed, that we are to believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whom we are to place our faith—but not *in* the holy Catholic Church, because, if we believed in this as we believe in the blessed Trinity, we should introduce a confusion into the Christian worship. From whence it clearly follows, that we must believe whatever doctrines we see in those Scriptures which both we and you admit ; but that we need not credit those things which the Church proposes, till we see them revealed in that sacred code in which alone we are bound to place our confidence. For otherwise we should believe *in* the church precisely as we do in God—an error against which your catechism most justly warns us.

(a) Tom. 10. Serm. de Tempore, 181.

Hence

Hence not only does your whole argument fall to the dust ; But by asserting what you have here advanced, you have dealt unfaithfully with your people ; and must therefore either recall your rash assertion, or else be satisfied to erect your own private opinion in opposition to the most authentic catechism in your church. Your own definition of the word *Church*, in the beginning of this section, is the very same which this catechism has given, and most fully expresses its genuine meaning : but yet this very definition determines in our favour, more than half the controversies which have been so warmly carried on between us. Neither will it suffice to say that you believe upon the authority of your creed, that there is a holy Catholic Church ; and that as the Scriptures require you to hear the church, you therefore owe to her decisions the same implicit reliance, as if your creed had most expressly enjoined it. For this is only “darkening counsel by words without knowledge,” unless you prove that the church cannot mislead you, by arguments as strong and evident as those by which you prove the veracity of God ; that is, by reasons drawn from the nature of the thing itself. The utmost belief we can have in God, is to believe whatever we have just reason to think was delivered by him. And if we believe whatever the church proposes, with equal confidence, we believe in the same manner both in God and her ; although the duty in one case is self-evident, and in the other requires a long chain of obscure argumentation to render it even probable.—Perhaps, Sir, this disquisition, like others in my Appeal, may appear to those who run after the “*dolcezza di lusinghier Parnasso*” somewhat heavy : but it is the nature of that which is solid to be so. And those who read for amusement only, may easily have recourse to something more light and airy.

But if we hold that we are not bound to submit our opinions to the church, and abide by her decisions, in what sense, may you inquire, do Protestants admit at all of church authority ? I reply—in that sense in which both reason and revelation equally combine to enforce it ; in every thing relating to *edification, peace, and good order.* (a) By the very nature of the *social contract*, the heads of each society have

(a) Romans 14, 19. 1 Cor. 14, 40.

a right to establish certain regulations, from which it is no less absurd than criminal in any individual to plead an exemption, under pretence that they seem improper or inexpedient. For were such excuses as these admitted, there would quickly be an end to every species of civil, as well as ecclesiastical government, which in such things as these has no other authority but such as it receives from the civil power. To these it therefore is our duty to submit when they are imposed by lawful superiors, not as any essential *parts* of our religion, but merely as *practices* which have been judged most likely to contribute to the preservation of decency and order. We might with as much reason object to plead in a court of law where a judge officiates in a large wig, and in a gown of a peculiar cut, as to pray in a church where a minister wears a surplice—or refuse to appear uncovered before a king, as object to the receiving of the sacrament in a kneeling posture, when it is so universally acknowledged that no kind of adoration is meant thereby. In all this there can assuredly be nothing that exceeds the boundaries of human authority. And there is in reality no christian society on earth, in which some outward rites and observances are not prescribed, and in all which a cavilling spirit might not equally find something to reprehend, to the subversion of all order, and the utter destruction of whatever forms the duties and cement of civil society. Even the Dissenters themselves in this country, who so much object to several of the ceremonies which *our* church has either appointed, or retained from ancient times, prescribe the posture of sitting in the celebration of the Eucharist, and the joining of the hands in that of matrimony; with several other observances and rites which have no foundation in Scripture, and which are as essential to *their* religion, as any thing that we observe, is to *ours*. All these things are modes and circumstances which may be suppressed or changed by the same authority that introduced them; and have no more necessary connection with religion itself, than the robes which the king puts on when he goes to parliament have with the assent he gives to the laws that are enacted; or the whole ceremonial of our civil courts, with the decisions that are there pronounced. Were these injunctions of our church even burdensome, unpleasant, and such as the  
manners

manners of the present time should make it desirable to have repealed, yet ought not its peace to be broken on such accounts. And where the substance of religion is not most evidently injured by such indifferent practices which the civil legislature, in conjunction with the ecclesiastical authority, has prescribed ; it is the duty of every peaceable subject to bear even with what he may not approve, rather than break through that unity of communion and affection which forms the most solid basis of all human establishments. (a) In this sense, Sir, it is that we admit of Church authority as to rites and ceremonies. But as far as doctrines are concerned, the members of an established Church should ever be considered as bound to no other burden than what they have themselves imposed ; and from which the *minority* is ever at liberty to withdraw, without forfeiting any of those privileges which they have a right to enjoy as citizens and men. Yet, whilst the present constitution subsists, they are no more entitled to share in "the Loaves and Fishes," either by the laws of equity, or of nations, than the poor cottager is to an equal share in the possessions of the opulent, which are only confirmed to them by such laws of human convention as the ostensible representatives of each nation have thought proper to introduce, with a view to the general good. (b)—What Bishop *Burnet* has said upon  
P Church

(a) See all this set in a most rational light by Dr. Syngé, in his "Eternal Salvation, the only end of Religion," page 16—"the Authority of the Church in matters of Religion," page 57—"A true Churchman set in a just and clear Light," page 11, &c.—"Gentleman's Religion" § 62, 63.

(b) To this doctrine I know it will be objected, that it is a bar to all those improvements which in the course of time become requisite in all human institutions, which by their nature must be for ever varying and imperfect ; And that it may likewise seem to follow that the present form of our Ecclesiastical Government is so essentially connected and interwoven with the happiness, the freedom, and the very being of the State, that the one cannot subsist without the other. But I must confess that I do not see that either the objection or the inference have any fair foundation in the principles which I have here laid down, as could easily be shewn, were this a proper place for such a discussion. The same legislature which has adopted our present civil establishment of religion, might undoubtedly again abolish, or change its form, without affecting either the Protestant succession in the illustrious line that now sways the Empire, or without subverting the rights and liberties of the subject: Yet it is evident that in such a case



Church authority in his "Exposition of the thirty-nine Articles" is, I think, sufficient to satisfy every sober mind: And that our belief in the Holy Catholic Church, as well as our obedience to the powers that "are ordained of God," are full as *real*, and somewhat more *rational* than yours, I flatter myself that I shall, in the several sections of this letter, be able to establish in the most satisfactory manner.

Your observations upon a visible and speaking authority are erroneous and illusory. Where was there before the law any visible tribunal to which all were obliged, under pain of damnation, to submit their speculative opinions? Was there even such a one appointed under the law, unless when on particular occasions he who was their *God* condescended to be likewise their *Legislator*, and vouchsafed to manifest his will in a miraculous manner? In other cases, the supreme authority was then restrained to a mere declarative interpretation of the written code. (a) To this all were required to submit—Good policy required it: But the justice of the determination none were constrained to believe. If their Church was really *infallible*, what became of this prerogative

case, the "entire constitution" of the kingdom would not remain the same as it now is.—What I chiefly mean to enforce by these observations, is that every good citizen should inculcate subjection in all that is not sin, to "the powers that be;" and be extremely cautious not to give occasion to any present *certain* evils and confusion, from a view of any distant good that may *possibly* arise. Yet it only is the sentiments of peace and sobriety which I wish to impress, and by no means those of servile submission, or abject adulation.

How far it may be *proper* that Dissenters from the Established Religion should contribute to the maintenance of the Established Clergy, I am not sufficiently clear, to give any decided opinion. But upon what principles any set of men can refuse this contribution, when it is become a law of the State, I cannot conceive; and should think that a public declaration of their dissent from the purposes to which these levies are applied, might in this respect quiet the scruples of the most delicate consciences. As well might any Sect which held that all dominion is founded on Grace, or that every kind of war was unlawful, refuse to pay the necessary subsidies of the State! What is *Cæsar's*, *Cæsar* has a right to require.—How he even may possibly misapply it, we need not ask "for conscience sake."—See Paley, vol. 2, edit. 4, octavo, pages 319, 339.

Even Dr. Price himself, page 42 of his excellent "Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution," appears to me to have totally mistated the question concerning the foundation and claims of religious establishments.

(a) Appeal, 127, 359—See Deut. 17, 18. Ezekiel, 44, 24.

when

when it rejected the Messiah? If they always had authority and tradition to recur to, and by which they were bound to abide, why were they not perpetually directed to their *Rabbinists*, and the doctrines that have since been collected in their *Talmud*, *Mischna*, and *Gemara*—and why, on the contrary, was the written law so often and so emphatically ordered to be studied night and day; to be for ever in their mouths, for ever in their hands; and to be taught to their children, even from their infant years? Can you affirm with truth, that the same has ever been the practice and spirit of your Church, before the æra of the Reformation?

When Christ retired from on Earth, and all the infallible teachers of his appointment, they had left in writing all that was essential both to faith and morals. “*Quod tunc præconiaverunt apostoli, says S. Irenæus, postea per Dei voluntatem in scripturis nobis tradiderunt.*” (a) My arguments and authorities on this subject you have never attempted to answer, by any direct reply. At best you have only sought to invalidate them, by endeavouring to establish a contrary system; as if your only aim was to facilitate an honourable retreat.—A specious, but surely a very unfair and illogical method of confuting!

If your belief in the Church “*precedes*” your belief in the Scriptures, as you assert, it can only be an human faith, depending upon human testimony; and must finally be resolved into human certainty. We are brought to the knowledge of God’s written word by the motives of credibility; and what we find revealed therein we admit with a steady faith, in proportion as these motives have convinced us it really is his word. Till the Scriptures were written, Christians depended upon oral tradition, and a living speaking authority, which could at once determine what tradition was to be admitted, and what rejected, by resolving with unerring certitude every doubt that could occur. But when these enlightened guides, these faithful interpreters of heaven, were taken from us, tradition became a very uncertain rule, and the Scriptures were our only standard. “*Scriptura sancta,*

(a) A variety of the most unanswerable passages from the Fathers, on the clearness and sufficiency of the Scriptures, may be seen collected in the learned Usher’s “*Historia Dogmatica de Scripturis,*” or in the “*Catalogus Testium Veritatis.*” See also, title 5, in the second volume of Bishop Gibson’s Tracts.

says *S. Augustin*, nostræ doctrinæ regulam figit :” And as *S. Basil* remarks “ It is a manifest defection from faith, and token of pride, either to reject any thing that is written, or to introduce any thing that is not written :” (a) Hence he also asserts, in the same work, that “ the hearers who are instructed in the Scriptures, must examine the doctrines of their teachers. What is agreeable thereunto they must receive ; and reject whatever is contrary to them.” The Apostles and Evangelists certainly proposed to write the Gospel of Christ : And if they were honest men, must have omitted nothing in their narration of his life and doctrines, which they knew it was requisite that they should themselves believe. Yet, according to you, they have mentioned little of many important articles, and have been totally silent upon that which, it should seem, is of all the most essential : namely, that oral tradition was fully sufficient to serve every purpose, and supply every defect ; to clear up what they had obscurely delivered, and deliver what they had purposely omitted. Could *S. Paul* assert that he had “ not shunned to declare all the Counsel of God,” (b) when the Gospel of *S. Luke*, written, as the fathers tell us, at his peculiar desire, and under his inspection, contained only part of it ? How much you have swerved from the doctrine above cited from *S. Augustin* and *S. Basil*, and with how little reason, will appear, I hope, in the following pages.—If there exists not some one who is as infallible in interpreting the decrees, or even declarations of councils, as the Apostles were in explaining their own meaning, and the doctrines which were then handed about amongst Christians, we still are as liable to mistake as ever. Almighty God might, doubtless, interpret infallibly to you the meaning of any passage in Scripture or Tradition ; but unless I had an evident proof that you were personally infallible, you never could interpret it to me, in such a manner as to settle all uncertainties about its meaning.—Heaven leads us to truth as it does to virtue, by such means as prudence suggests to assist us in its attainment ; by proposal, study, prayer, and rational investigation.

Can it be indeed believed that if this wondrous privilege

(a) In Moral. Summa.

(b) Acts, 20, 27.

was granted to the Church, Almighty God would ever have suffered it to lie in such obscurity, as to be the cause and root of almost every diffention that has prevailed amongst Christians?—Would he ever have appointed such means to settle our rule of faith and unite us all in the same belief, as must, from their very nature, be so unfit to answer the desired end? (a) Especially as there are some points to the knowledge of which your infallibility cannot lead us, and which, when once known, render this prerogative of no utility.

The summary of the Christian faith which has long obtained the name of the Apostles creed we receive with the utmost veneration. It contains a full abridgment of all the articles of mere belief—of whatever was requisite to be preached to all mankind. But for the rules of practice and obedience, as well as for the knowledge of many other salutary truths which equally claim our assent upon the supposition of a divine revelation sufficiently proposed, we must have recourse to Scripture. Of this written rule, indeed, the creed “*says nothing.*” But it implies it: and without the written word would long since have been unintelligible. It is from this only that it derives whatever authority it has; and its conformity with the Scriptures is the only title which has procured it our acceptance: For with *S. Augustin*, Ep. 166, “in the Scriptures we learnt Christ, and in the Scriptures we learnt the Church;” Although we also confess with him, that we are indebted to universal tradition even for our knowledge of the Gospel.—Can we have no faith in human testimony, because it possibly may err? Can we neither trust the constant deposition of our senses, the long experience of ages, nor the uniform voice of mankind, because they are not infallible? It is *perpetuity* which Christ has promised to his Church, and not *inerrancy*. (b) And though this is held forth as your belief, yet the very history of your own ecclesiastical establishment shews the nullity of all the pretended advantages with which you boast that it is attended.

When the authority of your *Church has spoken*, you “*neither doubt nor examine:*” but the greatest of all difficulties is to

(a) Appeal, 299.

(b) Appeal, 292, where this assertion is fully illustrated.

determine

determine when, what, and whether this living *Umpire* speaks, even when it is admitted that it has any right to speak at all. As to your insinuation that the words "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" can convey no idea to our mind, because we refuse to admit your fanciful comment on this article; you must surely have forgotten your own definition of the word *Church*. And since you are convinced that either it is to be understood in the same manner as your belief in God, or else is devoid of meaning, the sooner you *expunge* it from your creed, the better. As well might you conclude from the same words, and by a similar argument, that in your Church there can be no sin, as that there can be no error; for sin is as opposite to sanctity, as error is to truth.—We allow that we must hear the Church. So also were the Jews obliged to hear the Magistrates, under pain of death, *Joshua*, 1, 18. And children are bound, in all that is not sin, both to hear and to obey their parents: But this is no proof of the infallibility of their decisions. And as for the text which is cited from *S. Matthew*, to prove us, if possible, to be "heathens and unbelievers," your own commentators allow that it only regards a case of private contest, and is totally inapplicable to the purpose for which it is so frequently cited.

But all these observations upon the Apostles creed are evidently thrown in only to introduce the doctrine of a living, speaking, and never erring guide—your last refuge, and indeed your strongest hold. For I readily acknowledge that the system of oral tradition invariably delivered from father to son, even to the present day, is the firmest ground you can make a stand on, to support the tottering fabric of your creed. It carries with it in some points of view a seeming air of plausibility, which on a slight inspection imposes on the judgment; and may therefore easily put on the appearance of demonstration, either to those who are satisfied with words instead of reasons, or even to such others who from some prejudicated notions are persuaded they *cannot* err, and therefore think themselves obliged to defend the creed they have adopted. As for the written *depositum* collected from the fathers, councils, and the various treatises published from time to time upon these controverted subjects, and which your writers have mostly considered as the *palladium* of the party,  
I think

I think I have shewn that it is neither favourable to their tenets, nor so secure as the written Scriptures, when prudently investigated, and when the nature of this appeal is fairly stated. Indeed, both Mr. *White*, (a) *Holden*, and yourself, seem well aware that it is liable to the same objections which have usually been urged against *us* by Roman Catholic writers, and have therefore been desirous to shift your ground, in order to maintain the combat from a more secure entrenchment. Of the insufficiency of the written testimony we can need no other proof, than the volumes of annotations which commentators are obliged to add to the fathers, councils, decrees and declarations, in order to fix their sense. An objection this, which affects the Scriptures in a far less degree, as I have sufficiently shewn already by way of *Caveat* to the retortion which would naturally have been made; although no comparison can be fairly instituted in this regard between mere human traditions, and the written oracles of God, which Christians of every age and nation have generally admitted with equal veneration. The importance of the subject will then excuse me, if I endeavour to shew, somewhat at large, that the new foundation on which you wish to prove that your faith is built, is no less exceptionable and feeble than the former.

In the first ages of the world, before the invention of writing, tradition was a more safe and easy rule, as well from various circumstances peculiar to that dispensation, as from the long lives of the patriarchs. *Noah* had lived six hundred years with *Methuselah*, who was born more than seven hundred before the death of *Adam*—And between *Noah* and *Moses* but a few centuries intervened. Their religion was also then extremely simple, and therefore their code both of belief and practice was easily transmitted without any written documents. Yet notwithstanding this, and even those revelations which God vouchsafed occasionally to make in the most unequivocal manner, we find that the family of the just *Abraham* himself could scarce be withheld from giving an idolatrous worship to their *Theraphim* or tutelary deities.

In the beginnings likewise of the Christian Church, when\*

(a) Poole's "Nullity of the Romish Faith."

the

the articles of the Christian faith were so few and simple, and the various questions which have since caused such divisions in the world had not been thought of, tradition was a fair appeal. Most controversies might then be readily settled by a method equally decisive and short, whilst recourse might so easily be had to those who had either been instructed by the Apostles themselves, or their immediate successors; or even to such Churches as were universally acknowledged never to have varied in their faith or practice, and which still perhaps preserved the original or authentic records of revelation—And this more particularly with regard to those points wherein the Apostles had spoken, and not the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 7, 12; Although we may see from the writings of *Irenæus*, and other most early fathers, that many things were even then handed about as of Apostolical tradition, (a) which are now admitted to be both incredible and absurd. Even in the days of *S. Cyprian*, it already was a question what was tradition: And though this Prelate in his dispute with *Stephen*, confidently said “*Nos veritati consuetudinem jungimus, ab initio hoc tenentes quod a Christo et ab Apostolo traditum est,*” (b) yet reasoning upon Scripture principles prevailed. Let it also here be remembered, that by the word *Tradition* they frequently, in the early ages, meant the written registers or confessions of particular Churches; which when they were all found to agree, were evidently of great authority: Especially at a time when such Churches were totally independent on each other, and when the Bishops, tenacious of their own natural inherent prerogative, were jealous of every least attempt to infringe or lessen their authority—and each considered that he had a portion of Christ’s flock entrusted to him, which it was his peculiar duty to instruct and manage, and of which he was to render an account to God *alone.* (c)

Hence also *Tertullian’s* famous rule of prescription, which in those days was on various accounts so judicious and conclusive, is now an argument of little weight. For the various heresies and schisms that have risen—the alternate triumph of truth

(a) App. 111, 347, Barbeyrac’s *Morale des Peres.*

(b) *Epist.* 75, page 164, Edit. Rigal.

(c) See the Letters of *S. Cyprian.*

and

falsehood in the same episcopal Sees—the dreadful scenes of confusion which reigned in the fourth and fifth ages—the scandalous lives and simoniacal practices of those who were at the head of the Christian *Monarchy* (a) in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, and whom you consider as the chief guardians and interpreters of the Apostolic doctrines, &c. (b) have totally altered the nature and authority of all unwritten traditions. That they should in these circumstances have been transmitted incorrupt and pure through a lapse of seventeen centuries, is a sentiment that carries not the least feature of probability in it: And it would be truly ludicrous to reply to a serious inquirer concerning some of your doctrines, that you received them by oral tradition from your ancestors, some of whom heard them from the mouth of the Evangelists seventeen hundred years ago.

When Priests and Bishops wore rich embroidered belts, and headed their troops to battle—When councils gave men leave to take other wives, if their own refused to follow them in their journies—When Deacons claimed a right to consecrate the Eucharist—When some Priests used milk or beer instead of wine, in the celebration of the Sacrament—When books were so extremely scarce, that few private persons could afford the purchase of a single volume—When from the *Humber* to the *Thames* there was scarce a clergyman who understood the liturgy in his mother tongue, or could translate the easiest piece of Latin—When dignified Ecclesiastics could not subscribe their names to the Canons of those Councils at which they assisted—When candidates for orders were sometimes unable to recite the Creed or the Lord's Prayer—In fine, when ignorance, credulity, and superstition reigned with almost unbounded sway, can we believe that they were not accompanied with the utmost negligence and carelessness both in the clergy and the people? Can we really be persuaded that the clergy knew what the tenets of the age

(a) See Hooke's *Principia*. Paris, 1774.

(b) Cardinal *Baronius* allows that those who were at the helm strove to sink the bark of Christ: and that corruption was risen to such a height, that many believed that *Antichrist* was already come, and the end of the world approached. See *Annales*. an. 808, 899, 900, 912, 974, 992, 1001. "Peccatorum fuit caligo, *says he*, Ægypti pæne tenebras Superans—hoc tempore Romæ pæne nullus, ut fama est, qui literas didicerit."



before them were, or that the people were secure in their reliance upon their immediate pastors for information? (a)

Whatever is delivered down by mere oral communication must evidently vary, and in spite of system will be materially affected by those continual revolutions (b) which take place in the various customs, habits, opinions, prejudices, and even language (c) of mankind. In vain will you assure us that this is impossible, whilst the best supported facts demonstrate it to be true. What could be shorter or easier to be remembered than the decalogue? Yet even this heaven would not trust to oral tradition, but ordered it to be written that "it might remain for time to come, for ever and ever." *Isai.* 30, 8.—a very unnecessary caution, if oral delivery had been equally secure! Such is the general sense of mankind, who from the very beginning have always delivered to writing, or at least expressed by some sensible characters or symbols, whatever they wished to preserve or to perpetuate: and thus it is that every art and science is rescued from oblivion. For the experience of ages has shewn that writing is a more certain conveyance than tradition. It was upon no other account than this, that the Pagans fought so earnestly to destroy the Scriptures, and that the *Traditores* were so singularly detested by the ancient christians, although in your sentiment the crime of delivering the sacred writings into the hands of the infidels could, in many circumstances, have been but a very venial offence. The belief of christians you think is totally independent on them.—Whence then could arise the great importance of saving them from destruction at the hazard of their lives?

Now if it has ever been esteemed of the utmost advantage to commit to writing whatever was wished to be preserved, how much more necessary was such a precaution in matters of speculation, especially where outward actions are but

(a) See the Canons of the Councils of Arles, Verberie, Brague, Quiercy, Winchester, &c. in Abbé Richard—Notes 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 40, amongst the "Historical Illustrations at the end of Robertson's "History of the Reign of Charles the Fifth"—And Lord Kaime's "Sketches of the History of Man," with regard to food, arts, and manners; as well as with respect to opinions, both moral and religious.

(b) Appeal, 133. (c) *Ibid.* 373.

equivocal signs of inward belief. (a) Oral deposition is of a flitting nature, and the impressions caused by sounds are easily erased and frequently mistaken, unless reduced to some solid form : for which reason, of all the numerous miracles which our Saviour wrought, not one has reached us except such as the inspired writers have recorded.—Of his wondrous works and words there cannot be any doubt but much was known with certainty in the ages which immediately followed that in which he graciously vouchsafed to “ dwell amongst us :” but none of these traditions have been preserved even by the infallible church, because they were not written.

That tradition, in one or other acceptation of that term, is a certain and sufficient guide, your writers have frequently sought to prove from the opinions of the fathers on this subject. But admitting even their testimony on this head to be both uniform and clear, it merely relates to matters of little consequence. “ Multa,” says St. Jerom, “ quæ per traditionem in ecclesia observantur, auctoritatem sibi scriptæ legis usurpaverunt ; velut in lavacro ter caput mergere, die dominico de geniculis non adorare, &c.” And it is generally for such unimportant practices as these that *Eusebius*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Augustin*, *Chrysoptom*, and *Basil*, appeal to the authority of unwritten traditions, even when they seem to equal this authority with that of the Scriptures.

On this subject however your most celebrated polemical writers are much divided : and the various shifts they are put to in order to prove or to explain what they would fain have us believe is so clear and obvious, leave rather an unfavourable impression of the whole system. No one ever wrote more plausibly in its defence than *Holden*, who endeavours through many pages of his *Analysis* to establish this doctrine of a constant tradition derived to every pastor of your Church by an uninterrupted succession from his immediate predecessor. But as I think it fairly proved that this is neither requisite to any useful purpose, nor does in fact exist,

(a) It is a known fact that before the tenth age, no kind of *religious* veneration at all, whether *absolute* or *relative*, was paid to images in France ; and no less certain that now there is. Nevertheless, external appearances have, in great measure, still remained the same : and who shall say when this change in sentiments took place ? See *Richard Anal. des Conciles*.

I am convinced that he has only laboured out an ingenious hypothesis to account for a mere non-entity. He much insists that the mean by which we are to arrive at the knowledge of all revealed truth must be so evident to our external senses that no Christian can possibly be ignorant of its existence; and, at the same time, such as can afford the completest certainty to the most unenlightened of society. He contends, moreover, that it was necessary Christ should have provided some such means, which therefore he concludes must be tradition, because he knows no other which would equally answer the benign intentions of providence. All this is evident abuse of logic and a mere *petitio principii*. For, however efficacious the means may be, their efficacy is foreign to the question, unless there is an equal evidence that these are really the very means which Christ has thought proper to establish. If we cannot perceive the conclusiveness of your arguments in favour either of its necessity or existence, your guide is very inadequate to the purpose for which you think it given; since it requires at least as much trouble to *seek* the guide, as it does to *find* those pastures to which it is supposed to direct us. Whereas, as it is chiefly necessary to the ignorant and simple, the proofs by which it is established should be evident and easy beyond the reach of controversy. Now to examine the notes of the Church, and to determine to which of the several societies on earth they belong, is a much more difficult task than to examine the conformity of any present doctrines with the Scriptures; although it is at least as necessary to be infallibly sure where the true Church is, as to know that that Church when found will guide us infallibly to truth.

The History of the dissensions caused by the writings of *Jansenius*, (a) and the publication of the Bull *Unigenitus* in the

(a) "The principal errors contained in the doctrine of the Jansenists are, that God sometimes refuses, even to the just, sufficient grace to comply with his precepts; that the grace which God affords man since the fall of Adam is such, that if concupiscence be stronger, it cannot produce its effect; but if the grace be more powerful or victorious by a *necessitating* influence, that then it cannot be resisted, rejected, or hindered: and that Christ by his death paid, indeed, a sufficient price for the redemption of all men, and offered it to purchase some weak insufficient grace for reprobate souls, but not to procure

the beginning of the present century, is more than sufficient to invalidate all your pretensions and system. And the contradictory publications of the Cardinal *de Noailles* and the Bishop of *Soissons*, as well as of the other *accepting* and *appealing* Prelates, will ever furnish a memorable proof of the insufficiency of your unerring guide to settle religious contentions in your own Church; although you speak so vauntingly of the harmony of sentiment which ever prevails in your society. This famous constitution is now regarded as a rule of faith as to its effects, although it was perhaps never legally accepted as such. Yet how many explications did it not require, how many appeals did it not give rise to, to a future council which never will be held? How was not the *Catholic* world thrown into the utmost confusion by excommunications, seizures, prosecutions, arrests, decrees, explanations, pastoral letters, &c, while Bishops, Abbots, Chapters, and Colleges, both secular and regular, were mutually fulminating anathemas against each other; at the same time that they all professed to be governed by tradition—declared their submission to the unerring authority of the Church—and looked up to *Rome* as the center of unity, even whilst openly resisting its decisions! (a)

It is also worth remark that in this memorable controversy, Messrs. *Arnauld*, *Nicolle* and all their learned adherents, made use of the same arguments against their adversaries, to which they would afterwards allow no merit when urged

procure them means truly applicable, and sufficient for their salvation. The main spring or hinge of this system is, that the grace which inclines man's will to supernatural virtue since the fall of Adam, consists in a moral pleasurable motion, or a delectation infused into the soul, inclining her to virtue, as concupiscence carries her to vice; and that the power of delectation, whether of virtue or vice, which is strongest, draws the will by an inevitable necessity, as it were by its own weight." Albin Butler's *Life of S. Vincent of Paul*. "To explain, support, modify, reject and impugn such absurdities as these, an enlightened and polished nation was convulsed for near a century. This fanatical system called forth all the airy humour, all the powers of satire, all the profound erudition of an elegant people. Princes and bishops, friars and poets, divines and ladies, eagerly engaged in the mighty contest; while to an impartial by-stander it was a matter of doubt whether the object of contention was not a mere phantom at last." See Dr. Wharton's Reply to Dr. Carroll, page 42.

(a) Lenfant's *Preservatif*, tom 4, page 216; or the *Eccles. Hist. of the Times*.

by

by Protestants. In support of their own cause they appealed to argument and truth: And the *immutability* of truth was urged as a sufficient reason to withstand the authority of all their Ecclesiastical superiors. They rejected the idea of an unerring guide, and quibbled both upon the nature and extent of its prerogative; affecting indeed in speculation to allow its existence, although they never could agree where, when, or what it had determined in this important concern. By their advice the nuns of *Port-royal* refused to sign the *formulary*, because as they could only have a probable certainty that the condemned propositions were in *Jansenius*, they would betray their own conscience by swearing to a fact of which they could but have a fallible security: and it was on this occasion asserted that even women should not submit to *the greatest authority which was on earth*, (a) till they were convinced of the equity of the terms which were proposed to them, and the truth of what they were required to acknowledge. Yet how different their language when writing against the principles of the reformed religion!—Such is the inconsistency of a party spirit. If they really were sincere in their own cause; (and could such men be otherwise, when fighting against the far major part of the *Catholic* world, and that very Church out of which there was no salvation,) what must we think of their proceedings when they engaged so warmly against the Calvinists? In one or other of these debates they must certainly have acted against their conscience—or must at least be held up as a striking instance how far prejudice and mistaken zeal will sometimes mislead the most clear-sighted men.

Neither is this the only question which has caused divisions amongst the members of your church. The disputes between the bishops and mendicant clergy concerning exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, when for more than half a century six or seven different popes were endeavouring to establish peace amongst them, and determine the limits of their own authority, are another striking example of your wondrous unanimity. To which I might also add the quarrels between the secular and regular priests in England towards the close of Queen *Elizabeth's* reign, about the autho-

(a) See the “*Examen du livre qui porte pour titre Préjugés légitimes contre les Calvinistes,*” par Claude Pajon, 1761.

rity of an *Arch-priest*; or those which were carried on a short time after, when the titular Bishop of *Chalcedon*, though invested with the power of *ordinary*, was obliged to withdraw to France. From all which notorious facts it is evident that whatever power Rome may boast of with respect to heretics, she has never been able to compose any differences that arose within her own fold.

Nor do these dissensions only prove how useless that tenet is from which your imaginary union is supposed to proceed; but they likewise shew the fallibility and insecurity of those exterior means of resolving doubts which you attribute to your society--and this even in matters of great importance, such as the Pope's prerogative and jurisdiction, and the disputes concerning Jansenism undoubtedly are. Amidst all these theological squabbles what can a simple unlettered christian do, or where descry the unerring depositum, the living guide which is to fix his faith? Perhaps his bishop is not orthodox, (a) or his curate may be infected with the leaven of some heresy, which he wishes secretly to instil, although he does not dare avow it openly! The whole diocese or province may be tainted with the errors of *Jansenius*; and who would dare suspect the orthodoxy of such men as signalized themselves during these troubles in France? Yet alas! they were all stricken with *Anathema*. Thus may a well-disposed christian in a catholic country consult cardinals, bishops, and theologians; and though they all agree in teaching him the same doctrine, nevertheless he may live and die in error. Appealing to oral tradition as far as it is in his power to discern it, he may stray from the truth--Applying to an hundred teachers, who to him are the universal church from which he received his scriptures and his creed, yet is he not secure: Since had he consulted two hundred more, he might have learnt that his former teachers had all misled him. This, Sir, is no speculative subtilty, called in to serve the ends of party. Even now it actually is the case in France, where whole communities and districts are still attached to the doctrines of this learned bishop,

(a) In 1668, Pope Clement ordered the ritual of the Diocese of Aleth to be burnt; but nine and twenty French Bishops declared openly in its favour.

and

and revere the names of *Nicolle, Pascal, Arnauld, Sacy, Tournoux, Hermant, &c.* little less than those of any of their calendar faints.

The same has also been more or less the case in every age of the christian church. Will any one pretend that in the days of *Arius* oral tradition was such a guide that none could apprehend the danger of being misled, and had only to attend to what had been delivered from ear to ear, what they learned from their own immediate pastor, and what he had received from those who went before him? Had this been the opinion of those days, the orthodox party would never have returned or got footing again in the church; since every argument of this nature was evidently against them. The people had then received the gospel from the *Arians*, and why should they not have taken the explanation of it from the same hands? The *Arians* were then the ostensible Church having, as they asserted, catholicity, (a) antiquity, succession, sanctity, prescription, on their side: And the orthodox were held as *Schismatics*, an upstart handful of innovators who were departed from the faith. They cited indeed a prior tradition, and insisted that against truth no prescription could be admitted. But they were answered that *they came too late*, that the true Church actually was and ever had been in possession of the Apostolical Doctrines, and that it was their duty to submit. In fine, the same prejudices were urged against them, that now are produced against us: And if they proved at length to be only *prejudices* then, so will they also one day be acknowledged to be again, though urged with equal confidence against the principles of the reformation. (b)

This doctrine of a regular uninterrupted transmission of the creed from the very earliest days, might in some degree be admitted with respect to the great leading doctrines of

(a) See Jerom, Hilary, Greg. Naz. Athanasius, &c. cited by Claude, part 3, ch. 4.—Chillingworth, page 353. Il faut bien peu connoître l'histoire de l'Eglise, pour s'imaginer qu'il y eut alors des milliers D'Evêques qui demeurèrent fermes . . . Combien la signature emporta-t-elle D'Evêques? Si on excepte un tres petit nombre que Dieu conserva, afin qu'il restât quelque semence et quelque racine pour faire refleurir Israel, tous les autres cederent au tems. Hist. Ecclef. tom 1, page 263. Paris, 1768.

(b) See above, page 38.

Christianity,

Christianity, although the total oblivion even of the unity of God, for the maintenance of which the chief wonders of the mosaical dispensation were wrought, is little favourable to this idea. But it is no ways applicable to those obscure tenets, of which not one in a thousand who either presumes to *teach* or pretends to *believe* them, has formed to himself any distinct notion. The slight foundations upon which most men's way of thinking is established, need not be mentioned. Customs beget opinions, and opinions readily rise to doctrines, when once they have had for a certain time the countenance of a few leading men; so that what in one age is deemed merely possible, becomes probable shortly after, and in another century passes without the least hesitation for an established truth. In short, whatever *Holden* has advanced in support of his hypothesis, rests solely on the supposition that the knowledge of every single article of the Roman belief has been ever more universally spread over the Christian world—has been more confirmed by daily and general practice—more explicitly credited in every age, at least by the learned and good—more clearly taught to each succeeding generation, than any other human traditions ever were. And though in fact nothing less than this seems requisite to establish the several tenets of his creed, yet the assumption appears to be destitute of truth in almost all its parts. How indeed this acute Theologian should ever have been induced to hazard such a series of gratuitous assertions is not easily discovered, since he has himself allowed that the Church has always *delivered down and taught* both the articles of her *belief*, as well as whatever regards her *discipline*, “*omnia simul confuse et indistincte.*”—As if the clear unequivocal knowledge of any speculative points can have been regularly handed down to each individual, when the body of Pastors has never taught them but in a confused and indefinite manner! Can it be believed that such a method would have preserved every article of your present faith unaltered from the days of the Apostles, when in every other instance we know that it is not sufficient to hand down a single truth from year to year with any certainty and precision, even if a perfect knowledge of it could once be possibly attained from the midst of such obscurity? Is it not most likely owing to this, that it is still so highly uncertain, after seventeen hundred years, *as you*



*affirm*, of your establishment, whether the Pope's assent to the declarations of a general council is requisite to make them Catholic traditions? Yet, how much depends on the decision of this important question is known to all! And the affirmative opinion, though not the fashionable tenet of the present age, has surely Catholicity in its favour, the weight both of times and numbers. There are however some things, you may tell us, which never can be known but by tradition only, and which nevertheless Protestants have received as well as the Church of Rome; such as the lawful use of blood—the institution of the Lord's Day—the Canonicity of certain Books of Scripture—the validity of Infant-baptism, and that which is conferred by heretics or laymen. Having animadverted upon most of these objections in a former work, (a) I shall confine myself in this place, to that which concerns the Sacrament of baptism; having first premised this general reflection, that if it is impossible to determine them from Scripture, it is not necessary that they should be determined at all. *First*, then, with respect to Infant-baptism, the validity as well as propriety of it is entirely deduced from Scripture grounds: For since Children were included in the Abrahamic covenant, which was not annulled, but only confirmed by Christ, (b) they are by birth entitled to the enjoyment of all covenant blessings. Even under the Mosaic law, every gentile Profelyte, with all his family, both young and old, could no otherwise be admitted into the peculiar Church of God, but by baptism and circumcision. And as Children were received into the covenant by the same ceremony for fifteen hundred years before it was adopted by our Saviour into the Gospel dispensation, it would be the summit of injustice to exclude them from it—more especially as we have sufficient intimations of the Apostolic sense and practice, to justify the discipline which our Church has thought proper to adopt. (c) That much of this is denied by the Anabaptists, I am not ignorant: But what will not men deny, even without suspecting the illusion, when it clashes

(a) Appeal, pages 80, 119, 122. (b) Galat. 3, 17.

(c) Acts, 2, 38—16, 15, 1 Cor. 1, 16—7, 14—Coloss. 2, 11, 12. See "the Covenant of Grace, and Baptism the token of it, explained upon Scripture principles," by Dr. John Taylor, of Norwich, wherein this question is fully discussed.

with

with the principles of a favourite system? If their reasonings on this subject are inconclusive and weak, so also is the argument deduced from their denial—And if they have any solidity in them, in proportion to this solidity the question is likewise proportionably unnecessary to be settled with any infallible degree of certainty. Besides, as baptism is a positive law depending solely on the Legislator's will, it extends no further than the literal import of the words, which only require the outward application of water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Whatever other questions can be moved about it, are therefore only “of doubtful disputation.”

*Secondly.* The same reasoning equally applies with regard to the validity of baptism when conferred by heretics or laymen. It was not said “If an Orthodox man, or a Priest baptises,” but “be baptised every one of you . . . for the promise is unto you and to your Children.”—Whence then can all these useless queries arise? Tradition was certainly not uniform in its favour, or else *S. Cyprian* and all the Bishops of *Galatia* and *Cappadocia* could never have been so completely ignorant of it. Was it delivered from hand to hand in such a manner as to make the Africans secure that their Pastors could not misguide them? When you shall produce in favour of those points of Pope *Pius's* Creed to which we now object, the same authority which we have for the above observances; or as *Timothy* and the *Theffalonians* had for the things that were committed to them by *S. Paul*, (a) you will easily persuade us to embrace them. It is not, I again repeat it, to Apostolical traditions we object, by whatever name or in whatever manner they are conveyed; but only to the weakness of those proofs which you produce for their existence.

These reflections are, I think, sufficiently forcible and clear in favour of the Protestant rule of faith; Whilst at the same time they fully point out how little dependence can be placed on mere oral communication, which often may mislead us in most essential points, even when we esteem ourselves the most secure. The simple exposal of the system of the Christian faith as embraced by the reformed Church,

(a) 1 Tim. 1, 14. Theffal. 2, 15.

seems infinitely more rational and obvious, than that which you have traced out with so much confidence of its superior excellence. Natural and convincing as this may appear to you, I assure you that to me it seems perplexed with difficulties, hard to conceive, and useless when admitted; unless there exists in every province some infallible individual to whom, in cases of uncertainty, all Christians both illiterate and learned may have free access—An individual whose claims are obvious and indisputable as were those of Christ himself and the first planters of that religion which he came from Heaven to teach, speaking “as man never spake,” and making a full display of that sovereign power which so completely established the divine authority of his commission.

Indeed the claim of an infallible direction to all truths which it shall please any human tribunal to decide, is of so very extraordinary a nature, so truly pernicious in its consequences if supported only on fallacious grounds, that it ought to be the clearest of all demonstrable truths. As it precludes every further inquiry, its proofs should be not only obvious, but unexceptionable. And since it is the only point on which a Roman Catholic need be solicitous, it is of the utmost importance that he should take every kind of information on this article, which either friend or foe can furnish.—A maxim which yet your church has ever been careful to discountenance! Nevertheless it is a most undeniable fact, that unless by repeating a few texts of scripture which are often ludicrously inapplicable to the question, your people are but ill instructed in this most essential ground-work of their whole religion. For even upon the supposition that it is an undoubted truth, yet the reasoning by which you labour to establish it, and which you allow to be different from that by which it has generally been supported, is far from being obvious to the illiterate; but requires much argument and combination to descry either its force or meaning. And a person of plain simple sense may well suppose that it is not so certain as you would fain persuade him, when “*the only true light*” (a) in which the authority of his Church has been considered, is not “*the Common one*” which has been presented to your people for these seventeen hundred years. Where, I

(a) Reflections, page 98.

befeech you, is *exactness* requisite, if not in such points as this, on which the truth or fallacy of your whole Creed depends?— In vain do you flatter yourself that your Religion is founded on a rock, if even this rock has no other foundation than an unstable Bank of Sand: For, however firm the rock itself, yet whilst it is placed on so insecure a basis, both house and rock may possibly fall together.

Nothing, Sir, can surely be more conclusive in our favour than the above stated facts and reasonings. By believing explicitly whatever the Scriptures have clearly taught, and with an implicit faith whatever they declare in a less perspicuous manner, we have every degree of certainty which seems possible in a state of merit, obscurity, and trial. Can you have more by admitting a supposed unerring guide, without any other warrant for the tenet than the bare presumption of its great utility? That this doctrine is indeed delivered most explicitly in the sacred Writings, Father *Cressy* and some other of your writers have not scrupled to assert. But it is, I believe, at present most generally allowed that the conclusiveness of such passages as are usually cited to this purpose, is entirely owing to the acceptance of your Church, which has been pleased by her unerring declarations to determine that such must have originally been their genuine meaning. For I cannot persuade myself that any are now disposed to argue on these points of controversy upon the principles that a celebrated writer of your party once advanced when treating on the Eucharist; who insisted that the more any interpretation of this tenet was agreeable to human reason, and the more probable to common sense and understanding, the greater reason there was to conclude that it could not be the proper meaning of the scripture words. (a) The necessity therefore of an unerring teacher is generally deduced from a consideration of man's ignorance and weakness. But Protestants, on the contrary, not able to discover either from scripture or the plain principles of reasoning, that any such has been appointed,

(a) "Hunc non esse verum sensum vel hoc ipsum declarat, quod is humanæ rationi magis accomodatus est.—Quæ de hoc sacramento dicis, probabiliter dici non negamus; sed quo probabilius, eo magis est a Christi sententia alienum. Nisi enim longius a sensu verborum Christi in hoc sacramento nos retrahit, quam quæ sensui et intellectui nostro probabilis assertur interpretatio Verborum Christi." *Polus de Eucharistia.*

conclude

conclude they hope with more respect, as well as on more solid grounds, that notwithstanding all our weak surmises and conjectures, if it had been requisite, we should all have been directed to it without the possibility of error. And if we will but reflect on the narrow boundaries of our own apprehensions, and the unfathomable wisdom and knowledge of the Almighty, I can but think that this is the fairer argument. Whatever is required to be known, will always be made manifest to the humble and sincere inquirer who "asketh in faith, nothing wavering;" and if we receive it not, it is "because we ask amiss." (a) This the scriptures repeatedly assure us in terms infinitely more clear and unambiguous than any you produce in support of the unlimited authority of the Catholic Church in matters of Religion. These few lines convey at once my ideas of the celebrated question which formerly was so much canvassed, concerning *fundamental* and *non-fundamental* Articles. That part only of religion is fundamental to each man, which he has been enabled to know: And he will be answerable only for the use or the abuse of the means he has had, and not be judged according to the discoveries he has made. Even the whole Christian Church seems to have for a while been ignorant that the Gospel was to be preached to the *Gentiles*, although it had been declared in the most express terms that language could supply; (b) and remained in this error till the Conversion of *Cornelius*, when a new miracle was requisite to make them embrace the truth. (c) Did this "make the faith of God without effect?" (d) If we argued only upon the inscrutable ways of providence by what seemeth best to human reason, we might perhaps infer that heaven might have adopted even a more secure method of making known its will, than that which you have devised: for private inspiration to each individual Christian would have effectually prevented all these difficulties in which we now seem so bewildered. And the prevention of all controversies is better far, according to our conceptions, than the decision of them; especially where the Commission of the Decider was likely to remain the subject of perpetual disagreement. (e) But these are lights which were incompatible with our present destina-

(a) James, 1, 6.—4, 2.

(b) Matt. 28, 19.

(c) Acts, 11, 12.

(d) Romans, 3, 3.

(e) Chillingworth, chap. 2. § 128, et Seq.

tion, and which it has pleased almighty God for just and wise reasons to withhold. Here, Sir, it is that we may justly apply the reflection of *S. Augustin*, “ Ubi de re obscurissima disputatur, non adjuvantibus divinarum Scripturarum certis clarisque documentis, cohibere se debet humana præsumptio, nil faciens in partem alteram declinando.”—And happy would it have been for the human race if these boundaries so wisely settled had never been transgressed! (a)

On a fair review, therefore, of this question, and whatever has been offered in its support by *Holden*, the able Logicians of Port-Royal, and all your writers of greatest eminence, I cannot think your System has any just title to our acceptance. The disregard you shew for Scripture (b)—the difference between your language, and that of the ancient fathers—the inconclusiveness of your most favourite arguments—the impossibility of collecting any uniform tradition in your Church—the impropriety of building one’s whole system of belief upon an hypothesis, which may indeed account for the introduction of any tenet, but which neither renders that tenet credible, nor is itself supported by any solid reasoning; all these, as far as I am able to form a judgment, are so many presumptions against your system, which nothing I have yet seen urged in its favour, can counterbalance. The universal deposition of mankind has indeed a title to command a general acquiescence; and it were folly to question the existence of any Roman Emperors, or that there really are such places in the world as those which usually have been called *Constantinople*, *Pekin*, or *Calcutta*. But with respect to your discriminating opinions, no one will ever venture to affirm that any man can trace out a tradition equally clear, constant, and undoubted, as he can concerning the above-mentioned truths; Nor, if he did, would he merit our belief.—Neither then can he adhere to them with the same fullness of assurance. Thus much for the ingenious analysis of *Holden’s* faith, to which you seem to have had an eye in the sketch which you have

(a) August. de Peccat. Merit. l. 12, c. 36.

(b) “ Scripturæ Sanctæ dignitatem temere deprimit Holdenus,” says D’Argentré, in his *Animadversions upon Holden’s Analysis*, Edit. Nov. Paris, 1767, apud Barbou: And the same censure may, I think, be applied with equal truth to all your Reflections on this subject.

given us of your own. As the strength of all those arguments by which you hoped to "*crumble into dust the whole substance of my appeal*" (a) depends entirely upon the principles which form the basis of his elaborate system, I considered myself as fully justified in exposing the fallacy of them, even at the hazard of meeting again with your disapprobation.—I will now attend to your further most extraordinary reflections on this same important subject.

If you really believe that the faith of a baptised infant is divine ; or that an adult, the moment he has submitted to this appointment, although he never heard of the scriptures, yet believes with a divine faith in all that the Church teaches ; we have totally done with argument. He has then no further need or right to inquire whether his Church is either orthodox or fallible, has no further cause to seek whether his religion is rational or absurd ; being certain that whatever that Church teaches in which he received his baptism, must indubitably come from God :—An argument which would equally serve every Christian society on earth ; a wheel within a wheel ; a system which no human ingenuity can unravel ! No, Sir : Their belief can neither be divine nor rational, unless upon a supposition that it is conformable to revelation ; which is the very point in dispute. (b) Unless the terms we use are previously settled, and their meaning fully ascertained, we may go on wrangling for ever till the main object of dispute is lost in the wild confusion : But how far either your faith or ours may be called *divine*, and that they both are equally such, I think I have shewn before, beyond the reach of reply. (c) We are not here speaking of extraordinary circumstances in which almighty God has out of pure mercy provided for the salvation of such as were under a physical inability of complying with his precepts ; but of the usual progress through which rational beings are led to truth. When infants are snatched away by sudden death before they either can be guilty of any personal offence, or pay to God that homage of their faith which he so justly claims, the compliance of the parents with the terms of the Christian covenant is imputed to their Children to acceptance ; in as much as they are "Abraham's

(a) Reflections, page 97.

(b) Appeal, page 344.

(c) See above, page 53.

feed and heirs according to the promise." (a) And in a similar situation of a sudden and unforeseen removal, it is, properly speaking, charity alone, and a wish to comply with what they judge to be the will of Heaven, that saves adults; whether they were baptised in an heretical or apostolical society. (b)

You ask me whether it is from "*Ink and paper that the written word of God derives its authority,*"—and might with equal reason have inquired whether the truth of the apostolic doctrines was derived from the air that passes through the *Trachea* or the *Glottis!* Does not the same objection bear equally hard upon every law both human and divine? Yet ink and paper, or something equivalent to them, are the means, and often the necessary means of preserving any of the monuments of ancient times. "*Les égaremens des hommes, le monde entier devenu payen, says one of your late writers . . . nous prouvent sensiblement que la seule voie de la tradition étoit insuffisante ;*" (c) And he also expressly adds that the written Scriptures were given us because it was justly to be feared lest the great truths of religion would not otherwise be long maintained in their original purity, since oral tradition was soon "entirely altered and corrupted."—It is far even from being certain that *Moses* himself in the composition of the Pentateuch had not the assistance of many written traditions which had carefully been delivered down from more ancient times! (d)

"*Were the Bible to be lost,*" Sir, the laws that were written in the hearts of man by the Christian legislator would quickly be obliterated; the most important truths of religion would be too soon obscured, if not forgotten; new systems of practical worship would speedily be introduced; a

(a) Galat. 3, 29. See Taylor's Covenant of Grace.

(b) Without faith it is impossible to be pleasing to God: But faith cometh by hearing, and has never an equal merit with charity.

(c) See the Work entitled "*Des Titres primitifs de la Révélation, ou considérations critiques sur la pureté et L'Intégrité du texte original,*" par le R. P. Gabriel Fabricy. A Rome, 1772, vol. 1, page 182.

(d) Such at least was the opinion of Bossuet, Fleury, Dom Calmet, and more particularly of the Author of the "*Conjectures sur les Memoires Originaux, dont il paroît que Moyse s'est servi pour Composer le Livre de la Génèse.*" Bruxelles, 1753.



presumed tradition would every where keep pace with the capricious conceits of man; and the universe would be over-run again with superstition, ignorance, and prejudice, without hopes or means to be reformed. If there were no Bible, we must have done as well as we could without it, and have followed the dictates of natural religion, common sense, and tradition, as far as we could trace it and it deserved our confidence; just as we are obliged, when the sun abandons us, to supply its place with some inferior substitute. But many Christian writers have admired, and copiously treated on the miraculous preservation of the Scriptures in their present degree of purity, and have clearly proved that both in the Jewish and Christian Æras they have had advantages which no other writings ever had: So that it was morally impossible that even in the common course of things, they should have been corrupted. All the laborious researches of a *Mills*, a *Kennicot*, a *Rossi*, and a *Geddes*,<sup>(a)</sup> have only tended to prove that they are still essentially the same as when first written, and that the whole-historical tenor of the divine œconomy towards man has been preserved in them without any important alteration to the present time. To assert that any part of the inspired canon has been lost in the course of ages, is extremely rash in itself; and may be prejudicial, in the eyes of many, to the authority of what remains. (b) Nevertheless, although no part of Scripture is superfluous, and a variety of witnesses and records may be presumed of some advantage; yet in reality, each single Gospel, even that of *S. Luke* alone, if his own assurances deserve any credit, contains whatever is necessary to be known—the substance of all that Jesus taught, *until the day in which he was taken up*—whatever was requisite, as well to the establishment of Christianity, as to its support and full perfection. For *S. Luke*, *having perfect understanding of things from the beginning*, declared whatever was *most assuredly believed amongst Christians*; in which belief undoubtedly was included every essential part of the *Gospel* which he delivered. (c) So little has tradition been depended upon

(a) See his *Prospectus of a new translation of the Bible*. Glasgow, 1786.

(b) *Fabrycy* and *Lardner* have shewn that this opinion rests upon the most weak conjectures.

(c) *Chillingworth*, chap. 4, § 43.

by the writers of your communion, unless as an useful interpreter, that the total loss or depravation of the Scriptures has ever been considered as impossible in the present dispensation, wherein the word of God seems plighted for their being preserved entire as to all the material points of his most merciful covenant. “ Les mêmes raisons, *says Fabricy*, qui servent à constater la nécessité d’une révélation (écrite) nous démontrent la nécessité qu’elle nous soit conservée toute pure dans nos écrits sacrés.” Their divine inspiration and essential sameness are admitted by all Christian societies with surprising unanimity. But if they were not necessary to the Christian Church, and you could have retained the same faith unadulterated “ *without the aid of a written word*,” wherefore the standing miracle of their wondrous preservation which has so much excited the astonishment of every age? (a) Even the *internal* marks of a divine original which are discernable in them, may be considered as a striking evidence in favour of their authenticity, and may well induce us to confess with *Rousséau*, that “ Le Divin livre de L’Evangile est le seul nécessaire à un Chrétien, et le plus utile de tous, même à quiconque ne le feroit pas . . . il a des caractères de vérité si frappans, si parfaitement inimitables, que l’inventeur en feroit plus étonnant que le Héros.” (b)—In a word, all Christians believe them to be the genuine dictates of the Holy Spirit; and it is a sad inversion of order, as well as most disrespectful language, to say that you only admit their authority *because* the doctrine and maxims they contain were found conformable to your unwritten traditions.

If the Scriptures were never intended to *deliver* the word of God, but only to *confirm* it, they certainly were destined to be *no rule at all*, as you have candidly at length acknowledged; although at first you advanced this strange opinion with some degree of diffidence, by asserting that they were not the *only* or *essential* rule of the faith of Catholics. (b) In this sentiment, however, you are somewhat singular; and it

(a) See on this subject the several valuable Treatises selected by the Bishop of Landaff, in his late “Collection of Theological Tracts,” six volumes, octavo, Cambridge, 1785; as also the most excellent Work entitled “L’Incredule Detrompé, et le Chrétien affermi dans la foi,” by M. L’abbé de Pontbriand. Paris, 1752.

(b) *Rousséau*, *Emile*.

(c) *Reflections*, page 43, and 50.

is but justice to admit that your writers have mostly spoken of them in a far more reverential style. "Tous les Ecrivains demeurent d'accord, *says the learned Dominican above cited*, que parmi les sources d'ou la theologie tire ses argumens pour établir ou pour éclaircir les dogmes de la foi, le premier et le fondement de tous les autres est l' Ecriture Canonique . . . la parole non-écrite est le second lieu ; *Primo, divinæ legis auctoritate, tum deinde Catholicæ Ecclesiæ traditione*, comme parle Vincent de Lerins." And he mentions amongst the errors to be avoided, "de prétendre que les livres saints n'ont pas été écrits pour régler notre foi, et que les argumens qu'on en tire pour prouver les dogmes de la religion, ne sont pas convaincans par eux-mêmes." Perhaps by the aid of a few logical distinctions you may persuade yourself that the sentiments of this learned writer may be reconciled to yours.—If so, it will only the more betray the weakness of so flexible and complying a system.

Our Saviour was sent to teach ; and the short period of his laborious mission was spent in instructing and doing good. The Apostles were appointed by him to a similar employment, though they received not full intelligence of all they were deputed to announce, till after the departure of their master. Before all these infallible teachers were withdrawn, before the Apostles had concluded their mission, the whole system of religion was committed to writing, and sufficiently developed by such amongst them as the divine providence fixed on for that great work. (a) If only part of the Christian covenant was written by the Evangelists and Apostles, why may not the Church still propose new articles of belief ? Cannot he who was the "*inspirer*" of the Apostles, be also the teacher of their successors, and *gradually* reveal to them the different parts of his plan according as circumstances shall require, or the ideas of mankind are fitted to receive them ? All this he certainly may have done, and in your principles I do not see that he actually has not done it. Your Church may tell its children what it pleases, and assure them it was originally revealed, without a possibility of its being detected. Between immediate inspiration and infallible direction the difference is but

(a) Appeal, 291.

small, and either may be proved by the same texts if properly developed, or by the same arguments if properly applied. Was mankind *tutored* even in the Apostles time to *receive* the sublime doctrines of the incarnation, Christ's miraculous birth of a Virgin, the resurrection &c, and not those of purgatory, or an unerring guide? And do these latter require indeed more *discretion* to reveal them, as well as a greater effort of an improved mind to believe them, than the sublimest mysteries of the Christian faith?—a most unguarded assertion surely!

You say that your Church only *declares* what is of faith, and never has pretended to create new articles. But wherein the difference between these two privileges lies I cannot imagine, so long as her declarations must be received with implicit faith and blind obedience. If we neither may oppose nor judge of her declarations, the catalogue of them may increase for ever. Has she not already declared herself on several points concerning which many of her own divines assert that they were never able to discover the least footsteps in antiquity; concerning which whole Churches and whole ages have doubted? And yet she professes religiously to adhere to such doctrines only as have been handed down by the uninterrupted voice of universal tradition! All this, Sir, may possibly be open and ingenuous dealing, though to me it appears so very fallacious and unfair: So likewise might the system you have developed perhaps have formed a most excellent system of religion. I only wish to express my sincere conviction that it is far different from that which Christ delivered.

The Jews, you tell us, were a carnal people, on whose minds the impression of the law was not to be perpetuated unless by written records. Are the hearts of Christians better disposed to virtue, or otherwise moved than those of God's chosen people? Let us, however, consider their situation with respect to unwritten traditions. When our Saviour came to preach the Covenant of Grace, the Jewish cabbalist, and indeed the whole Jewish Church, appealed to an oral revelation made to *Moses*: And if ever it could be appealed to as of decisive authority, it was on this occasion. For whatever can now be urged in favour of a living speaking guide, a visible Church, &c, was equally an argument, circumstanced and prejudiced as they were, to the Jewish people, that they ought to reject the new faith which was attempted

to be introduced. They were members of a Church established by miracles, protected and preserved by the visible interposition of heaven, and glorying in a succession of two thousand years; a Church that could cite its long list of prophets and divine messengers; and which had this singular advantage, that its claims were all acknowledged even by that society which had risen up against it. The vocation of their Priests and Elders to the ministry was incontestible, their authority and mission undeniable; and they were looked up to as the superiors of the only Church which then was on earth, even by the Apostles themselves. Moreover these Priests and Elders whom God had by repeated declarations commanded this people to consult and follow on every occasion, were all unanimous in refusing to receive the Gospel dispensation. Yet they were reproached with blindness of heart, ignorance, and obstinacy, for rejecting the evidences of their written law, and paying deference to the instructions of their regular guides and living teachers, rather than to the oracles of the Ancient Prophets. They were accused of making the word of God of none effect, *Mark 7*, by their traditions: Though if tradition had been designed as the only rule of faith to Christians, it would unquestionably have been insinuated that under the new law it would be entitled to a degree of authority which under the old it vainly pretended to usurp. They urged that it was but reasonable they should prefer the doctrines which their fathers had delivered down from day to day by an uninterrupted succession without alteration or change to that very period: (a) Nevertheless, these pretensions were rejected, because their doctrines were false. Our Saviour appealed to facts, and not to prejudices; and when they asserted that they *could not* in the nature of things be exposed to any material error, was content to shew them that *they were*, and to inculcate that God was to be obeyed rather than man. In other words, he confuted their pretensions by Scripture and reason, and made light of all those *notes* which they adduced so plausibly in their favour. If these indeed had been admitted, they might have served even for an argument to justify their sacrifices in high places, and all their several idolatries: for they

(a) Maimonides Pref. in Seder Zeraim.

were generally either led into these defections or patronised in them by their ordinary pastors and conductors, who always encouraged a variety of will-worship in opposition to the written law. To this alone were they then referred when the new Covenant was published; although the *way of discussion* was no more easy to them than it is to us, or by any means more safe.

You observe that as you receive the Scriptures from the Church, so also from the Church you ought to receive the interpretation of them: And your writers frequently inquire why Protestants so pertinaciously reject tradition, when even the Scriptures themselves are derived to them by no other means. Yet surely it little matters how they have been either transmitted or preserved, so long as their existence and integrity are universally acknowledged. This point being once granted, they stand in need of nothing else but prudence to interpret, and piety to practice, the duties they enjoin. Moreover, the Scriptures, strictly speaking, as delivered to us from hand to hand by successive tradition, are to be considered in the light of deeds or instruments which contain our privileges, or as instructions only which it is our duty to comply with. The manner in which they are received has not the slightest connection with the documents which they contain. Hence the tradition which you speak of should be merely viewed as the delivery of a Charter, which when once possessed of, we have an undoubted right to appeal to in support of our legal claims. Those who preserve the last will of our natural parents, have never upon that account been considered as the proper interpreters of it: And how frequently are not deeds produced in law suits by the very parties whose pretensions they serve to set aside? Do we not receive the Old Testament from the Jews; yet surely we never have recourse to them for the full interpretation of it! Thus, though Protestants, with *S. Augustin*, could not believe the Gospel "if the authority of the Catholic Church" did not persuade them to it; yet the Church derives as little plea to infallibility from this concession, as a secular judge does in the sentence he passes in court, from his being possessed of that code which contains the Statutes of the Land. (a)—Is it not easier to

(a) See Jeremy Taylor's Introduction to the second part of his 'Dissuasive from Popery.'

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convey a letter, than to determine precisely its contents ; easier to deliver one matter of fact, than to explain a thousand various points of doctrine ? Oral tradition, Sir, has conſigned to us the Books of Scripture ; and this is all that could be required of it.

Let me likewise repeat that the argument you here inſiſt on was greatly in favour of the Moſaical diſpenſation, and very unfriendly to the reception of the Chriſtian worſhip. “ We have received the oracles of the prophets, *might the Jews have ſaid*, upon the tradition and authority of the Pharifees, Scribes, and Doctours of the law, why ſhould we not receive from *them* alſo their proper interpretation ? If we are to believe them, we are to reject Chriſt. If we are not to believe them, we need not believe the Scriptures which we received on their authority alone ; and it is therefore uſeleſs to refer us to them, ſince our belief in our Church *precedes* our belief in the written teſtimony. If what you ſay of Chriſt is evident in the prophets, our teachers have miſſed us by refuſing to admit that evidence. But neither in that caſe ſhall we believe you, becauſe your only proofs are in our own Scriptures, which are of no authority if you ſet aſide that from which we derived them”.—A ſimilar argument was uſed by *S. Auguſtin* againſt the Manichæans ; but in very different circumſtances. For he was arguing upon the general truth of the Chriſtian religion, and upon the authority of the Scriptures, which Scriptures they rejected. Whereas we are agreed as to the divine original of theſe ſacred writings, and are only diſputing whether ſuch and ſuch particular tenets are deducible from them. The *Manichæans* alſo held that the Chriſtian revelation was imperfect, and the truth but partially revealed to the Apoſtles. Now this you ſcarce pretend to, although your principles lead manifeſtly to the ſame concluſion. Moreover *S. Auguſtin* ſuppoſes that the doctrines which were then held in the Chriſtian Church were conformable to thoſe which the Apoſtles taught, which thoſe againſt whom he argued did not deny.

When on another occaſion this father aſſerted the neceſſity of infant communion, if any one had denied it, he might have adduced the conſent of nations, the antiquity of his Church, the order given to *S. Peter* to feed Chriſt's ſheep, and

and all the exterior marks by which he sought to establish the unerring authority of that body of men to which he adhered, and amongst whom this doctrine passed for an apostolical tradition. But he might have been answered that all this was foreign to the question of infant communion, on which the apostles had been totally silent, and could only be applied to support those doctrines which it was evident that they had delivered. Unless in this view, *S. Augustin's* arguments would have been as inconclusive as yours, whose whole system rests on the supposition that you are on the right side: and then tradition must be indeed admitted in its full extent, as a rule which all are obliged to follow. For the burden of your song, and the conclusion of all you advance in support of each tenet of your faith, is this—That you have received it from tradition, that you now actually teach it, and that your tradition cannot err. To which I think a sufficient and satisfactory answer is given, if we reply, that all written deposition is against you, or at least preponderates greatly in *our* favour—that a pure uninterrupted current of oral testimony is a mere chimerical pretence—and therefore that you *may be* in an error: But as you teach what neither can be proved from Scripture, nor yet made good by argument, that therefore also you *have erred*. If this induction displeases you, you must controvert the premises by flying to reason and discussion. And thus must every thing be ultimately settled amongst reasoning creatures.

The contrary system which excludes all appeal to reason, examination, and Scripture, or at least refuses to be judged by them, instead of promoting unity, tends to encourage obstinacy in whatever religion a person may chance to be born, and is far from being adapted to draw Profelytes even to the Christian faith. When *Nicolle* wrote against *Jurieu* on the unity of the Church, he objected indeed great difficulties to him, and confuted several positions of his violent opponent in a masterly manner. But he did not dare encounter the objections which this minister proposed on *the way of authority*; infomuch that it has been suspected that in his heart he gave little credit to it himself. He had produced a great variety of difficulties against *private examination*, which he well knew were retorted against his own method with greater  
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strength : but those he never attempted a reply to. Had he succeeded to prove that truth was not to be discovered by the lights of reason, he would have established a maxim, highly destructive to the interests of religion. He would have opened a door to universal scepticism, and banished all certainty both from religion and morality, as Mr. *Placette* has justly observed. For if *the way of authority* is inadmissible, as all Protestants contend, and have they think established even to demonstration ; and if that of *private judgment* is impossible ; then every thing must depend upon grace or education. And this would introduce a system destructive of the human liberty and injurious to heaven, at the same time that it would give countenance to the sad tenets of fatalism, absolute predestination, and all the reveries of *Montanus's* inward light.

The necessity of an unerring guide is a necessity of your own creating. So far from being proved with that degree of evidence which you suppose, it still is denied by thousands of upright and virtuous christians—a fact by no means in its favour. Besides, if this is only to be proved by argument and induction, there is then something which reason can establish with perfect security. And indeed the whole substance of this controversy turns upon this supposal. For if no certainty can arise from any appeal to our understanding, then evident contradictions may perhaps be true, and even mathematical demonstrations liable to error. But if from the lights of reason a christian may judge without fear or uncertainty of the security of his ways in following tradition, why may he not be equally secure on any other point which is equally a subject of discussion, and can only be embraced from a preponderance of evidence ? If he is allowed to judge and to decide on a point so controverted and obscure as the unerring authority of his church, can he with equity be restrained to seek, consider, and determine on this alone ? 'Tis thus the Mahometan reasons with regard to his *Sanna*, and thinks he rests secure on the assurances of his *Iman* —'Tis thus the savage argues ; and by the assistance of a few glosses renders his religion as little repugnant to his unenlightened reason, as yours appears to many other christians who are unacquainted with the subtle distinctions of catholic polemics. If the unlettered mechanic, whose mind is  
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least informed, has a right to *argue* upon, and ought to *comprehend* the motives which you suggest to lead him to your church, I cannot conceive that he is not equally entitled to reason upon every tenet she proposes to his belief, and to examine every argument by which Protestants assert that they confute them—thus estimating the validity of her claims by the reasonableness of her doctrines and their conformity to scripture; and not admitting all her tenets without examination, upon the single persuasion of her inner-rancy. For the questions concerning the adoration of the host, the invocation of saints, the existence of purgatory, the septenary number of the sacraments, &c. as well as the sufficiency of the scriptures to conduct us to salvation, and the whole simple scheme of religion on which Protestants build their confidence, are not more difficult to comprehend, nor to determine, than those of the vocation of pastors, the succession of the ministry, the unity of faith, the nature of schism, the security of oral tradition beyond that of the written law (a), and all that list of prejudices which your writers have called up against the principles of the reformation, and retail in every abstract of their catechism which is given even into the hands of children.—To conclude; the whole *analysis* of your faith, when reduced to its simplest expression is, as I before observed, neither more nor less than this: that you are members of the true church, the doctrines of which you may therefore admit without danger or hesitation, because it is only submitting to *the greatest authority that there is on earth*.

\* This question concerning *the way of private discussion* and *the way of authority* (b) you perhaps may think that I might have omitted, as it may seem unconnected with the principles of one who insists that all catholics are as free to examine and determine for themselves as any christian society is, or ever was. But if it were a discussion foreign to the subject, the most eminent controvertists of the Gallican church, whose knowledge and acuteness were never doubted, would scarce have bestowed so many elaborate treatises upon it, and held it forth in all their writings as the grand

(a) How little the system of oral tradition is countenanced in Scripture, may be seen in the *Treatise on the Church*, by Mestrezat.

(b) Voie d'examen—Voie d'Autorité.

point to be determined. Say what you will, the “*Auctoritati credere magnum compendium est et nullus labor*” (a) is the leading maxim of your teachers. “*La voie de discussion*”, says *Dom Jamin*, ne sauroit conduire les simples et les ignorans à la foi. Il n’y a que l’autorité qui puisse la leur faire connoître (b) . . . heureux ceux qui marchent à la lumière de l’autorité légitime!—*La vraie règle de la raison et de la foi*, says *Nicolle*, est d’établir sa créance sur la plus grande autorité visible. Cette règle est la seule qui soit proportionnée au peuple” (c). In short, the writings of *Arnauld*, *Nicolle*, *Dom Jamin*, *Terrasson* (d), *Papin* (e), *Peliffon* (f), &c., seem rather addressed to those who are persuaded already that they are members of the only true church, than to such as are still in suspense and doubt, and have as yet taken nothing for granted in the controversy. And the advice of the *Bishop of Viviers*, which I have cited above (g), is that which is mostly followed in practice both by your people and their instructors.—If they esteem this a sufficient motive, it possibly may be well, and does not affect the *truth* of their belief: but all the merit of their faith is owing to accident and not to choice, and their submission can never be that “reasonable service” which God requires of his creatures. If then all these difficulties appear not to reach *your* system of religion, and *your* resolution of the Catholic belief, you must at least acknowledge that if I have erred, I have been led astray by the most able reasoners your own church can boast of. Neither can you say that in this noted controversy they admitted of the way of discussion upon as large and fair a scale as their opponents with regard to the motives which lead to a knowledge of your church, and only excluded it when once this point was settled: for Protestants all allow that were this established, it would be the

(a) Auguf. de quantitate animæ, cap. 7.

(b) *Pensées Theologues*.

(c) *Essais de Morale*. See also his prétendus réformés convaincus de schisme.

(d) *La Philosophie applicable à tous les objets de l’esprit et de la raison*.

(e) “*Les deux voies opposées en matière de Religion*,” and other works, collected in 3 vols. 12mo, 1723.

(f) “*Reflexions sur les différends de la Religion*” against *Jurien* and *Leibnits*, 4 vols. 12mo. (g) Page 80.

duty

duty of every christian to submit with implicit faith to whatever else that church proposed (a). But they excluded it in great measure even in the most distant approaches to the main object in dispute, by refusing to admit the examination of her particular tenets, although these were very material witnesses to be consulted in determining the grand question of her infallible authority.

THE GOSPELS.—These I think you have depreciated greatly; since you seem to consider them merely as historical narratives of the life and death of Christ, which were written at first with no other view than the edification of those to whom they were particularly addressed. By the manner in which you speak of those of S. *Mark* and *Luke*, one would imagine you only regarded them as a kind of hearsay testimony, of less authority than the other two. And whether the respective writers of them all were under any peculiar influence of heaven, is a question which you seem entirely to have overlooked.—Can you, Sir, after this, with a serious countenance reproach Protestants with “*innovation*,” and accuse them of not adhering to the maxims of ancient days? (b)

The arguments by which you endeavour to prove that they were not intended to be a general rule of faith, are perfectly ludicrous. As well might you conclude that the civil laws of a kingdom are not designed for all the subjects of it, because there are thousands whom the knowledge of them will never reach; and who could neither comprehend nor read them if they were at hand! All information must be acquired by gradual progress. Did oral tradition extend at once to all *languages* and *places*?—Could not the scriptures be designed for a rule of faith in future days, because the Apostles were a still more certain rule whilst they remained on earth? You maintain that Catholics are not held to any doctrines till they are sufficiently proposed by their church; why then should the christians of early times be obliged to receive any traditions, till they were made ma-

(a) If this could ever be ascertained; which I think I have proved impossible.

(b) See Calmet in 2, Tim. 3, 16; as also “The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures asserted and explained,” by John Kiddell, London, 1779; or Calmet’s Dissertation on the same subject, in Rondet’s Abridgment of his Commentary, 17 vol. 4to.

nifest to them by their conformity to the written law, and by the motives of credibility? It was by these that Christ would have them judge even of those doctrines which he delivered himself; and by the same test also were the Apostles to be tried, till the divinity of their mission and their unerring authority were proved by such visible interpositions of Providence as left no room for doubt. Upon this account, the conduct of the *Bereans* was esteemed deserving the highest praise: because though they received the doctrines of *Paul* and *Silas* with ready minds, yet they daily searched the scriptures to discover if these new traditions were perfectly consistent with the written law which had been given to their fathers. (a) Why also was it ever the manner of *S. Paul* to reason from the Scriptures, when he had at hand a much more decisive as well as shorter argument, by insisting that such was the doctrine of truth, the doctrine of the Church, which therefore it was their duty to believe without examination or mistrust. The contrary method which he pursued must surely appear in your sentiment a very dangerous precedent, imprudent and unadvised in the highest degree.

*St. Peter* also intimates that he wrote on purpose that after his decease his doctrines might be had in remembrance; and seems even to pronounce an appeal to the ancient prophecies, a stronger evidence to the mission of Christ than any oral deposition of his own; since he applies to them that distinctive mark of excellence, that *no prophesy can come of private spirit*, but must necessarily be derived from God. (b) Hence doubtless was it that the Jews, as we have seen above, were always referred even by our Saviour “to the law and to the prophets,” although from the days of *Malachi* to the coming of Christ, a space of more than four hundred years, they had no other expositor of their law than their own private judgment; as no prophet was sent amongst them during that long interval, to interpret to them the oracles of ancient times. Yet were the carnal hearts of the children of *Abraham* less liable to be misled than ours? Were they less dear to Heaven than Christians, that they should be thus abandoned to build their faith, each on his own bible—uncertain even of the

(a) Acts xvii.

(b) See Calmet on the 2 Ep. of *St. Peter*, 1, 19, who acknowledges this to be the most natural interpretation of the passage.

**Canonicity of those scriptures which his nation had preserved with so much caution? (a)**

**CANONICAL EPISTLES.**—You still continue in this section to pursue the same extraordinary language, and your ideas of written revelation seem equally contemptuous and confused. The Epistles were indeed only written on some particular occasions, and addressed to some particular persons. So also was the law concerning inheritances *Numb. 7*, delivered upon a particular occasion: Was it therefore not intended for the Israelites at large? The Apostles first instructed by preaching. It was the natural manner of proceeding. They were deputed to “baptise and teach.” But if their credentials were not examined, their doctrines could never have been embraced from any rational conviction; although, indeed, the credentials of those who can bid the blind to see or the dead to rise, are readily admitted. Yet left in their absence the converts they had made should be disturbed in their belief; lest arbitrary comments should pervert or obscure what they had delivered; lest the fanciful devices of human traditions should be imposed on the credulity of mankind as the sacred “*maxims of the apostolic ages* ;” they con- signed to writing the self-same doctrines, as an effectual bar to the progress of deception. Were they still alive, we should value their decisions above the letter of the written law; because they would certainly be the best expositors of it. But this is not the case. Our guides are taken from us, and the comforter alone remains. If in cases of perplexity we stand in need of information, let us but seek it rightly and we shall be sure to find it. Christ’s promises in this respect are both unlimited and plain. (a) And if a Christian who seeks in the scriptures for the articles of his belief and rules of conduct with prudence, humility, and perseverance, is not able to discern them with sufficient evidence to guide him to all necessary truth, his condition under the Covenant of Grace is worse than that of the Jews at the first promulga- tion of Christianity under the law of *Moses*.

(a) The Books of Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Tobit, Judith, the Macchabees, &c. were not admitted into the Canon of the Jewish Church.

(b) Matt. vii. 7—xviii. 19—xxi. 21. Luke xi. 9. John xiv. 13—xv. 7—xvi. 23, James i. 5—iv. 3. Ep. John iii. 22, &c.

The message of the Apostles and Evangelists to those to whom their Epistles were addressed, we may justly conceive to have been delivered in terms of the following import. "The doctrines we formerly imparted to you by verbal instruction we now deliver in writing, as well as some replies to your more particular questions; that when we are gone, you may more easily recall to mind, and teach to others, whatever you received from us. We were destined to be with you but for a while, to guide you like infants *ignorant of the first rudiments of spiritual science*; but we soon shall leave you to be directed by your own integrity and prudence. Having been thus far helped, you must learn to walk alone with the assistance of this only clue, that your belief may have merit as well as your virtues." (a) To us also their address was evidently this: "You have *Moses* and the *prophets*; hear them. You have our writings, in which we have omitted nothing that was necessary to be believed or practised. Exert the same solicitous diligence in studying these that you do in every other most important pursuit, and your labours will not be vain. For by divine commission we assure you that wherever even two or three are gathered together in Christ's name with upright heart and pure intention, the spirit of truth shall be amongst them, granting wisdom to such as seek it, and opening to those who knock. All truths will not be made known to all; for man is now designed only to know in part, to see as through a glass obscurely: But the sincere inquirer and upright Christian will easily discover whatever is necessary to make him happy both here and hereafter." This seems to me a much more rational speech than yours, as well as more conformable even to the *modern* ideas of the written word, which you have egregiously mistated. The Scriptures, then, Sir, were to be a rule of faith when once they were communicated with a proper degree of authenticity. This is all that even oral tradition pretends to. And enough of this was authenticated even from the decease of the Apostles, to serve for a sufficient guide, especially when supported and explained by those traditions which in the beginning of the Christian establish-

(b) See the passages cited further on under the article "Scriptures."

ment were invested with a degree of authority, which in future times they were, by their very nature, destined in great measure to forfeit.

From this it appears that our rule is as infallible as your guide; and conducts us by a much more unerring way to heaven, than yours does to truth. This you can only attain upon a supposition that your scheme is true: Whereas ours certainly rests upon the evidence of natural reason, and the *plain* testimonies of Scripture, both which must mislead us, before our rule can possibly be unsafe even in idea. We produce credentials which you cannot dispute, (a) and argue upon principles which you cannot contest; whilst you pretend to act in virtue of a warrant which you cannot produce, and of which we deny the existence. I may be in an error. But if this is not evidence, I know not where to seek it, nor what reliance I can place upon it when found, however clear it may seem.

You think the writings of the new Testament gradually acquired an importance which at first they had not; and that whatever authority they now claim is owing to your Church's *acceptance* of them, from which alone they derive their value. Amazing condescension! Well Sir may you allow, by way of Caveat, (b) that this is not *exactly* the light in which the written word has generally been treated. It is indeed uncommon and novel, as well in the reformed as the Roman Church; entirely differing from the received opinions of either, and notoriously repugnant to the belief of every age and nation. A certain latitude of expression is, I know, allowed of in these latter days: but never could I have suspected that such a deviation from doctrines universally received, would ever have been tolerated. However, there is a time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak. It may be thought adviseable rather to countenance a suspected friend, than to make him an open enemy; as well as ungenerous, not to overlook some heterodox opinions, in favour of the occasion on which they were hazarded.—And this silence you doubtless will appeal to, as a tacit approbation of your sentiments.

(a) Appeal, 99, 105.

(b) Reflections, 98.



What you say of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is not accurate. *S. Jerom*, who died in the fifth century, affirms, in three different places, that in his time the Latin Church had not received it into their canon. This very fact, Sir, is a full confutation of those who assert that we received even the Scriptures from the Roman Church; since we retain this epistle in our catalogue of inspired writings, although that Church rejected it for many centuries. We receive all those books which have been best attested, and have at least the same security that the ancient fathers had for many ages; with which we are fully satisfied. Neither do we presume to *anathematise* every Christian who should still think he had just reason to suspend his judgment upon the divine authority of those concerning which many of the most learned fathers were not agreed; although the uncertainties under which they then laboured may now be so far removed by subsequent observations, as to command a prudent and firm assent. Were it even granted that we received the Scriptures from you, as you did the ancient Testament from the Jews, this would only be a further argument in our favour—that you should yourselves have so greatly contributed to the preservation of those monuments which bear witness to the solidity of *our* belief, and to the novelty of *yours*.

On the nature, extent, and use of Church authority, I am sensible that I have, both by the method of reply that I have adopted, and a conviction of the importance of the subject, been led into some superfluous repetitions. Were the question to be handled in a different form, much of this might perhaps be avoided. Nevertheless, there possibly may be some advantage derived even from this redundancy; for though accurate precision and conciseness is best adapted to an improved and philosophic mind which has long been habituated to analyse the matter in debate, yet a fuller explanation of the subject, by representing the same argument in a variety of different views, may oftentimes be not only more suited to the apprehensions of such as are less acquainted with the controversy, but is frequently even necessary in a certain degree to make them rightly conceive the application and strength of the reasoning.

SCRIPTURES. The ancient Fathers, you allow, often speak of the Scriptures as an infallible rule. They do so indeed  
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in most express terms : And if ever tradition was uniform, it surely is in this point. The Fathers not only teach that the Scriptures are infallible when duly interpreted ; but assert that they are so clear that every one may readily understand as much of them as is necessary to make him good and virtuous, which is the main end of all religion ; as much as is necessary both to faith and practice, and is “ able to make him wise unto Salvation,” 2 *Tim.* 3. (a) Neither is it in their disputes with heretics only that the Fathers have recourse to Scripture ; but they refer to them on every occasion as to writings given purposely to settle all disputes, as far as any means can settle them in the present state of man ; and to be a sufficient direction even to the most illiterate. (b)—Or if they sometimes argued from tradition, it was chiefly on such subjects on which the Scriptures were entirely silent ; or in reasoning against such adversaries as objected to the written word, and pleaded tradition in favour of their errors. But

(a) Non omnia quæ Dominus fecit scripta sunt, sed quæ scribentes tum ad mores quam ad dogmata putarunt sufficere. *Cyrius lib. 12. in Joan.*

Omnia clara sunt et plena ex Scripturis sacris ; quæcumque necessaria sunt, manifesta sunt. *Chrysostomus 2 Thess.*

Nulla probatio esse potest veræ christianitatis, nisi Scripturæ divinæ. *Id. in c. 4 Matt.*

Nihil fere de illis obscuritatibus eruit (spiritus sanctus) quod non planissime dictum alibi reperitur . . . quæ obscure, vel ambigue, vel figuratè dicta sunt, quæ quisque sicut voluerit interpretetur secundum sensum suum. *Aug. lib. 2 de Doc. Chris. c. 6. Et de Unit. Eccles. c. 16.*

Electa sunt quæ scriberentur, quæ saluti credentium sufficere visa sunt. *Aug.*

Quoniam hæreses pullulaturæ erant . . . operæ pretium visum est, ut scriberentur evangelia. *Theophylactus.*

Si quis sive de Christo, sive de ecclesia, sive de alia quacunque re . . . vobis annuntiaverit præterquam quod in scripturis accepistis, anathema sit. *Aug. contra lit. Petil.*

Quod de scripturis auctoritatem non habet eadem facilitate contemnitur qua probatur. *Hieron. in cap. Matt. 23.*

Nunc nullo modo cognoscitur quæ sit vera Christi ecclesia, nisi tantummodo per scripturas. *Aut. Ant. inter opera Crysof. in Matt.*

Scriptum esse doceat Hermogenis officina : si non est scriptum, timeat væ illud adjicientibus aut detrahentibus annuntiatum. *Tertul.*

Many other passages equally decisive may be seen in Bishop Taylor's *Dissuasive*, part 2, book 1, sect. 2.

(b) Appeal 209, 291, 299, 306, 343. See also Chillingworth, chap. 2.

surely no single father ever asserted, as you do now, that the sacred writers had omitted some necessary points of the Christian belief.

Should it be objected that to those at least amongst us who cannot read, our rule must be entirely useless—the argument may be retorted with equal force against the exterior means which you propose; since to the deaf and blind these also can prove of no advantage. He who cannot read himself may easily procure them to be read by others: And no one ever refused to make inquiry into the title which he could justly claim to the inheritance of his father's possessions, from a plea that, being ignorant of letters, he could not be assured of the contents of his father's will. Whoever will not pursue the ready means that are afforded to learn the truth, can never be a fair inquirer; any more than he whose intellects are obscured by vice can hope to pronounce an equitable judgment on the duties of a religion, of which he had rendered himself unqualified to judge.—Besides, it should not be forgotten that millions in every Church believe upon authority alone, if even they have so good a motive: and you cannot deny but that in many cases, a sufficient and saving faith may be built upon the testimony of a single person, without any knowledge of tradition, without any communication with an unerring guide, or any acquaintance with those *notes* which you think so clearly indicate the only true Church of Christ. (a)

That the Scriptures were sufficiently plain and easy to suit every sex, age, and capacity, was strenuously asserted by the learned authors of the New Testament of *Mons*, which made such a noise in France; and has been the opinion of Christians in every period of the Church. Those famous reasoners, in their preface to that Version, maintained that these divine writings included every thing requisite to the conduct of life, and always explained in some other place, whatever might in any single unconnected passage appear equivocal and obscure. They even endeavoured to prove that it had ever been the spirit of your Church to encourage the laity to read them in the modern languages. But *M. Simon* demonstrated that their proofs fell far short of their

(a) Chillingworth, chap. 2, § 72. And Appeal, page 344.

wishes,

wishes, and controverted their assertions on this subject by the most unexceptionable authorities. (a) And in this he was supported by the discipline which till these latter days has always been observed amongst you; since even now, the more timorous scarce ever venture to read them without the advice and permission of their spiritual director—So often has this restriction been enforced by your provincial councils, and inculcated by all your moralists. Indeed, with respect to the clearness and utility of the written word, and the rights of private judgment in the interpretation of it, their sentiments underwent soon after a total alteration. For when it became their interest to decry what they had before so warmly patronised, *Nicolle* pretended to see most evidently that the truth could never be discovered in the Scriptures, however prudently interpreted. But then he spoke with passion, and having engaged to confute the doctrines of the reformation, was obliged to suit his principles to the occasion. We must therefore judge of his real sentiments by his didactic rather than his polemic writings, and prefer the ideas of the Christian teacher, to those of the professed controversialist.

Upon the fairest estimate that I can form, as well from the language of your Theologians, as from the general practice of your society, it can but be concluded that your notions of the written word are in every respect widely different from those which were entertained in the purer ages of the gospel dispensation. You affect indeed to revere them as *the inspired word of God*, because they were found consonant to your traditions. But I maintain that if they were not authentic from the beginning, your acceptance of them could never give them an authority which they did not originally and intrinsically possess. If tradition had stamped the same repute of orthodoxy upon the writings of *Papias* or *Hermas*, would these have been equal in authority to those of *S. Paul* and the Evangelists? Of what use was their being inspired, in your sentiment; or how indeed came they to be written at all, when they could only serve to mislead, by giving a partial account of the christian religion? Does it not seem as if the Evangelists apprehended lest all these things should slip the memory of mankind, and mis-

(a) *Nouvelles Observations sur le texte et les Versions du Nouveau Testament.*

trusted either their fidelity, remembrance, or capacity? The oral deposition of such men as *Paul* and *Barnabas* was certainly sufficient to deliver the decrees of the apostolic meeting at Jerusalem; and yet we find it the opinion of these wise legislators, that *written* credentials were likely to conciliate to them a greater degree of respect (a). It is true that *S. Paul*, in writing to the Thessalonians, directed them to hold fast what they had been taught, whether "by word or by epistle." But this was at a time when they had no written gospel, and knew little either of Christ or of his doctrines, unless by tradition only. This letter to the Thessalonians was written about the year 52; and it is far from certain whether even *S. Matthew's* relation was not written at least ten years after (b). When their doctrine was misinterpreted, the Apostles wrote: because it was the securest way of handing down to future ages the glad tidings of the gospel. But if we *believe not their writings, how shall we believe your words?* (c)

The Scriptures, when once accepted by the general voice of all christian societies, are the only standard by which all religious opinions should be tried: and whatever you have said of the priority of oral testimony, is palpably sophistical. For it is evident, as *S. Irenæus* remarks, that "The gospel which the Apostles had first preached, was, *by the will of God*, put into writing, that it might be a foundation and pillar of our faith." (d) How different was his opinion from yours, who seem to attribute this to accident, and think it not intentionally addressed to future ages; although *S. Luke* committed his Gospel to writing, that Christians "might know the certainty of those things wherein they had been instructed." (e) These had been already imparted by oral communication, which a written testimony was to strengthen and

(a) Acts, xv. 23.

(b) The four gospels were probably written about the years 63, 64, 65, and 68. See Lardner's History of the Apostles and Evangelists, 3 vols. 1760. How different a statement this, from what you have adopted!

(c) John, v. 17.

(d) Lib. 3, c. 1.

(e) Luke 1, 4, "Prius te sine scripto institui," says Theophylact on this Chapter of *S. Luke*, "nunc scriptum trado evangelium; atque ita mentem tuam munio, ut ne obliviscatur eorum, quæ prius sine scriptis tradita sunt."

confirm.

confirm. Hence also *S. John* expressly affirms that some of the most illustrious miracles of Christ were *written* on purpose that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." (a) This beloved disciple had lived longer than any of the Apostles; and therefore saw how little tradition was to be relied on, since it was already corrupted in so material a point as the divinity of the Son of God. If this, therefore, was written that we might believe it; so would every other point have been also written before the inspired code was closed, which was necessary to be believed. And the strong expressions which this Apostle uses in the first Chapter of his Gospel "That which we have heard, which we have seen, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, declare we unto you," &c, doubtless command, with respect to us a much a more firm assent, than if it were resolved into such a security alone as may be had by *hearing some relate, that others told them, how they had been taught that such and such was the opinion of those who had seen them who were contemporaries with . . . Christ himself on Earth!* And yet this is exactly the case of an unwritten relation.—Assert, reply, explain, distinguish for ever as you please, unless tradition is reduced to writing, it will quickly degenerate into absurdity. And the silent traditions by which many of your doctrines seem supported, are like the path of an arrow shot through the air, which scarce has any thing more than an ideal existence, and concerning which we never can affirm with certainty from whence its motion first arose, or how long it has continued.

Had your ingenious system been adopted some ages since, it would have saved much labour to several Christian divines who have written so copiously on these useless subjects. For the questions concerning either the authenticity or inspiration of the Scriptures are of little importance, if without their aid a Christian's faith would have been equally secure. But to assert that the revealed writings do not contain the whole covenant between God and Man, is to speak against all antiquity. With respect then to inspiration it is unnecessary to inquire which way your ideas lean. *Dr. Priestly*, whom you have censured for his too free deviations from the

(a) John 20, 31.

current opinions of mankind, has scarcely spoken his sentiments with less reserve.—It is a clog upon your system : and therefore is probably one of those articles of the Catholic belief, which you assure us, *hang heavy on your mind.*

Before I conclude my remarks on this paragraph of your letter, I would wish to know how you would reason with a Jew, whom you were desirous of bringing over to the christian faith? Would you not refer him to Scripture and the way of discussion, as our Saviour and the Apostles did ; or have you perhaps discovered a more convincing method? How great must be the surprise of your convert, if after having brought him to the belief of christianity by the study and confrontation of the Scriptures, you should then assure him that written revelation was often so obscure, that after all he must have recourse to verbal tradition for its sense, and that a christian's creed was independent on it? Would he not naturally be led to suppose that you spoke in derision? Undoubtedly he would. Every argument you then could urge to persuade him of the insufficiency of the Scriptures, would appear a new insult on his understanding: and the obscurity and uncertainty of all written deposition would be a powerful reason to persuade him to return to his old religion, where every thing was clear and easy, and in which every prejudice and motive of credibility would conspire to fix him. Could he believe indeed that Christ and his Apostles would have violated, in their advice to his fathers, a principle which they meant to establish for the propagation of their own religion; or that they designed to change their maxims and doctrines, as soon as they had made them converts? Would he not either suspect their honesty or judgment?—This very principle, Sir, (had the Apostles inculcated it,) would have greatly impeded the success of their ministry. For if after that they had pretended to prove from the Scriptures that Christ was the promised Messiah, the Jews might have refused their interpretation as of private spirit, and appealed to tradition. Had they mentioned their miracles, they would have attributed them to art or magic—if they had objected the corruptions of their belief or practice, they would have called them heretics, and talked of schism, rebellion, novelty, and want of mission. I am confident that it is full as easy to discover any necessary  
article

article of belief in the letter of the New Testament, with those assistances which are at hand to every sincere enquirer, as it is for a Jew to discern the divinity of Christ and the whole œconomy of his mission, in the oracles and types of the prophetic writings. And to assert that these are not sufficiently clear, approaches near to blasphemy.

**NO NEW FAITH.** On this subject I must again refer you to my Appeal. If your Church now teaches what you cannot prove from tradition to have been held from the beginning, it has varied in its belief; and whether it was not held at all, or only in so obscure and silent a manner as not to be visible even to some of the most eminent persons in the Church, is perfectly equal with respect to most of my arguments. This will be made still further apparent, when I come to review your panegyric on the Council of Trent. The description which you give of the writings of such men as *Daillé, Claude, Aubertin, Basnage, Blondel, Lenfant, Chais, Jewell, Usher, Wake, Tillotson, Sherlock, Hammond, Falkland, Chillingworth*, and others of our controversialists, who during these two last centuries have written on religion, is really curious—And still you boast that partiality has not got the better of your judgment, and that honesty and candour have held your pen down every page! (a)

Was the denial of the Cup in the administration of the Eucharist, against the express form of the institution, and the general practice of twelve hundred years, an alteration of little moment? Had not Christ foreseen the pretended inconveniences upon which his appointment was set aside? (b) Perhaps when this innovation was introduced, it might have been the prevalent opinion “*tanto dignius verbum dei tradi, quantum ab omni Scriptura remotius; et explicandam Scripturam esse juxta currentem Ecclesie ritum, qua sententiam mutante, dei etiam judicium mutetur.*” (c) I can find no other apology for several of your present doctrines; for it is the current notion and practice of the day that forms the standard of orthodox belief. And wherefore should it not? The Church is as infallible now, as it was in the apostolic

(a) Reflections, pages 21, 99.

(b) See Gerson's Treatise “*contra hæres. de Com. sub utraque Specie.*”

(c) Card. Cusa. Epist. 2. ad Bohem.



age ; and if we explain the promise of leading her into all truths as many of your writers do, it little matters whether her present doctrines are founded either in Scripture, or in Tradition. To both of these indeed they generally appeal ; and often glory in the support of the written word. But on many occasions this Appeal is made with so little appearance of reason, as to remind us of the Painter who assured his ignorant employers that the sign which he had painted at their request was most assuredly a Lion, although, till they were authorised by him to say so, it was full as likely to be taken for a Cat or Cow.

You have, for obvious reasons, destined no particular paragraph of your Reflections to the Fathers, although they are generally exhibited as the main links of your chain of Tradition. Of their sentiments we have no other rule to judge, than the language they have held in their writings. But if "*this silent letter can return no answer,*" how comes your Church to oblige her Children to swear that they will never interpret, nor receive the Scriptures, unless according to their unanimous consent? (a) If you have read them with attention, you cannot but have remarked that upon many points of your belief it is impossible to collect from them any *uniform* tradition. And if this be really necessary, as it should seem to be from *Veron's* much valued rule, the presumed connection of your chain must be formed from some little accidental links that lie scattered here and there ; and the whole will form a very motley composition, unequal, weak, and little to be trusted. That their deposition is not uniform, I have proved from their own genuine writings, by extracts as plain and unequivocal as human language can afford. Through what more creditable witnesses will you pretend to trace your tenets? Were the ancient Saints and Doctors but little qualified to declare "*what their tenets were?*" Was their "*zeal and recollection*" not equal, at least, to those of your modern teachers, whether collected or dispersed? For the use of those who probably may never see their writings, I either made copious extracts from them, or pointed out from authors of your own communion what their sentiments were. It occasioned an unne-

(a) Pope Pius's Creed.

cessary

cessary exuberance in my Work: But the prejudices of many of my readers in favour of authority were to be respected.

It has been said that in my Appeal I treated the Fathers with too little veneration, and seemed to take a malignant pleasure in exposing weaknesses and errors, into which the best and wisest men may occasionally fall. I cannot in my conscience plead guilty to the charge. (a) Nevertheless, although it is undeniable that some of their writings are highly to be valued, and may be read with equal pleasure and advantage; yet I will candidly confess that the Treatises of *Daille*, *Whitby*, and *Barbeyrac*, have most fully convinced me that in general very little authority is due to their *opinions*, whether they are considered as Philosophers, Theologians, or Moralists. (b)—However, I can readily forgive the imputation. For it is but natural that he who by his calling is daily obliged to offer incense at their shrines, and invoke them in his prayers, should misconstrue every most innocent expression which seems to detract from that perfection of character which we are all but too prone to ascribe to the objects of our worship.

LUTHER. With all his blemishes he is allowed by contemporary writers of your own Church, to have been a man of great sincerity and purity of life; as well as many others of the reformers. (c) But it was thought more useful by *Bossuet*, *Mr. Challoner*, and *Pastorini*, to represent him in the most odious colours: As if abuse were argument, and defamation became a virtue when employed against an enemy! However, on the general excellence of his moral character—his great intrepidity and love for truth—his can-

(a) Appeal, 116, 347, 355.

(b) Dallæus “de Usu Patrum”—Whitby “de Scripturarum interpretatione secundum patrum Commentarios”—Barbeyrac “Traité de la Morale des Peres.” As Interpreters of the Scriptures, Dr. Geddes seems to hold them in no higher estimation than Whitby. See his Prospectus, pages 114, 115.

(c) Appeal, 180, 182. “Sunt tot eruditi viri, et iidem boni, quorum ut quisque sincerissimus est et veritatis evangelicæ tenacissimus, is a Lutheri libris minimè est offensus . . . Videmus Lutherum apud omnes integritate vitæ commendari . . . Nemo non fatetur se ex illius libris factum esse meliorem, etiamsi quædam non immerito displiceant.” Erasmus.—A testimony which even his sworn enemy Alexander did not dare dispute.

dour and christian forbearance—the modest manner in which he apologised for his intemperate zeal and unguarded language—the favourable interpretation which his most objectionable expressions will bear—the moderation and prudence of his plan of reformation—his love of peace and disapprobation of all violent proceedings—his truly christian advice to those ecclesiastics who left their convents and engaged in a worldly life—his unaffected piety—his zeal for the extirpation both of vice and error—and the purity of his motives, enough may be seen by any person who will take the pains to consult the writings referred to in the margin, (a) to set both his character and conduct in a most respectable point of view.

As for the fable of his conversation and struggles with the devil, and such like fictions, of which many of your writers seem to think that “*quæ non profunt singula, cuncta juvant,*” I look upon them in the same light that I do the history of Pope *Joan*, the six thousand heads of infants found in *St. Gregory’s* fish ponds, or the indulgence of Pope *Sixtus* to the family of the Cardinal of *St. Lucia*. So, likewise, *Luther’s* grant of two wives to the *Landgrave*, in the circumstances and manner in which it was made, I think a matter even of much less consequence to religion, than a similar licence offered to *Henry VIII.* by the Bishop of Rome (b). Neither could this “*famous conference*” give me the least embarrassment. For the combats of *Ferom*, *Anthony*, and thousands of others, so greatly admired in your church, are much more *singular* than his. And all the contrivances of *Satan*, in these latter ages, whether played off upon “*the Patriarch of the Reformation,*” a convent of poor *Ursuline Nuns* (c), or

(a) *Basnage’s* “*Histoire de la religion des Eglises reformées*”—*Lenfant’s* “*Preservatif contre la reunion avec le siege de Rome, Lett. 11.*”—And especially *Beausobre’s* “*Histoire de la Reformation, ou Origine et Progrès du Lutheranisme dans L’Empire et les etats de la Confession D’Augsbourg.* 4 vol. 8. Berlin, 1785. Vol. 1, page 95. Vol. 2. pages 42, 50, 60, 63, 69, 105, 106, 108, 125, 145, 150, 169, 179, 186, 202, 231. Vol. 3, pages 4, 124, 151, 169, 218, 226. Vol. 4, pages 23, 73, 77, 258, 322, 329, 333, 421.

(b) See *Neve’s* *Animadversions*, pages 16, 80, 179. And *Ridley’s* *Review*, page 52. Also *Basnage*, second part, chap. 4.

(c) *Histoire des diables de Loudun, ou possession des religieuses Ursulines.* Amsterdam, 1693.

a set of convulsed fanatics (a), could appear but stale conceits to one who had seen so many of his waggish antics recorded in the lives of the ancient solitaries.

Luther was an active zealous man, to whom society is eventually much indebted; but he was not even the beginner of the Reformation. For, not to mention the many witnesses whom Providence had raised in every age to bear testimony to the truth, *Zuinglius* had been already blessed with great success in Switzerland, before *Luther's* reform was heard of. I have admitted that this able antagonist of Rome was not without his defects—and where is the mortal man that is blameless, especially if long engaged in the more turbulent scenes of life? Amongst the more shady parts of his character, there is none perhaps more striking than the intemperance of language into which he was often hurried. Yet the peculiar circumstances of his situation may well be pleaded as some extenuation even of this most blameable excess. For nothing was omitted which was likely to irritate his passions (b); and the language of his adversaries was little less outrageous than his own. It was a style that was then so prevalent, that even “*the learned, the moderate, the tolerant, the Christian*” Cardinal Pole (c) adopted it, when he wrote so bitterly against his benefactor and sovereign.

It has been objected that even the Reformers themselves acknowledged that the world was not improved by their preaching; and that wickedness still spread amongst those who pretended to withdraw from the corruptions of the ancient church, with more unbounded sway than ever. But what could be a more natural complaint than this, when they saw that their endeavours were not attended with all

(a) *La vérité des miracles opérés par l'intercession de M. Paris, &c.* 4to. par Louis Basile Carré de Montgeron.

(b) The imperious Leo ordered his person to be seized; and a reward was offered to any one who should make the dangerous attempt. Every place wherein he resided was put under an interdict, even for three days after his departure. See an extract from Leo's ridiculous Mandate, in *Beaufobre*, vol. 2, page 17.

(c) *State and Behaviour, &c.* Preface to the second edition.—A curious specimen of this Meek Prelate's scurrilous invectives may be seen in *Ridley's Review*, page 61; in nothing inferior to the most extravagant declamations of Luther, without the same provocation to excuse them.

the success they could wish? In proportion as their zeal was great, these complaints were likely to be made in terms more strongly expressive of their disappointment. Such was the style of the most virtuous and zealous teachers in every age of the church. But expressions like these are never to be taken in their rigour; and *Sleidan* assures us, on the contrary, that purity of life was a certain character by which the reformed were in those days always to be known. Yet, granting that something of this were true, it ought to be attributed to far other causes than any presumed irregularities in those who seriously joined the party of the reformers; since it could not but be expected that under the shelter of this pretence, many worthless subjects would escape from their *religious* retreats, with the hopes of indulging with less restraint the vicious pursuits which in their convents they were sometimes under the necessity of concealing, at least from *public* inspection. For although they had been long accustomed to chuse for their superiours “Le meilleur biberon, qui aimoit le plus les garces, les chiens et les oiseaux; bref, qui étoit le plus debauché,” and made them swear to indulge them in the same excesses (a); yet they preferred to roam at large, and could not easily submit to the yoke even of publick decency.

As for a comparison between the Reformers and the Apostles, it is, prejudice apart, as little to the purpose, as between them and the Popes; many of whom would gain nothing by the parallel even as private men. But when we come to consider them as the heads of the Christian Church—the Vicars and representatives of Christ on earth—the supreme pastors of God’s own appointment—the Fathers of his people—the first Shepherds of his Flock, &c. and yet reflect to what a course of infamous excesses many of them have been abandoned; what a confusion of ideas does not the contrast generate? The History of the Roman Pontiffs, written by persons of their own communion, affords a stronger presumption against all *their* pretensions, as well as against some of *your* doctrines, than all the *variations* of Protestants do against the principles of the reformation. When next your mind is drawn, (whether *with* or *against* your will, it matters not) to make such comparisons as these;

(a) See Brantome’s Memoirs.

compare

compare the prudence, circumspection, firmness, piety, and generous behaviour of the Protestant Elector *Frederic*, with the haughty insolence and tyranny of *Charles*—Compare the manly end of this great favourer of Heresy, with all the ridiculous mommery of the Emperor's obsequies (a)—Compare the steady coolness and dignity of the Protestants at the diet of *Augsbourg*, with the overbearing and passionate behaviour of their opponents—Compare, in fine, the characters of *Hufs*, *Zuinglius*, *Melancthon*, and *Æcolampadius*, with those of *Æneas Sylvius*, *John 23*, *Leo 10*, and others who opposed the progress of Protestantism; and see if in every view, both as Men and Christians, the Reformers do not appear in a degree of far superior eminence. (b)

COUNCIL OF TRENT. This I have only represented as I found it in Catholic writers of best repute, and scarcely have added any thing to their accounts. If it be but a fair picture, it little matters by whom it was drawn; yet my own observations have persuaded me that the likeness was a good one. Though I did not look towards it for the serenity of a calm sea, yet I should have expected to have found in it liberty, learning, calm and mature discussion; which yet I am assured from History were mostly strangers to it. It was, no doubt, attended by some men of erudition, piety and wisdom: But these were comparatively few, as my authorities have shewn; especially amongst the Bishops. And the inferior Clergy and Divines, however learned, were often little heeded. (c)

If you hold that Bishops are assembled in general Councils merely, as far as doctrine is concerned, “*to declare what tenets*

(a) A curious detail of this Farce may be seen in Robertson, or in Leti.

(b) See Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, with Dr. Maclaine's learned Annotations, in 6 vols. 1782.—Lenfant's History of the Council of Constance—The Postscript, at the end of Gilpin's Lives of the Reformers—And Beaufobre, vol. 1, pages 246, 262, 268. Vol. 2, pages 17, 127, 191. Vol. 3, page 271. Vol. 4, pages 180, 185, 193, 291, 416, 429.

(c) There are many Observations relative to this fact in Schelhorne's *Amœnitates Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ et literariæ*, not unworthy your attention. You will there find a full reply to Campian's Panegyric on the several Members who composed this Council, and a justification of Chemnicus against all his accusations and invectives.

*they received from their predecessors,"* and they discharge this duty in every other, no better than they did at Trent, these meetings are truly of very little importance; the extraordinary interposition of Heaven is little needful; and the authority they have ever assumed of making decrees, is both nugatory and groundless. But if we may credit their own assertions, they have far other claims than these; and pretend a right not only to declare and witness, but to define and judge.

As to what you add, that I "*singly, in a very short space of time, pretend to have found out the true word of God,*" it is a captious and malevolent insinuation. Neither I, nor those from whom I have collected the chief of my observations, impose them on any one under pain of Anathema; but with *honest zeal* propose them to others, as we believe them ourselves, for the most reasonable and conclusive opinions that we have been able to discover. If your three hundred Bishops had done no more, and had fairly set forth the reasons upon which their report was founded, they would have been entitled to the thanks of all Christian Societies on earth: Whereas, by assuming an usurped authority over the opinions of mankind, they have occasioned infinite dissensions amongst them, which are likely to be perpetuated to the remotest ages.

If you really find "*clearness and precision in every period and expression*" of the decrees and canons of this celebrated Synod, you surely must have read them with little attention, or under the most powerful influence of prejudice. Nothing can be more equivocal and ambiguous, nothing more disingenuous and ill founded, than many of its declarations and anathemas.—The following instances will justify this heavy censure.

1. The decree concerning the number of the *Sacraments* is nugatory and trifling; since it has pronounced *Anathema* against such as should assert that there are either fewer or more than *Seven* properly so called; although this must evidently depend upon the definition of the word *Sacrament*, which the Council did not think fit to determine, and which has always been used by Ecclesiastical writers in a variety of acceptations. Besides, the precise number of them was never recorded by any Ecclesiastical writer, Greek or Latin,  
before

before the twelfth age ; as *Leo Allatius*, *Cassander*, and others acknowledge. Hence this Anathema is neither supported by Scripture, nor by any oral tradition.—For the pretence of a tradition which had never any visible existence, can never be admitted. (a)

2. This Council Anathematizes those who should assert that the Sacraments are not necessary to Salvation. Now, although it is necessary that there should be some ministers in the Church, and although the human race could not be perpetuated without any union between the sexes ; yet both Orders and Matrimony might surely exist, and yet not be Sacraments *properly so called*.

3. It pronounces Anathema against those who should assert that it is not required to the valid administration of a Sacrament, that the minister should have “*saltem intentionem faciendi quod facit ecclesia*”—a decree which is susceptible of almost any sense that an interpreter chuses to give it. *Catharinus*, Bishop of *Minori*, held that if the external action was seriously performed, it little mattered whether the minister had or had not interiorly a very contrary intention. His opinion in this respect gave great offence ; although now pretty generally embraced. And it is evident from the acts, that this council meant to require a more direct intention than this Bishop contended for ; and believed that although the minister should seriously perform whatever was prescribed, yet the Sacrament could not be valid, unless at the same time it was likewise his intention to impart whatever blessings this ceremony is usually supposed to confer. Yet, even after the Council was ended, *Catharinus* continued still publicly to support his former sentiment, even in Rome itself ; whilst other Theologians ceased not to affirm that this was the very opinion which the Council intended to proscribe. A notable instance of the clearness and perspicuity of its decisions !

4. It decrees that all mankind are guilty of original sin, and yet makes an exception in favour of the Virgin Mary ; *declaring* that it “*did not mean to include in that decree the*

(a) See *Cassander*. Consult. art. 14. de Num. Sacram.—Peter Lombard and Durandus expressly denied that Matrimony was a Sacrament properly so called. And that extreme unction was never considered as such, appears from all the ancient rituals. See tit. 7. in the second vol. of Bishop Gibson's Collection of Tracts.



bleſſed and immaculate Virgin." Nevertheless, no tradition can be more poſitive and uniform than that which comprehends her in the general miſfortune; ſince all the fathers down to the eleventh or twelfth age aſſert it in the plaineſt terms. "Sancti antiqui Omnes," ſays the learned Biſhop of the Canaries, *Loc. theol. lib. 7*, "uno ore aſſeverarunt . . . nullus ſanctorum contravenit." But it was dangerous to ſet the *Franciſcans* and *Dominicans* at variance by any definition on this ſubject; and therefore, rather than explain the Scripture according to the unanimous conſent of the fathers, the Council choſe to make a declaration ſo perfectly ambiguous, that the queſtion is ſtill as undecided as ever. (a)

5. It Anathematizes thoſe who aſſert that clandestine marriages, and ſuch as are contracted between young perſons without the conſent of their parents, are null and invalid: yet it aſſumes the authority of declaring them not only wicked and illegal, but perfectly void and of none effect, by determining that they ſhould no longer be conſidered as a civil contract. The ſame is the caſe with the ſolemn vow of continency, which, as is allowed, was not an impediment invalidating any ſubſequent marriage, till the Council of *Lateran* in 1139. (b) Now if theſe are only laws of diſcipline, they are only binding in thoſe countries where that diſcipline is admitted; And none of theſe contracts are invalid in their nature, but are only rendered ſo in ſuch places where they have not the requiſites to make them legal.—Has not the Council, in this deciſion, tranſgreſſed the limits of that power which the Church received from God? (c)

6. The Council of Trent has declared that the obligation of the marriage vow is not deſtroyed by hereſy; whereas the contrary was decided by the ſixth general council. You

(a) See on this ſubject Richer *Hiſt. Con. Gen. lib. 3. chap. 5*, on one ſide; and Maldonatus and Cajetan on the other: Alſo a curious Diſſertation in the third vol. of Biſhop Gibſon's Tracts, tit. 12.—See Appeal, 331.

(b) "Analyſe des Conciles" par le R. P. Richard, 4 tomes. Paris, 1773. Article, Mariage.

(c) If a Marriage contracted under any legal diſqualification is void in conſcience and before God, then the ſuppoſed Marriage which has of late been ſo much talked of between a certain Prince and Mrs. F. is evidently null by all divine as well as human laws. As a civil contract, it is certainly within the reach of civil juriſdiction.

cannot

cannot surely believe that the oral tradition of the seventh age was opposite to the *declarations* of so many learned Bishops who assisted at that assembly!

7. It has Anathematized those who maintain that "*matrimonium ratum, sed non consummatum*" was not dissolved by the religious profession of one of the parties. Had it any *apostolical* tradition on its side, when it passed this *decree*? For it should be remembered that it did not enact this law as a new regulation of discipline; but asserted that a solemn profession in any approved religious order totally annulled the prior contract in the sight of Heaven, and obliged all Christians to believe the truth of this decision, under pain of censure. Now *Melchior Canus*, Dr *Hooke* (a) and most of your Theologians agree that whatever is determined under Anathema, is a definition of Catholic faith;—and *Veron* assures us that a necessary requisite to make any thing a point of Catholic belief is, "*ut sit revelatum a deo, per prophetas, apostolos, seu autores Canonicos.*" (b)

8. Where can there be a more striking instance of duplicity, as well as obscurity, than in its decree about divorces? Upon the representation of the *Venetian* ambassadors, and for fear of losing a large portion of the Christian world, the fathers of this council would not condemn the *Greeks*, but left them in the undisturbed possession of a practice they had long maintained of marrying a second wife, when a former one was dismissed for adultery. (c) Nevertheless, they at the same time pronounced *anathema* against those who should assert that they had erred in determining the contrary doctrine as an evangelical and apostolical tenet. What can prove a tenet to be "*de fide*," if an anathema against those who teach an opposite opinion does not? Hence a person even in the church of Rome may act against this determination, and not incur their censure, if he can but hold his tongue, and abstain from making any reflections upon this strange decision.—Prove to me that this is clear from all inconsistency, and shuffling, and human policy, and I

(a) *Religionis Naturalis and revelatæ principia*. Parisiis, 1774, tom. 3, page 393.

(b) *Ibid.* page 611.

(c) *Drouin de re Sacrament.* l. 9, q. 4, page 452.

will fairly acknowledge my ignorance of the meaning of these terms. If the practice of the Greeks is really repugnant to scripture and tradition, no motive was sufficient to justify a toleration of it: If not, then the council's declaration is equally partial and absurd.—If it is a point of faith, the church has no power to grant a dispensation: if only a point of discipline, this canon is both arbitrary and cruel. (a)

9. A similar charge of duplicity may justly be alledged against the decree concerning communion under both kinds. "Licet ab initio, *says the council*, non infrequens utriusque speciei usus fuisset. . . ." What an unfair palliation! Was it not, morally speaking, the universal practice of all times and persons, unless in very extraordinary cases, for near twelve centuries?—And what mean the words "ut quidem falso asserunt," inserted in the canon?—Did not Christ then truly institute it under both kinds? (b)

10. The Council of Trent affirms that we must rest assured that the ancient fathers never looked upon Infant communion to be necessary to salvation. But this is an historical fact, which the authority of the council could no-wise affect. For the contrary was the opinion of the church for 600 years, as *Maldonatus* acknowledges in *Joan* 6, v. 53; and which *Pallavicini* can no otherwise disprove, than by saying that it *cannot* be, because the church assembled at *Trent* would then have taught an error. But *S. Augustin* repeats the assertion too often, to leave any room for doubt on this head. He says that no christian questions but that children cannot be saved without it—that it is so declared in the Scriptures without any ambiguity, "testimoniis divina luce clarissimis, divina auctoritate certissimis." (c) And

(a) What miserable shifts your casuists are put to in order to exculpate this decree, may be seen in *Abbé Richard*, Art. Divorce.

(b) "Licet Christus administraverit suis discipulis sub utraque specie," says the Council of Constance, "tamen hoc non obstante, Consuetudo communionis sub una tantum specie nunc pro lege est habenda." Can this be possibly the language of an assembly of Christian Bishops? See *Lenfant's History* of this Council.

(c) *Lib. 1, de Peccat. Mer. cap. 20. lib. 3, cap. 4. Epif. 106, alias 186, cap. 8, num 30, Epist. 217, alias 107, ad Vit. cap 5, n. 16, in all which he argues that Children must be baptised, because the Eucharist is necessary to salvation; and unless they were baptised, they could not be admitted to the Eucharist.*

whatever

whatever glosses *Thomas Aquinas* or other scholastics have devised to explain away this opinion, yet it is evident both from the writings of Pope *Innocent*, and the most express declarations of S. *Augustin*, that, except in cases of extreme necessity, (a) the absolute reception of the eucharist was then thought requisite to salvation. Upon this persuasion was the universal practice of the ancient church built; which practice, nevertheless, this council, ever so precise and clear, has only expressed in terms that imply a doubt even of this unquestionable fact, "Si eum morem in *quibusdam* locis *aliquando* servavit antiquitas."—Is this the language of an infallible assembly, speaking to mankind in the name and by the authority of the Holy Ghost?

II. With regard to the canon of the Scriptures, how arbitrary and ill founded are its decisions? It has admitted the books of *Tobit*, *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, the *Maccabees*, &c, upon an equal footing with the gospels, against the general testimony of ancient tradition. For that the notion of their divine original was rejected in the primitive ages, is evident from the history both of the eastern and western churches; and may be easily shewn from the writings of *Hilary*, *Augustin*, *Jerom*, *Gregory*, *Primasius*, *Cassiodore*, *Isidore*, *Alcuin*, *Bede*, *Cajetan*. . . in short the general deposition both of the Jewish and Christian churches. (b) Whence did the Council derive its new lights upon this subject; whence did it receive its authority? When any point is universally believed in one age which was no less universally disbelieved or questioned in another, it still may possibly be true;—but never can be established on tradition, in whatever shape delivered. For that testimony can never be deemed morally speaking universal, from which, morally speaking, all dissented. (c) Do the words "cum omnibus suis partibus"

(a) Fulgentius says that "preveniente velocius morte," Salvation may be attained without it.

(b) If they were indeed of divine original, how came the Jews to reject them? Is it probable that Heaven would have permitted the records of its revelations to lie unnoticed for so many ages by its chosen people?

(c) See P. Courayer's "Defense de la nouvelle traduction de l'histoire du Concile de Trente," page 99. There is so much good sense

**partibus**" include also the titles of the Psalms, many of which were confessedly never in the original?

12. With respect to *penance*, it has asserted that contrition, confession, and satisfaction, are the "quasi materia" of the sacrament. Now whether the expression "quasi" signifies *as being*, or, *as it were*, is perfectly uncertain. However this be decided, it is equally extraordinary either that Christ should have instituted a sacrament without determining any *proper* matter to it, or that the church should be ignorant for 1500 years what that *matter* was: and no less wonderful perhaps that the *matter* or *quasi* matter should not be applied by him who administers the sacrament.—The same difficulty occurs with respect to holy orders. Did Christ appoint a sacrament, the apostles receive it, and the church practise it for so many centuries, without knowing what constituted the essence of it?

13. It has asserted that the lights, incense, garments, &c, used in the celebration of the mass, are *of apostolical tradition*; although this is most positively contradicted by the ancient fathers, who even deny that the use of lights and incense is lawful. (a)

14. Although it has not attempted to prove that any inward grace was annexed to the ceremony of *Confirmation*, and many of your own divines have denied that it was instituted by Christ, (b) yet it has raised it to the dignity of a sacrament. The Apostles gave it to those whom they baptised, by the imposition of hands; whereas this outward sign is now omitted, and another established in its place. (c)

15. It has decreed that auricular confession is a *divine precept*, by which all christians are obliged to mention in

sense in this little Treatise, and the amiable Author speaks the language of reason in so simple and forcible a manner, that I think it is alone sufficient to set at defiance all the learned and prolix discussions of your Theologians.

(a) See the learned Work of Dallæus "De Cultibus religiosis Latinorum," the seven last Books of which relate entirely to the Eucharist. Genevæ, 1671.

(b) Joannis Dallæi de duobus Latinorum ex unctione Sacramentis, cap. 4, page 24. And "De Confirmatione" in his Treatise "de Cultibus religiosis Latinorum, lib. 2.

(c) The variations of your Church with regard both to the matter and form of this observance may be seen in Pere Sirmond's Disputes with the Abbé de S. Cyran. Opusc. Paris, 1696, 5 vols. folio.

secret

secret to a priest all their mortal sins, with every material circumstance, "as is now practised, and has been practised from the beginning of the church." Now I have proved that this is contrary to the faith of history—that it was totally unknown in the primitive ages—that this doctrine was never introduced before the 13th age in the Council of *Lateran*; and is totally repugnant to the discipline of early times. Such also was the opinion of Cardinal *Cajetan*, *Richer*, *Scotus*, *Gratian*, *Rigault*, *Erasmus*, and many others of your own church. And *Erasmus* was at least as well acquainted with antiquity as any of the divines who assisted at the Council of Trent. (a)

16. It determined that *due* honor and veneration is to be given to saints. The unparalleled explicitness of this decision is doubtless the reason why, even after this infallible decree, your writers are still undetermined whether it may or may not be pronounced of a *religious* nature. (b) Nevertheless, every kind of religious worship which had not God for its immediate object was reprobated by the ancients, who had no idea of the distinctions of *subordinate* and *supreme*, *absolute* or *relative*, *transient* or *terminative*, &c, because they had no objects of religious homage to which these different degrees of worship could be suited. Neither could they esteem it even "good and profitable to invoke the saints," because they were convinced that if it were, *S. Paul*, in speaking so largely upon prayer, would certainly somewhere or other have at least given a slight intimation of a practice so profitable and useful. And the patronage of *Abel*, *Seth*, *Moses*, and the ancient patriarchs and prophets, was surely in no respect less desirable, or their interest less powerful, than those of any of your canonised saints.—On the same subject it likewise asserted that the *memories* of the saints are to be frequented in order to obtain the assistance of their relics, and the like other holy monuments. (c) Is not this equivocal at least, and liable to be misunderstood?

(a) All this may be seen fully established in *Dallæus's* work, intitled "De Sacramentali sive auriculari Latinorum confessione disputatio." Genevæ, 1571, 4to.

(b) See *Veron*,

(c) "Eorum (sacrorum monumentorum) opis impetrandæ gratia. See *Tracts*, vol. 3, tit. 9, page 65.

17. It declared that there was a Purgatory, and that the souls that were there detained were assisted by the suffrages of the people ; ordaining likewise that the Bishops should be careful to teach *sound* doctrine on this head—although it never ventured to define what the *sound* opinion concerning this very doubtful question was. But the hurry and precipitance in which this decree, as well as that concerning indulgences, was drawn up, could scarce allow them time to unfold it in a more explicit manner. (a)

In short, Sir, upon Grace, (b) the institution of Bishops, original sin, the character impressed by some of its Sacraments, the strict duty of residence, indulgences, justification, and several other points, the declarations of this Synod are often respectively obscure, ambiguous, and inconclusive.

But the motive of all this is evident. Lest it should appear to patronise the opinions of some particular schools, it worded its decrees with caution, and in so vague a manner, that each might still continue to teach its favourite opinion ; because it wished to keep them all in humour, that they might all be ready to unite against the common enemy. Hence orders were sent from Rome to proceed but slowly in the affair of the reformation, and to determine nothing which was a subject of controversy amongst her own divines, if it could possibly be avoided. It was interest and authority that Rome ambitioned, far more than unity and truth—Or else she would have been more sparing both of her Anathemas and her decisions. To reconcile the natural and simple ideas of truth with the opinions of Scholastics, they were obliged, says *Courayer*, in their decrees, to unite together many opposite notions which were incompatible with each other. And as this could not be effected but by a variety of accessory and discordant clauses, connected in an aukward manner by hyperbatons and long parentheses, it was totally impossible that their determinations should be satisfactory and fair. But indeed it appears even from *Pallavicini's* History, that they thought the cause they were engaged in required the aid of human policy ; and that they

(a) Appeal, page 170.

(b) See Bafnage's " Histoire de la Religion des Eglises reformées " to, second vol. part 4, chap. 16 and 17.

had but a very faint conviction of their own infallibility. Neither was this only with regard to questions which related to ecclesiastical discipline and reformation ; in which, nevertheless, the interference of Heaven appears to have been at least equally necessary, as it was to the discussion of some of those speculative opinions on which this Council presumed to decide ; but also, as the above-mentioned observations shew, with respect to points of doctrine and belief. Hence *Bossuet's* assertion that “ Les hérétiques qui cherchent leur foi vont à tâtons, mais L'Eglise s'explique sans embarras et sans équivoque ; et comme elle envisage sans s'étonner les difficultés les plus hautes, elle les propose sans ménagement,” is mere *fanfaronade* and froth. For the cautious wariness and circumspect reserve of your Church have ever been noticed, both by her friends and foes.

But what is peculiarly despotical and severe in the proceedings of the Council of Trent, is, that it subjects to Anathema not only those who *affirm* any thing contrary to its decisions, but even those who *think* so. (a) This is indeed precise and clear : Yet surely there cannot be a more cruel stretch of power. Can any one believe against conviction—or does a Christian deserve to be accursed, because he cannot discern the strength of your reasoning? Is this in truth allowing to your subjects the same liberty which is allowed by the reformed, and which is so consonant to reason and good sense ?

Can you really affirm, with your hand upon your bosom, that either in this Council, or almost any other, every subject was discussed “ *previo examine fidei et diligenti, absque suffragiorum ambitu, aut sollicita prensatione,*” as *Hooke* and *Holden*, and common sense require? Of 267 prelates who assisted at it, more than two thirds were Italians, entirely at the beck of the Roman Pontiff : (b) And it is well known how great the prejudices of the ultramontane Clergy

(a) See the Canons relating to Concupiscence, and Images.

(b) Appeal, 285. The learned Wagenfeil asserts that there are in Italy 315 Bishops ; and humourously reminds us that “ *In Conciliis tantumdem valeat Macilenti ac paupertini Episcopi Suffragium, quantum ejus qui preest provinciæ integræ.*” *De Urbe Noriberga. Lib. 1, c. 1.* Hence D'Espence asserts with great appearance of truth, “ *in Conciliis id fieri, et necessario fieri, quod unicæ placeat nationi Italicæ.*”



are, in favour of whatever is the discipline or doctrine of that court. Indeed, enough of this may be seen in the historian of its own choice, to justify these reflections. Nor can we wonder, when we reflect on the dissentions, (a) as well as the political manœuvres which he has recorded, that *Amelot* (b) and *Aquilinus* (c) should have acknowledged that he has done more to lessen the authority of this Council, than even the writer of whom he so grievously complains. The behaviour of the Italian prelates, when any thing was advanced which seemed prejudicial to the Pope's authority, was highly unbecoming. "Sia Brucciato, Anathema Eretico" was the cry of these *Orthodox* Bigots: (d) and during the whole session of this council, when one party found itself overruled by the weight of opposite suffrages, it always tore the other in pieces by satires and lampoons. It is impossible to read even *Pallavicini's* account of the confused transactions of this assembly, with every fair allowance for the different views, and interests, and passions of those who composed it, without regretting for the sake both of religion and truth, that it was ever held.

Could there indeed be any reform expected from this Council, when all its decrees were to be interpreted "Salva auctoritate sedis Apostolicæ"; (e) when the Pope was allowed to dispense with all its regulations, as often as he should deem it expedient; (f) when every difficulty that should arise concerning the meaning of its decrees and canons was to be decided by him *en dernier ressort*; and all who opposed his determinations were to be considered as heretics

(a) Pallav: tom. 1, lib. 8, cap. 6 et 7.

(b) Preface to his Translation of Fra Paolo's History.

(c) De Tribus Hist. See Coll. of Tracts, vol. 1, page 46.

(d) "Plus molestiæ nobis infertur ab istis hispanis" said the Italians, stamping and kicking in the most indecent manner, "qui Catholicos agunt, quam ab ipsis hæreticis. Tum iracundé Hispani, Hæretici estis vos, &c.

(e) See Richer's *Historia Conciliorum Generalium*, lib. 4, cap. 5, § 7. And D'Espence in cap. 1, ad Titum.

(f) And always did he find it expedient, when it was desirable: For Pluralities, Non-residence, Nepotism, and almost every abuse went on just as it did before, as appears from the Lives of Gregory XIII. Sixtus V. Paul V. Gregory XV. Urban VIII. Innocent X. Alexander VII. and Clement X.

and

and aliens from the Church of God? (a) Besides: If all the *declarations* of this Council in religious concerns were so accurate and fair, must it not appear extraordinary that its regulations in discipline should have been so unreasonable and assuming, so contrary to the laws of nations and the prerogatives of sovereigns, as several of them most indisputably were? For, notwithstanding all that piety and “*wise experience*” which you attribute to it, and all its “*honest zeal*,” the injustice, presumption, and imprudence of many of its precepts and appointments are glaringly conspicuous. Thus, in the *first* place, it decreed that the sacred canons, the orders of all general councils, and all the papal constitutions in favour of ecclesiastical persons and the liberty of the Church, should be exactly observed—By which regulation the clergy were rendered in great measure independent on the civil power, both as to their possessions and their persons; (b) appeals to Rome were authorized; the Bull *in Cæna* was approved; and every most lawless attempt against princes under sentence of excommunication, as well as the several most cruel laws against heretics, were renewed and justified. *Secondly*. In opposition to the practice of antiquity and the plain dictates of reason, it reserved to the Pope the cognizance of all criminal causes of Bishops in any matters of weight, and obliged them to repair to Rome. (c) *Thirdly*. It presumed in certain cases to deprive secular princes of

(a) It was by his authority alone that the adherents of the learned Bishop of Ipres were condemned: And who will now dare publicly to say in a Catholic country, that Jansenism is not Heresy?

(b) Concil. Later. sub Innocent. 3, can. 43, 46.—Concil. Later. sub Leone 10, sess. 9.

(c) The same spirit prevails in the oath which is still administered to all Bishops before their consecration. By this they bind themselves “to defend the *regalia Sancti Petri*—to preserve, promote, and enlarge the rights, honours, privileges, and authority of the Roman Church, and of the Pope—to observe, and cause to be observed by others, his decrees, orders, and mandates—to visit him in person every three years—to give him an account of whatever concerns the Salvation of the Souls committed to their trust—to receive his commands with submission, and execute them in the most punctual manner.” What would S. Cyprian have thought, if Pope Stephen had required him to sign a similar test of homage?—It is no less degrading to the episcopal character, than injurious to civil authority, and hurtful in every light to the Christian cause.

their sovereignty and civil jurisdiction. (a) *Fourthly*. It maintained the *exemptions* of chapters and religious communities from any dependence on their natural superiours; or no otherwise subjected them to the inspection of the Diocesan Bishops, than as these were delegated for that purpose by the holy see. *Fifthly*. It restrained in many points the jurisdiction of the Bishops, even in the management of their own peculiar flock; as if their whole authority derived from the Pope's commission. *Sixthly*. It empowered the Bishops to proceed in certain cases against their lay subjects by pecuniary fines, or even by personal arrests. *Seventhly*. It authorised the Court of Rome to charge any ecclesiastical benefices with pensions and reserves, even in those states over which it had no civil claims. *Eighthly*. It attributed to the Pope the right of deposing Bishops, and of substituting others in their places, if after sufficient notice they continued to live out of their respective dioceses. *Ninthly*. By petitioning the Roman Bishop to confirm its decisions, as well as by various other parts of its conduct during its sessions, it tacitly insinuated (in contradiction to the *decisions* of the general councils of Constance and Basil) that it considered him as superior to itself, and totally independent of its jurisdiction. (b)

Can it be a matter of surprise, after this account, that this celebrated Synod could never gain admittance in any *Catholic* country, except in Italy alone, without a variety of modifications and restrictions? Such was its fate both in Germany and Spain. In the Eastern Church it was totally unknown; nor were the prelates of that part of the Christian world ever summoned to it. In France its discipline was rejected and despised, notwithstanding the repeated efforts of the emissaries of Rome to procure it a favourable reception; and even as far as doctrine was concerned, was never legally promulgated in that kingdom. Besides, the severe and satirical manner in which it was

(a) Sess. 25, cap. 19.

(b) That this was the light in which this Petition was understood at Rome, appears from the Bull of Confirmation. And Pallavicini assures us that this was actually the sentiment of nine-tenths of the Prelates assembled at Trent. How this uniformity of opinion, though not enforced by any formal declaration, should not be sufficient to make it a point of Catholic belief, is a nicety which I could never comprehend.

reflected

reflected on in the most public manner after its final conclusion, by such of that nation who had been witnesses to the irregular methods in which all its proceedings had been conducted, were a sufficient proof that it met with almost general disapprobation. (a)—The very omission of consulting the oriental Prelates on so important an occasion, most evidently manifested that it was at least but a partial meeting of the Christian Church.

FRA. PAOLO. Whatever this excellent historian has related without producing any vouchers for it, has since been proved by his last learned editor, to have been supported by the best authorities. (b) His purity of life was equal to his abilities, and therefore was he the idol of his country. By being acquainted with many persons who were present at the Council, he had several advantages which no other of its historians could boast of; and was moreover possessed of many original letters, acts, collections, and memoirs. Besides, he spent almost his whole life in rendering his work as perfect and accurate as possible. Whatever calumnies were raised against him by *Ubalдино*, *Pallavicini*, and other creatures of Rome, never met with any credit from the public, as *Amelot* has fairly shewn; and though you still talk of his malevolence and want of candour, his history discredits the imputation at every page. If his general descriptions and reflections are sharp and keen, they are such at least as naturally arose in the mind of an upright man, when contemplating the ambitious politics and duplicity of

(a) Du Thou. Liv. 35. N. 13.—It is remarkable that by some ridiculous mistake either of the Printer or Corrector, it was asserted in the authentic edition of the Canons and Decrees of this Council, that it was assembled “*PECULIARIS SPIRITUS Sancti ductu et gubernatione.*”—May we not consider the *Higb Priest* of that year, under whose auspices this appeared, as another *Caiaphas*, who spoke the words of truth, though *not of himself*? See the Roman edition by Paul Manucius, fol. 71. Upon the reception which this Council met in the various states of Christendom, see Pere Richard’s “*Analyse des Conciles,*” tom. 2, page 608. Also, the seven last Sections of Fra. Paolo’s History of the Council of Trent, by Courayer; and particularly the Appendix which he has subjoined to it.

(b) Father Courayer’s edition of the Work of this learned Patriot, with various Annotations in 1736, will remain for ever a lasting monument of his erudition and good sense.—Such Works as these are far more easily censured, than confuted.

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the chief actors in those scenes which he had undertaken to describe. And of all people you should have been the last to censure him for writing as he saw and felt. (a) With respect to *Leo*, *Marcellus*, *Julius*, *Adrian*, &c. he speaks much more temperately than does the Cardinal his opponent. And though *Pallavicini* scruples not to speak of the “*Vituperio perpetuo col quale infama tutti i Presidenti*,” the work itself bears sufficient testimony against this vague and unmerited charge; since in general he speaks well of all the legates who presided under *Paul III*, *Julius III*, and *Pius IV*, distributing both his commendations and dispraise with equity and judgment. (b) Besides, if the reflections he draws at the close of every session upon the decrees that were there formed are injurious to the decisions of the Council, it is a disparagement which it drew upon itself, by the arbitrary and despotic manner in which it endeavoured to obtrude them on the Christian world.

PALLAVICINI. In opposition to that of the learned and pious *Servite*, this Cardinal was engaged to write another history of the Council of *Trent*; which, however, rather deserves the name of a *Panegyric*, than an *History*. All the Archives of *S. Angelo* were opened to him, and much was expected from his zeal and erudition; but the success of this important undertaking fell short of the idea which had been formed. The substance of his narrative is nearly the same as that of *Fra. Paolo*. It is written in a very elegant and rhetorical style, full of declamation and abuse. And if he has detected in the history of that ingenious writer, some trifling inaccuracies and mistakes; at least he discovers in his own, uncommon prejudice and partiality—with such an attachment to the prerogatives and abuses of the Roman Court, as no modern Catholic would attempt to vindicate. He has, indeed, communicated to us some original pieces not known before: but with respect to these, nothing can

(a) “If I am too animated, it is not my fault. I write as I feel; and the regulating of the state of my nerves is not at my own option. Besides, the view of many things I had to contemplate, was of a nature sufficiently stimulant to rouse powers much less irritable than mine.” Preface to *State and Behaviour of English Catholics*.

(b) See *Courayer's Preface*, and the *Abridgment of Fra. Paolo's Life* prefixed to his translation of his *History*.

be more just than the reflections of the *Journal des Scavans*, 23d March, 1665: "Quoiqu'on ne veuille pas s'inscrire en faux contre les lettres et les memoires tirés principalement de la bibliotheque vaticane, ce ne sont qu'écritures privées, et a la foi desquelles on n'est pas obligé de déférer, jusqu'à ce qu'on les ait rendus publics, afin que l'on puisse les examiner et en reconnoitre la vérité." Besides, he has only published such parts of them as were best adapted to his own views and purpose; whilst the secret instructions which were incessantly passing between Trent and Rome, lie buried in deep concealment. We therefore have the greater reason to depend upon what Fra. Paolo has advanced upon every point, on which the Cardinal has not attempted to confute him by an appeal to any authentic acts. It never has been questioned but that the legates had two kinds of instructions given them; the first by which all their own proceedings and conduct were to be governed—the other, such as they might produce without fear of censure to the Bishops, and the Ambassadors of the Catholic Princes who attended the Council. Neither is it credible but that if the Registers of the Vatican were not likely to prove injurious to the authority of the Council, they would long since have appeared in print in their original form. Till the whole of these secret negociations is brought to light, the Cardinal's proofs will scarce meet with entire credit from impartial judges. That *Pallavicini* is favourable to his own cause, is evident: but it would have been downright folly to give indiscriminate praise to every individual of the Roman Court, when facts would have so notoriously deposed against him.

VARGAS. It is not from the complaints of *Vargas* against the haughty conduct of *Crescentio* that I infer the irregular and confused proceedings of the Council; but from the joint testimony of *Fra. Paolo*, *Vargas*, and *Richer*, as well as from the stubborn facts which divines of your own communion have produced. Many of the remarks which I had collected from these writers, have no reference to *Crescentio*: Although the nine last sessions under *Pius IV.* prove evidently that the same overbearing spirit still presided in their debates. In the passage to which you refer, I was evidently speaking of those decrees which regarded the Sacrament

ment of penance : but as you had determined to censure my Appeal, every idle *imagination* was cherished, which was likely to promote the end you had in view. And in the pursuit of this, you have often lost sight of those *duties* with which you boast your acquaintance.

As to the passeport granted to the Protestants, it was by no means such as they had a right to expect. They could not be ignorant of the contestations their requests had already given rise to—They were refused the privileges which were granted to the *Bohemians* in the council of *Basil*, where they were allowed a deliberative and conclusive voice as well as others—And they were likely also acquainted with the decree of that of *Constance*, since found in the manuscript acts of that Council, by *Vonder-hardt*, and which declared “Nec aliqua sibi (*John Hufs*) fides aut promissio de jure naturali et divino et humano fuerit in prejudicium fidei Catholicæ observanda.” Whether this was *defined* or no, is of little importance. It was the *doctrine* of the Council which, we may suppose, with “*recollection and honest zeal*” declared what they believed, and what had been believed before them. And little dependence could be had on persons professing such sentiments as these, who, if the whim had struck them, might have used the Protestants as they pleased, when once they had them in their power ; especially as the opinions of the Bishops between the meetings at *Constance* and at *Trent*, could probably have but little varied. I do not say that they would at *Trent* have availed themselves of this unchristian doctrine : but without being unreasonably timid, the Protestants might naturally have been under some degree of apprehension. Nor were they probably unacquainted with the sentiments of those who presided over this very Council ; which we may fairly conjecture to have been nearly of the same stamp as those of their predecessors : For in one of their replies to the petition of the orators deputed by the Emperor *Ferdinand*, they boldly declared that even if his holiness should be induced to bind himself *by oath* not to create more than a certain number of Cardinals, “Vinculo juramenti non teneretur, si aliud postea utilitas Ecclesiæ posceret.”(a) Could any safe reliance be placed

(a) Schelhorne, tom, 1. page 579.—See also Pallavicini’s scandalous comment on the Breach of Faith given to Heretics. His. Con. Trid. lib. 17, c. 15, n. 8.

in men who thus sported at pleasure with the most sacred engagements? (a) Neither may it be improper here to remind you than even in this century, a covenant made in favour of the Protestants has been rescinded at Rome. For the treaty made at *Alt-Randstadt* between *Charles XII* and the King of *Poland*, was declared by *Clement XI*, void and of none effect, in every single point wherein it might in any manner seem prejudicial in the slightest degree to the divine worship, the salvation of souls, or the rights, authority, liberty, and jurisdiction of the Church.—Be it granted that this is no *doctrine* of your society. Yet whether the Protestants were likely to suffer from your *doctrines*, or only from the partial prejudices of your leaders, is perfectly the same with respect to their apprehensions.

A GENERAL COUNCIL. The doctrine of infallibility you have indeed in some places made very free with, and minced away to such a mere skeleton, as scarce to leave a single trait of its former features. Is it then true, Sir, that the decrees of your Councils in matters of faith are but *declarations* more explicitly announcing what was before universally admitted—Is the divine spirit but little requisite to direct their proceedings—Is this wondrous claim at length resolved into a mere declaration what the present faith of your ecclesiastical superiors is, and what they were taught by those who went before them? Is it for this that your Theologians contend so fiercely—that so many texts of Scripture are wrested from their obvious meaning—that the successors of *S. Peter* have been squabbling for so many centuries? Was all this mighty stir, for ages back, designed to prove no more than that a set of honest men may surely be allowed to bear witness to their own opinions, as well as to the sentiments of those from whom they learnt the rudiments of their faith, without any suspicion of mistake or fraud? In short, do you really mean to assert that it is in this sense alone that the Fathers, Popes, Bishops, and Divines have ever unanimously understood this claim? My only motive for speaking thus undecidedly upon the opinion which you seem to have adopted on this subject, is the indeterminateness

(a) See on this subject *Fra. Paolo*, Edit *Courayer*, 4to. vol. 1, page 789. And *Lenfant*, vol. 1, book 4, § 32.



of your own expressions. For whereas in this paragraph, as well as in many other of your reflections, you appear so greatly to disparage every idea of *Inerrancy*; yet in other passages of your writings you seem as devout a worshipper of this doctrine, as your Church could wish. (a)

In various places I had admitted that when such assemblies are free and numerous, and proceed in a regular manner, their declarations are greatly to be respected. But I still insist that, since they possibly may err in determining points which are either in themselves unnecessary and obscure, or such as chiefly depend on human testimony and information, their declarations may be both examined and rejected, if they are found erroneous, or unsupported by fact or argument. "Qui lectis Conciliorum actis" says the learned *Turretin* "ea pro errare nesciis habuerit, ad medicos ablegandus est:" And it was doubtless this conviction that made *S. Augustin* exclaim "Quis nesciat et ipsa plenaria sæpe (concilia) priora, posterioribus emendari."

I would wish to speak of all such meetings of the clergy of the Christian Church, with due respect and reverence: But they have in fact been scarcely ever attended with those advantages which upon a slight consideration they may seem calculated to procure. And such seems also to have been the opinion of some of those ancient writers who flourished at a time when they were most frequently convened, and long before that period when your contrivants would fain persuade that the Protestant ideas of their fallibility were first introduced. (b)

Nor can it be a matter of surprise that the decisions of Councils, whether general or particular, should be considered as a very equivocal and infirm authority. If such Councils as those of *Rimini, Ephesus, Constantinople, Pisa, Florence, Francfort*, the fifth of *Lateran*, &c. have been rejected by one nation or other, from an idea that they were essentially deficient in some of those requisites without which they cannot justly claim the promise of any supernatural affir-

(a) Reflections, pages 36, 38, 39.

(b) See in my Appeal, page 341, the sentiment of *S. Gregory Nazianzen* on this subject, expressed in language so extremely severe and virulent, that it is no small wonder it has not occasioned his name to be blotted out of the Sacred Dyptics.

tance ; how shall we be assured that any other will not be annulled in some future times, from the discovery, either real or pretended, of some similar defect ? You may perhaps tell us that none are of infallible authority, except those which are upon mature deliberation universally adopted by the Church. But this only removes the difficulty a few steps further, without forwarding in the least the solution ; since what in one age is judged to have been faithfully delivered down and witnessed, may possibly be found in others more remote, to have been but the partial decisions of some prevalent faction, which had imposed its *new* traditions as truths of *ancient* date. How frequently is it not the predominant opinion of the day which forms the standard of orthodox belief, and which is seen to spread with an appearance of irresistible conviction, till some more fashionable sentiment chances to take the lead—or till some faction more powerful or numerous than that by which the former was supported, decides in favour of some quite opposite tenet ?

That this is no imaginary case, the experience of ages should have taught us. And the records of the Church, whether written by Protestants or Catholics, equally bear testimony to the truth of this humiliating fact. The little dependence that can be had on any written tradition, I have had occasion to examine before : And, that the acts of Councils have frequently been forged, mutilated, interpolated or otherwise most materially altered, it were useless here to prove ; as it has often been acknowledged and complained of by writers of your own communion. I cannot, however, omit to observe that even in those Councils which have been most revered in your Church, some unfair dealings have frequently been suspected, not without a strong appearance of reason. Thus, when it is related in history that in the second Council of *Nice*, in which the worship of images was so strenuously supported, there was not a single dissentient Bishop, can it be believed that no undue influence was exerted by the Empress, at whose instance it had been assembled, either to engage the Prelates to approve the doctrine which she wished to have maintained ; or at least to prevent those from attending, who were likely to be of a different opinion ? And this suspicion

will be greatly strengthened, when we recollect how much the opinions of mankind at that period were divided upon this subject ; since the contrary doctrine had been determined not long before at *Constantinople* in a Council of 338 Bishops, as it was again about seven years after, at *Francfort*, by 300 more. Besides, *Irene* was an artful and intriguing woman, little scrupulous at any time in her choice of means to accomplish a desired end. (a)

Indeed, it is but too unquestionable a fact that there was scarcely ever a meeting of this kind assembled, in which it was not the obvious design rather to support the opinions which the leading party held, than fairly to investigate whether these opinions had not been embraced from some prejudice or partial motive. In most of them, if any credit may be given to history, the powerful persuasives of hope or fear have frequently proved an effectual bar to free discussion ; and in all, the *Suffragiorum Ambitus* and *Sollicita pressatio* have been too prevalent, to leave the witnesses entirely uninfluenced in their determinations.

Moreover, as upon all these occasions every thing is decided by the plurality of suffrages, it is absurd to believe that a small majority of votes or witnesses can ever constitute that an article of necessary faith, which, till that assembly took place, had ever been held as a matter of doubtful disputation, by some of the best and wisest ministers of the Christian Church. And how, alas ! are your people to make that discernment between Council and Council, which ages have scarce been able to settle in minds most habituated to such researches, when they see that such opposite doctrines

(a) The Stories related with much applause at the Council of Nice, in favour of image worship, are more than ludicrous. Sophronius was violently tempted to incontinency, and could no otherwise get rid of the importunities of Satan, than by promising him, that if he would cease to pursue him with these troublesome suggestions, he would never more worship the image of the Virgin Mary. The compact was highly disapproved of by Sophronius's Abbot, who declared to him in the most express terms, that "Expedi tibi ut non dimittas in civitate ista lupanar in quod non introeas, quam ut recuses adorare dominum nostrum Jesum Christum cum propria Matre in sua Imagine." Not much more conclusive than this, were the other arguments produced in this Council for the religious veneration of images. See the Acts, in the Edit. Reg. page 268, and Dupin's Bib. Eccles. tom. 6, pages 138, 143.

have

have been alternately condemned and taught by such numerous meetings as were assembled at *Nice* and *Rimini*, *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*, *Nice* and *Constantinople*, *Basil* and *Lateran*, &c; or when they find that they have sometimes made decisions no less contrary to religion than to reason?(a) In short, whoever will peruse the history of the Church, can never fail to observe that traditions, like customs, have varied in every age and nation; and have at all times been pleaded for the discipline and doctrines which were then most generally received. Nor can I see why in your sentiment a Diocefan Synod is not full as infallible as a general Council; or why, whatever is mentioned *Obiter* in such an assembly as the general belief of the Prelates, is not equally a necessary article of every Christian's Creed, as if it really were proposed "*tanquam fide divina credendum.*" If they are *witnesses* only and *guardians* of your faith, their word and testimony are in no respect of less authority than their decrees; as these owe nothing of their force to the *splendour* with which they are attended, or the arbitrary denunciation of Anathema with which they are enforced. Of this at least I am assured, that every provincial Council has an equal promise of supernatural assistance, if it is really assembled *in the name* of God, as those that are more numerous; and that they are also much less likely to be under any improper influence in forming their declarations. Moreover, since of those which have at one time or other been reckoned œcumenical, some are rejected by the Italians, others by the French, and others again by the innumerable host of the Prelates in the Greek Church; I am fully persuaded that no individual can build any other than an human faith upon the most solemn of their declarations, unless when they are

(a) The determinations made in the Council of Constance concerning Hus, the fourth of Lateran concerning Heretics, the second of Clermont concerning the Crusaders, and hundreds of others which may be seen in Labbe, Hardouin, or Richard, are undeniable evidences to this truth. You will say that these related to points of discipline only. But they were surely more essentially connected with the peace and regimen of the Christian society, than many others on which your Church has given her decisions in the most confident and peremptory manner. And who shall dare presume to restrain the promised assistance of Heaven to such points only as regard speculation and belief?

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supported by the evident testimonies of the written law. The Millenarian System, the corporeity and frail nature of Angels, the delay of the beatific vision till the day of general judgment, with several other tenets equally erroneous, were decidedly the opinions of almost all the fathers in the primitive ages, as their writings fully testify; and therefore, doubtless, the opinions of the people over whom they presided. From what motive these doctrines of the Church *dispersed* came afterwards to be rejected, unless from an Appeal to Scripture and Reason, I cannot imagine.—This I think at least undeniably results from all these accumulated facts and observations, that, learned or illiterate, we cannot possibly follow any other guide with the same security as we can the written Scriptures.

One only difficulty of any moment against this determination here presents itself, and which might possibly have been introduced with greater propriety in a former section; namely, that we must on some occasions have recourse to the oral testimony of those to whom the *depositum* of faith was entrusted, because in the mere *letter* of the Scriptures there are many things which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction. It is an objection drawn from a passage in the second Epistle of S. Peter; though without any just foundation. For it was in the *doctrines* of which the Apostle had been speaking, and not in his *writings*, that S. Peter affirmed that there were some things hard to be understood. That the Scriptures, however, are often wrested to serve very improper purposes, is an undeniable truth. Yet the abuse of a good thing is but a weak argument against its use, when this is recommended by Christ himself; and should only inspire us with that *wariness* which S. Peter advises. Were this case but fairly considered, we should generally observe that it is not the unlearned, to whom the presumed obscurity of the Scriptures has chiefly proved pernicious; but that they have been mostly perverted by the learned, who are induced through pride and self conceit “to draw disciples after them.” And whenever the leading truths of Christianity have been obscured by the devices of men, both history and our own observation inform us that these *Unstable* Apostles have generally been found amongst those who were renowned for their extensive

tenfive erudition.—And to such men as these, the reading of the Scriptures has never, even in your Church, been prohibited. I can but therefore conclude with *Athanasius*, than whom few were better versed in the sacred writings, and *none* had surely ever more opportunities of examining the utility of Councils either to the advancement of truth or the peace of Christendom, that “*Magis sufficiens est Scriptura divina ad fidem inveniendam, quam omnes Synodi; et ii qui ad Synodos concurrunt ut quid credere debeant cognoscant, infideles merito dicuntur.*” (a)

It really appears, upon an impartial review of your several reflections, that you have done away the authority both of Scripture and general Councils. On these, as well as on many other subjects connected with the Catholic system of religion, your sentiments are so free and novel, and your language so widely different from that which has ever been held by the most esteemed writers of your society, that it is difficult to conceive how you can possibly hope to persuade the world that your opinions are nevertheless precisely the same as theirs. Yet, as this general assertion may perhaps appear too vague to merit any serious notice, I shall beg leave in a few instances to exhibit your respective ideas in contrast with each other.

You assert that Roman Catholics are independent on the Pope, unless “*where it has pleased the Community to surrender into his hands a limited superintendence:*” And although you believe him to be by divine right the head of your Church, yet you limit his jurisdiction as you please, and represent it as little more than what each Pastor in his parish is possessed of, who enjoys within his own district “*a proper and essential jurisdiction uncontrollable by the see of Rome.*” You even assert that “*the Cononical instalment of Bishops and other higher Ministers is alone a branch of the Papal jurisdiction.*” (b)

They maintain not only that he is placed at the head of the Christian *Monarchy* by divine appointment, but that he has the legislative and executive power over the whole

(a) On the subject of Councils there are many pertinent observations in the “*Traité du Pyrrhonisme de l’Eglise Romaine*” by M. de la Placette; a translation of which by Dr. Tenison is given in the third volume of Bishop Gibson’s Collection of Tracts.

(b) *State and Behaviour*, page 153, first edition.

Church—that his jurisdiction is derived from the immediate grant of Heaven, and not from any fancied concession of the community—that he is the interpreter of the decrees of general Councils—that the Church was built upon *S. Peter*, to whose *authority* the Roman Bishop succeeds. (a) In short, all the arguments which your writers produce from Scripture to prove his supremacy, establish his right “to feed, teach, and govern” the whole Church; or else they establish nothing at all. And the whole stream of your traditions, till about the times of *Gerson*, bore witness that he was considered in your society as “*Hæres Apostolorum, primatu Abel, patriarchatu Abraham, auctoritate Moyses, iudicatu Samuel, potestate Petrus, unctiōne Christus; nec modo ovium, sed et pastorum unus omnium pastor, cui . . . absolute et indiscrete totæ commissæ sunt oves.*” (b)

You affirm that in conformity to the good sense of antiquity, the public service of the Church should be in the language of the people, who “*ought to understand what is meant for their instruction.*”

They appeal to the same antiquity, to prove the impropriety of the proposed alteration. (c) They enumerate the *various and grievous* inconveniences that would arise from it; and insist that as in the liturgy it is the business of the Priest *not to pray to the people, but to pray to God* in their behalf, it little matters in what language this is done, or whether the people either see or hear what he alone is enjoined to do. (d) Hence it may justly be asserted that there is not in fact over the whole Roman Catholic Church any kind whatever of public form of prayer, either in Latin or in any other language, which is adapted to the use and instruction of the people. For, besides the mass, there is no other Church duty that they are in general expected to attend, except Ves-

(a) Hawarden on Supremacy, page 40.—Catechism. Montispeful. Sex tomis, 4to. Nemausi, 1765, tom. 2, page 56.

(b) Bernardus de Consideratione, lib. 2, cap. 8.—See also Natal. Alexander Differt IV. in Hist. Eccles. 1 Sæculi.

(c) Quid Incommodi esset si passim in qualibet regione vulgari lingua publicæ preces fierent? Respondeo. Multa certè incommoda et Gravia Occurrerent. Cat. Montisp. tom. 6, page 189.

(d) Hawarden's “True Church of Christ.”

pers, on Sundays; which merely consist of five or six psalms or canticles, an hymn, and two or three short collects.

*You* talk, in a tone of contemptuous raillery, of the stout lungs of those who embrace *the Monkish institute*—of the *Spirit of Friarism*, and their pretensions to *dispose of places in Heaven*—of the *great confidence* you have in the *prayers of the Nuns*, yet with a full persuasion that *were they sent into this land of Heretics with missionary powers, their preaching would make more Profelytes than a legion of Friars*;—And disclose such other sentiments as evidently speak your opinion of the inutility at least, if not the absurdity of such institutions, which you think entirely built on a *fanciful and mistaken idea of perfection*, and a *misconception of duty*. (a)

*They*, on the contrary, regard the religious state as worthy of the utmost veneration and respect—the most angelic system of life that can be embraced by man—producing the same effects as baptism or martyrdom, and secure of the same rewards (b)—entitled to a peculiar crown in Heaven, &c; And upon these accounts it has ever been distinguished by every privilege and title which was likely to give it a dignity in the eyes of those who had not the grace or happiness to embrace it.

*You* allow that, when attentively examined, the miracles ascribed to *S. Bernard* and other holy men, though recorded by eye witnesses, will not stand the test of criticism; and that the progress of miraculous operations through that long series of years, times of *Cimmerian* darkness, when their appearance was thought most frequent, was most evidently attended with ignorance, superstition, bigotry, and enthusiasm. (c) Even *Bernard* himself, though represented as a man religious, honest, and conscientious, yet you scruple not to hold forth as a person full of malevolence and abuse, who charged with every heresy which had hitherto disfigured the Church of God, and with every bad design that could animate the breast of the most profligate mortal, a man not

(a) *State and Behaviour*, page 176... 182. *Life of Abeillard*, pages 104, 255, 348.

(b) See the *Eloquent Discourse* pronounced in 1771, by the Bishop of Senlis, at the Religious Profession of the Princess Louise Marie de France.—“*Telle est la doctrine constante*,” says P. Richard, “*des Peres de l’Eglise*.”

(c) *Life of Abeillard*, pages 183, 367.



guilty of a single error, and the universal tenor of whose life was religious, penitential, and exemplary. (a)—Thus, Sir, it is, that we frequently are apt to attach the idea of *sinfulness* only to some of the grosser species of immorality, and forget that pride, bigotry, uncharitableness, malice, an unforgiving temper, deceitfulness, and such like vices of the mind, may often render a man more guilty in the sight of Heaven than the others; since they are equally deviations from moral rectitude, are generally more prejudicial to our neighbour, and frequently have not the same excuses to plead in extenuation of their guilt. (b)

*They* appeal to these miracles which you reject, as so many proofs of the truth of their religion. It is upon the presumed certainty of these incredible prodigies that the Saints are canonised, feasts are established in their honour, offices are compiled to celebrate their memories, religious orders are instituted under their name and patronage. And how much does not your whole doctrine and discipline relative to saints, images, relics, indulgences, purgatory, &c. depend upon this *baseless fabric of a vision* which, if impartially sifted, would scarce be found to leave a wreck behind?

*You* speak of the *unmeaning pageantry* of several parts of your religious worship, the *many abuses* of the vulgar practice, and the *Cumbrous weight of ceremonies* with which it is oppressed in *Europe*, and which ought long since to have been retrenched.

*They* describe all the pompous rites of its ceremonial—the various dress and discipline of the monastic orders “black, white, and grey,” (c) the ostentatious splendour of your Churches—your pilgrimages, jubilees, processions, confraternities—your blessings, exorcisms, beads, rosaries, &c.

(a) Life of Abeillard, pages 276, 285, 367.

(b) Is not this, perhaps, the reason why you represent Pope Gregory VII, as a man of most exemplary and irreproachable life, whilst *Mosheim* describes him as a person devoid of all principle, and destitute of every pious and virtuous feeling? Life of Abeillard, page 34. *Mosheim* Cent. xi, part 2, chap. 2, § 9.

(c) “In asceticis suis,” says Dr. Hooke “quam divina est, in Virginibus quam decora et Venerabilis!”—Of the beauty and variety of its ceremonial law a reader may acquire a competent idea from *Duraudus’s* “*Rationale Divinorum Officiorum.*” In comparison of this the Mosaic Code will be found barren of rites and ceremonies.—See also Lord Kaims *Book 3, Sketch 3, chap. 2 and 3.*

with

with reverential awe, as affording no slight presumption that theirs alone is the true Church of Christ.

From this short sketch of your opinions, and the observations which I have made upon the foregoing sections of your letter, it cannot but appear, that with respect to the whole discipline of your Church, as well as some other points more nearly connected with its faith, you have advanced such questionable sentiments, that the only way you have left to convince your readers of your *orthodoxy*, and that you have not endeavoured to impose upon their credulity a new system of religion under the name of *Catholicity*, is to procure the sanction of *Rome* to your opinions; and a full and fair declaration that your writings have expressed the genuine tenets of your Church, and the sentiments which it has in all ages patronized and taught. Till something of this nature is done in the most authentic manner, and in the most unambiguous terms, (a) you cannot expect that the bare assertion of a single individual should overbalance, in the opinion of impartial men, that weight of testimony which may be produced from your writers for ages back; and which exhibits the sentiments of your society in a far different light. Indeed, Sir, your language is by no means that of an orthodox and dutiful subject of the Roman Church. And whatever hopes you may indulge with respect to the American Catholics of future times, the Catholics of other countries are little likely to adopt your scheme. Be assured that the "*Divines*" of Rome will "*censure*" you, its "*Casuits*" will "*defame*" you, and the Pope will "*deny you*" to be his child, (b) unless you apologize in some future work for the

(a) My reason for so much insisting on the explicitness and authenticity of any approbations you might procure from Rome, is, that there are not wanting instances wherein the most opposite doctrines have been honoured with equal applause by the Prelates and Theologians of your Church. See this exemplified in the case of Bossuet, Capissuchi, Cardinal Bona, Pere Craffet, and the author of the "*Wholesome Advice of the Virgin Mary to her indiscreet Worshipers*," in Bishop Gibson's Tracts, vol. 3, tit. 9, pages 9, 92, 115, 136.

(b) State and Behaviour, page 150.—*Sint nobis viventibus*" says Baronius Not. ad Martyr. 16 Octob. "*hæc semper præconia laudum, et post mortem tituli sepulchrales, ut Romani semper dicamur atque Papistæ.*" He did not seem to think these titles so peculiarly insulting as you do. Pref. to State and Behaviour, p. 6.

freedom with which you have treated both them and their opinions, in those which you have already published.

THE POPE.—On this subject I have said very little. The “*reiterated declamation*” you accuse me of is entirely of your own invention. Like you, I had observed that “*in former times*” they strangely abused their power; and with *Pallavicini* I advanced some things which “*by no means redounded to their honour*”: But to the general excellence of the character of those who have governed the Roman Church in latter ages, I have repeatedly borne honourable testimony. Whenever I have made any remarks upon those of more early days, it was because the mention of them was naturally connected with the subject in discussion. Had their names been introduced with a view to call up the prejudices of my readers at the sound of this “*magic title*,” what a tale might I not have unfolded from the “*Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum*,” the writings of *Wicelius*, *Cassander*, *Baronius*, and others of your own communion? I could not have been at a loss for the choice of subjects, since, as *Genebrard* acknowledges, (a) “*For almost 150 years, about 50 Popes together degenerated wholly from the virtue of their predecessors, and deserved rather to be called renegadoes and apostates, than apostolic.*” Even the scandalous confusion which reigned in the Roman Church during the ambitious struggles between *Clement* and *Urban*, in the fourteenth century, when, to use the words of *Bossuet* “*Jesus Christ paroissoit endormi, et la barque de Pierre sur le point d’être submergé,*” would have afforded an ample field for declamation. (b) But I dare appeal to your own conscience, that you never seriously believed me to be actuated by the motives with which you wish to charge me. Even the memory of your late *Ganganelli* I still revere, notwithstanding the cruel anonymous attack which has been lately made both on his public and private character, by a partial friend or member of that society which he suppressed; who seems inclined to deny that he had either integrity, erudition, or understanding, and

(a) *Chronic. Ann.* 901. See the “*Incurable Scepticism of the Church of Rome*, cited above, page 175.

(b) See *Molheim Cent.* xiv, part 2, chap. 2. or, *Clemangis*.

assures us that he never observed the common rules of decency, either in his language or behaviour. (a)

As successors of *S. Peter*, the Popes were always understood to enjoy not only the primacy of honour, rank, and precedence; but of authority, power, and jurisdiction. How greatly you have limited this power and prerogative, we have already seen. The novelty of your ideas on this head I know you will endeavour to shelter under the authority of some respectable names amongst the Gallican clergy of these latter ages; but I appeal from these to the current tradition of every other age and country. Is it indeed credible that the successors of *S. Peter* should have been ever ignorant what this tradition was? Yet even since the formal declarations of the general councils of *Constance* and *Basil*, the amiable, the virtuous, the learned *Lambertini* (Benedict 14) than whom few were ever better acquainted with the writings and opinions of antiquity, has positively asserted in his famous work *de Synodo Diocesana*, that a Pope is superior to a general council—that his ordinary jurisdiction reaches over the whole Church—that he may extend the same to others, without consulting the Diocesan Bishop—that he may exempt any particular Church from the jurisdiction of its ordinary pastor—that he has power to change or to abolish whatever ecclesiastical laws, customs, and rules he pleases—that in a general council he need not follow the opinion of the more numerous part of the Bishops, &c.—Were all the most enlightened and pious amongst the Roman prelates and clergy so completely ignorant of the doctrines of that Church over which they presided by divine right, as to be totally unacquainted with the nature and extent of their own prerogative?

To this you will undoubtedly reply that these and similar pretensions of *Lambertini*, *Bellarmino*, *Du Perron*, *Baronius*, *Fagnani*, *Cajetan*, *Petavius*, *a Turre Cremata*, *Thomas Aquinas*, *Leo Allatius*, *Pallavicini*, *Pole*, &c. are but the prejudices of ultramontane Theologians, which both French and English Catholics now reject. But you also should inform your people that they are, and ever have been, with very few exceptions, the constant doctrines of their supreme Pastors

(a) A candid and impartial Sketch of the Life of Pope Clement XIV. Dublin: and sold by Symonds in Ludgate-street, London:

and

and all their *Sacred College*, even to the present century. If the declarations and decrees both of your Pope and councils have no force till they are admitted and promulgated by the consent of the civil power, the monarchical and pastoral privileges of the one, as well as the unerring authority of the other, are mere ideal attributes. (a) And if the successor of *S. Peter* in the see of Rome is but your ministerial head, why are such ceremonies and such language used at his *Coronation* as must mislead your people; and why are both he and they assured that he is the *supreme governor of the Universe*? Indeed, *Bellarmino* asserts that his absolute jurisdiction over the whole Church was never called in question; and *Lessius* proves at length that even his power of deposing Princes was the general doctrine of all Christians for five hundred years, as well as the opinion of five or six general councils. (b) He even adds that if this is not a doctrine of Catholic faith, the Church must have been in an error for many ages, in a matter fundamental as to government, and of most material import. Now, what are your people to do amongst all these theological squabbles? Are not the opinions of *Lambertini*, *Bellarmino*, or *Lessius*, of as much authority as those of any of their present teachers? And if the former were capable of misleading their judgment upon some very essential points of tradition, of which they were surely no incompetent *witnesses*, how can they have any greater security or reliance that they shall nor be misled by others, who are often men of less erudition, and sometimes of less integrity?

The contradictory declarations that have been made upon the Pope's authority by the general councils of *Basil* and *Constance*, the third and 5th of *Lateran*, the second of *Lyons*, and that of *Florence*, have driven your divines to the most extraordinary subterfuges and comments, to clear their church from the imputation of varying in her decisions. But *Rome* still mocks at all their idle discussions, and adheres to her ancient maxims. "Pour qu'on ne prescrive nulle part contre ses droits, elle fait juger secrètement a son tribunal quantité d'affaires qui y sont portées par le promo-

(a) Even so late as 1768, Clement XIII published a Brief at Rome, which was suppressed in France: And no Ecclesiastic was suffered to conform to it, or to render it public, under pain of high treason.

(b) Bell. lib. 9, c. 16.—Lessius, *Discuss. decreti Con. Lat.*

teur de la foi. Ainsi combien des gens, et même de corps, surtout en France, sont condamnés par les sentences de l'Inquisition, et ne s'en doutent pas. C'est le parti que la cour de Rome a pris pour se rendre justice a elle même." (a) What can she indeed do more, in an age when her very vitals are attacked by those who pretend to be her children? But we may justly infer from hence, that if she should ever again have the support of the arm of flesh to enforce her doctrines, she will again openly reclaim her rights; and then the declarations and decisions of those Doctors whom you now despise, will become the catholic belief of your church. That this suspicion is not entirely groundless, appears by what happened but a few years since, in the proceedings of the Irish titular bishops, respecting the oath of allegiance which was proposed about that time to the Catholics. For the cool reply of Cardinal *Castelli* to the titular Archbishop of *Cashel* sufficiently shews that Rome has not yet relinquished any of her former claims; and leads us to conjecture that if this politic court is flexible enough to give way to the exigencies of the times, it is only because she is constrained to admit or tolerate what she has not the power to contradict, restrain, or correct "by any coordinate punishment." (b)

I do not mean to say that the sentiments which you express concerning the papal dignity and jurisdiction are not just. On the contrary, as far as you derive them only from the free concessions of the community, they would scarcely be objected to even by the most rigid Protestants. This their own ecclesiastical discipline clearly shews;—and it is also conformable to that of ancient times. Nevertheless, since the Christian religion is now spread to people "toto penitus divisos orbe," I think it is far more proper that every national establishment of it should be under the direction of its own peculiar primate, than that it should in any sense be subject to the control of any foreign superior. For human interests and passions will always, even under the pretext of spiritual jurisdiction, be grasping at temporal advantages and power: And it has been found by long experience

(a) Abbé Richard. Voyage D'Italie. Paris, 1766.

(b) See a "Justification of the Tenets of the Roman Catholic Religion" by Dr. James Butler. London, 1787.

that

that every appeal to so distant a tribunal is attended with much inconvenience. Neither is it credible, as *S. Augustin*, *S. Alypius*, and the African prelates observed in their synodical letter to Pope *Stephen*, that the grace of the Holy Ghost will ever be wanting in any particular province, to direct the judgment of the Bishops in the due management of the people committed to their charge. (a)

That there should always be always some ministerial head to every well regulated society, Protestants have never denied. But yet it is very possible that the utmost harmony and order may subsist in an establishment, although the supreme executive power is not lodged in the hands of any individual person. Neither is this head of yours so very essential to your own society as you would fain persuade us. For the fashionable doctrine amongst your Theologians seems now to be, that your Church has power to produce every kind of vital act, decree, determine, and define without the concurrence of its head—that the head is obliged to submit its opinions to its members—that it may be struck off at pleasure, if it offends against your general discipline—that it may even be removed without any accusation exhibited against it, provided this be judged necessary for the advantage of the community; as for example, to re-establish peace in Christendom, or to promote the reunion of a considerable nation to the Roman faith. (b) Can you really Sir believe that he who is by *divine appointment* the Vicar of Christ on Earth, when he hears such blasphemy as this, will not say that you are a people that honour him with your lips, though your heart is estranged from him; and that, if he really is your father and your master, far other fear and honour are his due? (c) I dare aver that even from Pope *Zosimus*, to him who now actually wears the triple crown, there scarce has sitted a single prelate in the see of Rome, who would not reprobate such sentiments as these, and think them highly inconsistent with every idea of his supremacy and native jurisdiction over the Christian Church. (d)

(a) Collect. Reg. tom. 4, or Labbe, tom. 2.

(b) Gerson de Auferibilitate Papæ.—Hooke's Rel. Nat. et Revel. Principia.

(c) Matt. 7, 6. Malachi, 1, 6.

(d) See on this subject Blondel. "Quel livre" says Abbé Londeguerue, "que celui de Blondel sur la primauté du Pape? Le pauvre Coffetau voulut y répondre, mais il se fit moquer de tout le monde."

It was observed to me, not long since, by a Roman Catholic gentleman of some distinction, who much applauded your work, that although some of your sentiments were rather free, and your language liable to much misconstruction, yet your expressions might all be so explained as to make them perfectly consistent with the strictest orthodoxy.—And what indeed may not an ingenious comment at any time effect? But this is surely a very unfair method of setting forth the belief of your Church. In a discussion like this, you should have considered yourself at a bar where you were called upon to speak the whole truth in most explicit terms; and where you should neither have been influenced by the frowns of the great, nor the scruples of the timorous. In the cause of truth, the least reserve or caution justly becomes suspicious: And if in controversial writings we are authorised in using such a latitude of expression as may be suited by its pliability to whatever ideas we may wish to convey, we cannot wonder that all religious disquisitions fall into contempt; and that religion itself is discarded as a system of worldly policy, supported with no other view than to keep the lower classes of mankind in subjection by imaginary hopes and apprehensions. Indeed, Sir, your whole work seems rather an apology for your religion, than a plain account of its principles—And that must surely be an objectionable mode of worship, which stands in need of perpetual comments to reconcile its *discipline* to the dictates of common sense, and rescue it from objections to which it is so obviously liable.

As to the *duties* of those lecturers you mention, you are totally misinformed. They are appointed only “to prove the truth of revealed religion in general, and of the Christian in particular, from the completion of the prophecies in the old and new Testament, which relate to the Christian Church; especially to the Apostacy of papal Rome;”—as you might easily have seen in the deed of trust for founding the *Warburtonian* lecture. Some of the most esteemed amongst these writers, who undoubtedly were acquainted with the nature of their obligations, have therefore confined almost the whole of their remarks to general prophecy, as regarding the Christian dispensation.

ABUSES AND FOLLIES IN RELIGION.—On these I have somewhat dwelt; but I have both acknowledged them to be



*abuses*, which many of you wished to have reformed, and also that several obstacles stood in the way of their suppression. If therefore I have noticed them repeatedly, it was because they are mostly connected with such tenets as I think unscriptural, and to the support of which they greatly, though silently, contribute. Were it even true that “*all men of sense condemn them*,” yet it would be equally certain that they seldom seek either to discredit or reform them. Far from dwelling “*with complacency*” on such unjustifiable foppery, I wish I could have excused it ; but was with concern obliged to prove that much of it was still retained, tolerated, and authorised, over the whole Catholic Church, under the eyes and direction of your chief ecclesiastical superiors. (a) I appealed to notorious facts, which you have only endeavoured to set aside or palliate by vague and general reflections. Had I taken any satisfaction in setting the practices of your society in a ludicrous light, I should scarce have omitted the feast of S. *Rosalia* at *Palermo* (b), or the still more ridiculous whirligigs of the *Bara* at *Messina* (c) ; and should undoubtedly have mentioned not only the ludicrous, degrading, and oppressive *minutiae* practised in your Religious orders, but even the miracles, visions, and fanaticism of some of your modern Saints. My friendly forbearance on these heads should sometimes have been thrown into the scale ; and have proved to you, and to your party, that the little I had introduced, was not from any wanton caprice, but because I could not conceal it with justice to the cause in which I was engaged.—The renowned champion of the Gallican Church was much less temperate and reserved in his history of the follies and *variations* of the reformed !

You will perhaps observe that since I am willing to allow that these and similar observances are but *abuses*, it was unfair and disingenuous to object them as arguments against your system. The observation would be just, if these abuses were less general, less countenanced, and their evil influence less extensive. If my appeal had been addressed to those alone who invariably discarded such popular practices as these, they

(a) Appeal, pages 315, 321, 330, 342, 362.

(b) Brydone's Tour through Sicily and Malta.

(c) Voyage Pittoresque des Isles de Sicile, de Malthe, et de Lipari. 1782.

would

would never have been noticed. But as I wrote for the community at large, amongst whom prejudice has still its empire, I had a certain line of reasoning traced out, from which I was not at liberty to deviate without exposing myself to have several unfair advantages taken against me ; and without being obliged to combat on very unequal ground. The objection which I here suppose to be raised against me, is that which the Pagans made against *Arnobius*, when they asserted that all the puerile forms of worship which he so much derided, were nothing else than popular prejudices and follies—And therefore was I justified in making a like reply. “Whether they are true or false,” says he, speaking of the idle stories on which the vulgar worship was supported, “it little matters. It is sufficient that your practice gives it countenance ; that it is found in all your books. . . . The guilt still falls on you, for permitting these things to be recorded. But how can you assert that these relations are false, to which your worship adds yearly testimony ?” Thus did this famous apologist reason ; and deemed it fairer to take his view of Paganism from what the *people* practised, than from what a few *philosophers* devised in their closets, to wipe off the odious imputation of a worship which they did not dare defend. (a)

When in a single instance Protestants adopt an expression liable to cavil, in speaking of Christ’s presence in the Sacrament, you tell them that their language and their meaning are contradictory to each other ; and triumph in the seeming opposition. How easily might this accusation be retorted ; and how perfectly absurd would not your whole system of religion appear, were we to form our opinion of your doctrines either from the language of many of your canonised saints, or that which is used in your Pontificals, Missals, Breviaries, and other works published with undeniable authority ? From these it is as manifest as human speech can make it, that the Cross of Christ is to be venerated with supreme worship, as the Symbol in which your whole reliance is placed—that you address your prayers

(a) How the Pagans apologized for the abuses and follies of their worship, and with what contempt the ancient Fathers treated these pretences, may be seen in the Collection of Tracts so often cited, vol. 2, pages 180, 211, 244, 249, 255, 261, &c. or Dallæus “*Adversus Latinorum de Cultus religiosi objecto traditionem.*” Genevæ, 1664.—See also Appeal, page 328.

to it for comfort and assistance—that you implore the pardon of your sins by the merits of the wood on which Christ suffered—that you beg the Saints and Angels to enlighten, protect, and guide you ; to grant you various blessings ; to open to you the kingdom of Heaven—that you ask these favours of God not only through their *intercession*, but for their *merits*—that you even pray that the sacrifice of the mass may be accepted through the merits of the Saints—that you offer it to God in honour of his Saints—that you make a confession of your sins to them, as you do to the Almighty God—that you address the Virgin Mary in the same terms as you do the Deity himself, &c. &c : And yet you tell us that your only meaning is to pray before images and crosses to keep your minds from distraction, and that you only apply to the Saints, in order to beg their intercession with God ! I grant that this is your sole intention—Your Catechisms declare it. Yet surely it is impossible to gather this meaning either from your practices, or the general language of your liturgic and devotional compositions. (a) Explain them as you will, I still persist in affirming that these uniform practices and forms of worship are likely to mislead your people ; and are upon that account most highly censurable. (b) Your apology for these abuses is ingenious ; but not such as would have satisfied the primitive Christians. Besides, your Church has surely sufficient authority to reform its own Pontificals and Missals ; and the most bigoted of its children could scarce deny that at least this act of jurisdiction is included in the idea of general superintendance which they ascribe to their sovereign pastor.

You observe that at the time of the reformation, “ *good, bad, and indifferent were thrown together into one promiscuous heap, and a reform demanded of all.*” I would not wish to judge of your general veracity, by this unfavourable specimen. A great reform indeed was wanting, and therefore much was asked. But, as little was likely to be granted, however reasonable the demand, much also was taken. Thus, for not acceding even to the just proposals that were made,

(a) See Tracts, vol. 3, pages 19, 62, 185, 217.

(b) “ *Quis adorat vel orat, intuens simulachrum,*” says S. Augustin in Psalm cxiii, “ *qui non sic afficitur ut ab eo se exaudiri putet ?*” See also Dallæus de Imaginibus, or Chemnicus Exam. Concil. Trid. Art. de Invocatione et Veneratione Sanctorum.

you caused a schism in the Church. That a reform was asked with some intemperance of clamour, I do not deny; yet even to this you might have found some apology, if you had but reflected that "*when guides are ignorant, or when maxims are suggested, unfounded on truth and clogged with puerilities, a great mind is disgusted . . . and imperceptibly adopts singularities, perhaps extravagancies.*" (a) This was the circumstance which roused the zeal of the reformers to such active exertions. Nor can we wonder that a spirit of general dissatisfaction should obtain, when the complaints which had been made against the corruptions that prevailed in the 12, 13, 14, and 15th centuries, by persons of the highest dignity and character, were so little heeded, even in that council which was expressly assembled to reform them.

I have said that much was asked by the reformers. Yet this regards rather the latter periods, than the beginnings of this wondrous revolution. This is evident from *Luther's* comment on the prophet *Zechariah*, from *Melancthon's* letter to *Campegius*, and the memorial by which it was followed. The Protestant party was by no means exorbitant in its demands; but was even ready to make more concessions than they well could justify. (b) They scarce asked any thing which every national Church had not a right to settle as she pleases without consulting Rome at all—For what are the communion under two kinds, the law of celibacy, the language of the liturgy, the use of images and relics, and other observances which they wished to have respectively altered or repealed, but points of discipline only? The outcry therefore was not raised, "*against every thing that had been in former practice;*" but against the abuses which had long been a scandal to all men of sense. It was however I think an happiness for the world at large, that the Roman court was to little disposed to give way; since their concessions in a few less material points might perhaps have retarded the great event, and we should still be wishing for a reform in articles of higher importance.

Be this as it may; the reasons which you give why your Church has not even yet reformed whatever is generally al-

(a) *Life of Abeillard*, page 122.

(b) See *Beaufobre*, vol. 4, pages 77, 360, 398. "*Luther conserva non seulement ce qu'il y avoit de bon et d'édifiant dans les pratiques de l'Eglise Romaine, mais encore tout ce qui pouvoit être toléré.*" Vol. 3, page 4.

lowed to be a requisite amendment are *strange* indeed ; as well as a most severe reflection upon your ecclesiastical superiors who were so humourfome, touchy, and imperious, as not to accede to requisitions suggested both by religion and common sense, because they were not presented with all that humility and meekness which they expected.—Those who could stand so sternly on their prerogative, where the interests of truth and the happiness of mankind were concerned, but little deserved either their respect or confidence. To alledge, with regard to your liturgy's being still performed entirely in the Latin tongue, that their *foibles* have not yet been sufficiently foothed to “*dispose them to pray in the language of a Luther, a Calvin, or a Queen Elizabeth,*” is an excuse which might indeed serve for some apology for the perverseness of a froward school boy ; but which, even in the eyes of those who are best acquainted with the human heart, is highly disparaging to that Church which your writers are ever representing to us as a prudent and affectionate mother, attentive to every circumstance which can procure the happiness of her children, and inclined to make every reasonable advance to promote peace and unity amongst mankind. Besides, whatever was the case at the time of the reformation, when the minds of mankind were in an unnatural state of ferment, you have repeatedly exposed your own conviction that upon all material objects the *real tenets* of the *Protestant* and *Roman Catholic* Churches differ but little from each other. It is therefore high time to lay aside our mutual prepossessions, and to comply as much as possible in our *practice*, with what we deem in *speculation* to be most conformable to revelation and reason. In this respect, we have, I think, greatly the advantage over the Roman Church ; since whatever we reject in your discipline you do not even pretend to urge as any precept of revelation—and we have not in the whole system of our religion a single article respecting either faith or practice, which you can fairly and honestly disapprove.

If I have any where insinuated that my Appeal was “*intended to promote the spiritual welfare of my Catholic neighbours,*” I recollect it not. My Preface expressly intimates another motive. I have even acknowledged that *the strange deviations* into folly which you mention, are mostly unknown to the *English Catholics*, whose amendment there-  
fore

fore in these respects I could not possibly have in view. (a) But what is *England* and *sixty thousand* Catholics, to *sixty times ten hundred thousand*, who are, as it is pretended, to be found in *Europe* only—without reckoning those of *Syria, Palestine, Greece, Turkey, Persia, the Indies, China, and America?* (b) I considered that religion according to its general practice only; and it is the general practice that I reprobate: Just as I appeal for its tenets, not to a few individuals who assure me they are orthodox; but to the thousands of their writers in every age who have held a different language, and whose *tradition*, Protestant as I am, I still prefer to that trifling number of their divines on whose minds the Catholic belief hangs rather heavy, and who therefore seek to make their creed appear as little objectionable as they can, as well as to reconcile it to their own more enlightened apprehensions. One would imagine, from the expressions which you here make use of, that you considered *England* as the chief establishment of your religion; and that all the other Catholic States of *Europe* were only some *particular* subordinate societies that held communion with her.

Neither is it from my "*Flemish repository*" alone that my account of these abuses is collected. For, all these several practices which even to you seem so absurd that you lament that "*a creature which is termed rational*" should make them a part of his religious worship, are not confined to *Flanders* only; but are still greatly prevalent in *Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Naples, Sicily, Peru, Mexico, Brasil, Paraguay*, and wherever your tenets are admitted.—Have true religion, Sir, and sober sense no other abode than amongst the few Catholics of *England*, that "*the thousand extravagances of the Germans, Spaniards, and Italians give you no concern?*"

What I have said respecting the advice I would give to a fair inquirer, I still adhere to; (c) nor is there any thing in my Appeal which can suggest to a candid reader a contrary suspicion. Few Catholics who are already settled in their belief will read it; and even those who waver are equi-

(a) Appeal, 321.

(b) Catechisme Philosophique, par M. L'Abbé Flexier de Reval. Paris, 1777.

(c) Appeal, page 212.

valently referred for information to their own teachers, (a) who, if I have only addressed myself to their prejudices and passions, and not to their understandings, can surely say more against what I have asserted, than I have been able to produce in its support. Besides, in these trifling days when “*people read not so much for instruction as for amusement,*” (b) and every thing appears dull and tedious which is conveyed in the form of serious inquiry, few will read further than the conclusion of a Preface, which merited a smile of approbation even from you: For I have neither aimed at their *amusement*, nor practised any of those alluring means which are calculated to attract the eye or captivate the attention; but have only sought to recommend my subject by its own importance, set forth in the sober stile of unimpassioned reasoning. Such only amongst *you* were likely to read it, who were qualified to *detect its venom*, or whose principles were already shaken; for others would “*refuse instruction from so foul a source:*” (c)—and such amongst *us*, as are very unlikely to become your Profelytes; yet know not fully the motives of their own dissent. For these I wrote: And as far as I have yet been able to discover, there is nothing in my Appeal which will not tend to make those of either communion both happier and better, as well in a moral as in a political light. Had I written to undermine the faith of the unlearned and poor, I might, as I have elsewhere shewn, have recorded a thousand ridiculous stories which, though totally unconnected with your principles, would yet have equally served to render your society both hated and contemptible. (d)

(a) Appeal, page 312. (b) Reflections, page 15.

(c) State and Behaviour, page 162.

(d) The “*Lettres Provinciales*” of the famous Pascal, or the Dialogues of Erasmus, particularly those intitled “*De Visendis locis sacris—De Virgine Mysogamo—Exorcismus seu Spectrum—Peregrinatio religionis ergo—Convivium profanum—Naufragium—and Exequiæ Seraphicæ*,” would almost by the bare recital of them have fully answered this unfriendly purpose. What, then, might not have been effected by means of a ludicrous commentary on them? Nevertheless there are, farce and parody apart, many excellent reflections in the writings of this great man, which set several parts of your discipline in a very unfavourable light. See in tom. 5. Exomologesis, and Enar. Psalm xxxiii. Ibid. c. 1120. Tom. 6, in Matt. 12. Matt. 23. Acts 18, 19. Ep. 1. ad Timot. 1, 6; and 3, 2. Tom. 9, c. 255. Edit. Clerici. Lug. Batav. 1703.—It is, however, but fair to add that the Dialogues or Colloquies of Erasmus were censured by the Theological Faculty of Paris.

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Besides, I should then have written in another stile, and have published a far less voluminous compilation, to be dispersed at little cost amongst the lower class of people.—But I had too much respect for the cause in which I was engaged, to treat the subject with so much levity; and rather chose to lie open to the charge of writing an “*heavy*” work—because I knew that wherever it was *wished* to make an impression, its very weight was likely to render that impression more deep and lasting.

TOLERATION.—I have said that it was my wish that every penal law were repealed, which affects you merely as dissenters from our establishment. The same wish I here again most solemnly repeat. The *peevish qualification*, as you call it, which I subjoined, you cannot suppose was introduced as a reflection on the body of the English Catholics, contrary to my own express and repeated declaration. It was only an allusion to circumstances which I had mentioned in my Appeal, and to which you did not chuse to advert. You even might have made some candid allowance for the workings of nature, and have excused some little tendency to a peevish moment, had you reflected that when a person who formerly had your esteem, is suddenly become the object of your enmity—when he is addressed by captious and taunting letters even from the infernal regions—when his actions are severely scrutinized, and the purity of his motives questioned—when his character is traduced, and the seeds of discord are scattered even amongst his own domestics—when he sees himself deprived of the blessing and affections of a tender mother; the regard and friendship of a numerous acquaintance—when even dark surmises are spread abroad to deprive him, if possible, of the benevolence and estimation of his new connections . . . . the natural feelings of the mind will prompt at least a transient sentiment of fretful retaliation. All this, Sir, have I suffered from *individuals* against whom I never harboured an unfriendly thought.—And if I do not utterly “*despise*” such men as these, and think their “*religion vain*,” (a) it is because I rather wish to impute their unchristian conduct to the prejudices of a mistaken zeal, than to any wilful prevarication or malevolence

(a) Reflections, page 3.

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With respect to books published against the established religion of this country, I have admired the moderation of Government; but no where, that I can recollect, have I intimated even a *wish* that their circulation were prohibited: being sensible of the truth of *Gamaliel's* just reflection, that if the writers of them were "let alone," their work and counsel would certainly "come to nought." (a) Nevertheless, with reason might I be *surprised*; because few Governments are so tolerant. And you should have observed that my remark was only introduced as a reply to *Dr. Carroll's* assertion that the severest penalties still subsisted in this country against the introduction, printing, or vending any books written by Catholics.

On this subject I might have added much, with strict adherence to truth. Do even those *individuals* I have mentioned deserve the slight indulgence they have met with? A dog that barks and shows his teeth when chained, may justly be suspected of mangling the ill-fated wretch who once should come within his merciless reach. (b)—But, since you have dared me to make good my charge; Was there ever a more illiberal and seditious libel published than "the History of the Christian Church" by *Pastorini*, written by your present Bishop of this district, a Member of various Royal and Literary Societies, and no less illustrious amongst you for his erudition, than his Piety? I have it now before me: and there with wonder I find it written, that Protestants are enlisted under the banners of the devil, and still remain faithful to their allegiance—that the angel of the bottomless pit was the founder of their religion—that the locusts of the reformation had the devil for their sovereign—that the chief design of the reformers was to free mankind from the restraint of the strict laws of morality, &c. There also do I find an history of the reformation, both abroad, and in our own country, equally replete with fiction and abuse. With respect to England in particular, he advises *sixty thousand* of his Majesty's subjects to flee from this country of wrath and perdition, as soon as they shall see that the distracted course of public affairs seems to foretell the approaching effusion of the fifth vial, mentioned in the *Revelations* of S. John—which he has fixed about

(a) Acts 5, 38. (b) "Dic Mihi si fueris tu Leo, qualis eris?"

the 21st year of the next century!—Is the tendency of this to strengthen the Catholics in their allegiance? Do not such sentiments as these fall under the cognizance of the civil magistrate? Are these not truly the “*effusions of wanton caprice,*” and a “*muddy stream*” of every thing that is reproachful and intolerant? Yes, Sir, I again repeat it; Such indecent attacks as this would not have met with a like forbearance either in *Italy, France, Portugal, or Spain.* Here may you indeed see that genuine spirit of enthusiastic bigotry which scorns to palliate or disguise, and which contributed, no doubt, to kindle those very flames which we still look back upon with so much horror. (a) And yet the magistrates of London, (*who are always wiser than the rest of mankind, as you have elsewhere told us with a contemptuous sneer,*) so far from pointing “*to the door of Newgate*” or suffering every *miscreant to cut the hair by which the naked sword hung trembling over your head,* gave you, about that very time, the most striking proofs of its disposition to protect you. For in the trials of Messrs. *Webbe, Dillon, Magellan, and Talbot,* not only the Right Honourable Mr. *Crosby,* and the Lord Chief Justice of the King’s Bench, but also the Counsel, as well for the plaintiff as defendants, manifested the most humane and benevolent sentiments towards your society. I have mentioned *Pastorini,* because he is at present the apostolic vicar in this very district; but I might equally well have cited the writings of your late Bishop *Challoner,* or the life of Cardinal *Pole* by Mr. *Phillips,* which is a most insolent and unprovoked attack both upon the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of this realm (b).—All these are books which were neither published without “*the sanction of authority,*” nor received without the general applause of your whole community; and upon these alone I am not afraid to rest the truth of my assertions.

Throughout the whole of this paragraph of your letter there is much rhetoric and exaggeration, though but lit-

(a) Appeal, page 369.

(b) The Artifices which were used in this work to cast an odium upon the doctrines of the Protestants, and the several misrepresentations of which the writer of it has been guilty, both with respect to men and measures, may be seen in Neve, Ridley, or Pye’s Translation of Beccatelli.

the equity and fairness. At leisure you descant on the subject of toleration, and accuse me of sentiments the most foreign to my mind, that you may display your own ideas to greater advantage.—No, Sir, my foreign education has never taught me either to inculcate, or to believe, that a fair discussion of religious truths should be subject to the control or cognizance of the civil magistrate: But yet, whilst I think that freedom of inquiry should be restrained by no penal laws, I am persuaded that “all applications to the fancy, passions, or prejudices of the reader, all attempts to preoccupy, ensnare, or perplex his judgment by any art, influence, or impression whatever, should be rejected from a question which involves in its determination the hopes, the virtue, and the repose of millions. . . . And that every mind which wishes the advancement of truth and knowledge, in the most important of all human researches, must abhor this licentiousness, as violating no less the laws of reasoning, than the rights of decency.” (a) You blush, you say, to hear me talk of the forbearance of magistrates, in a cause wherein religion only is concerned. But where, under pretext of *religion*, the rights of civil government and the happiness of society are invaded, (as I think they have notoriously been in the abovementioned writings,) the magistrate has an undoubted right to interfere (b), without trespassing in the least degree upon the “*business of an inquisitor*.” My sentiments upon this subject you could not possibly have *mistaken*, as I had most expressly referred to Dr. Price’s late *Observations*, (c) in which this question is treated with great extent, and determined with the utmost liberality and freedom.—To give a complete finish to this curious section, you conclude it with expressing your *love and honour* for your country, which you have nevertheless repeatedly insinuated to be *mean, intolerant, oppressive, and scottishly tyrannical*;—a land of boasted freedom, the excellencies of whose constitution are nothing to you, whom it has deprived of the common rights of humanity; and in whom they only serve to create a restless desire of changes and revolutions (d)—a country where your condition has at all times been of so debasing and irksome a nature as would

(a) Paley, Book 5, chap. 9.

(b) See above, page 48.

(c) Cadell, 1785.

(d) State and Behaviour of the English Catholics, page 134.

have

have justified the most active exertions, (a) since it was worse even than death itself (b)—a country which has never behaved to you with the least degree of a liberal, humane, and manly spirit ; (c) whose laws take away your property more effectually than the highwayman's pistol (d)—where there still exists in full force against you the same infamous code that has now subsisted for two whole ages (e)—a country whose legislators are *persecutors*, however highly they may talk of toleration, or extol the wonders of their own liberal minds (f)—a government which has little right to demand your allegiance (g)—a land where, even since the last indulgence granted you, you still continue an oppressed and injured people, (h) whose situation the slaves in Jamaica have little reason to envy (i)—a government which, if it has at all taken you to its bosom, has done it with the kindness of a bear who presses his enemy to his breast, or with the feigned caresses of a stepmother smiling on her husband's child ; (k) and where, notwithstanding all your boasted attachment to the family that bears the sceptre in it, you acknowledge that, from the little relief you have received, you see no very particular grounds for such a new disposition in its favour. (l)

Have I not some reason, Sir, to ask you now in my turn, whether you recognise in these sentiments the genuine expressions of *love* and *honour* ; or even the language of fidelity, respect, gratitude, or prudence ?

To your review of the state of religion on the continent, and the tolerant sentiments which there prevail, I have little to reply. I hope the picture you have drawn is just, and greatly am I rejoiced at your account. There are however some small drawbacks to it, which should not be entirely omitted.

In *Germany*, you say, christians of different persuasions pray under the same roof. If this be considered as a proof of unwillingness to persecute, what judgment must we form of the contrary discipline of your society in *England*, where

- (a) State and Behaviour of the English Catholics, Preface, p. viii.  
 (b) Ibid. (c) State and Behaviour, page 96.  
 (d) Ibid. 123. (e) Ibid. page 186.  
 (f) Address to the Protestant Dissenters, 1787, page 50.  
 (g) State and Behaviour, page 43.  
 (h) Ibid. page 134. (i) Ibid. page 102.  
 (k) Address to Protestant Dissenters, page 56.  
 (l) State and Behaviour, page 134.

a Catholic

a Catholic servant is forbid to join in family prayer, if his master is of the established church? A gentleman of this very city who was married to a Protestant, was enjoined (as I was credibly informed at the very time it happened, by a Roman Catholic to whom he made his complaint) not to assist his expiring partner, even in repeating some general addresses to the Deity to console her in those tremendous moments.—Indulge, therefore, whatever speculations you please on this subject, and continue the benevolent dream till you believe it real, I am still convinced that *the bulk* of your society, especially your clergy, have hitherto been intolerant from principle, and faithful to that principle in daily practice—more intolerant from principle than Protestants, though often, perhaps, *accidentally* less so than some particular Protestant states or sects, whom casual circumstances may have led to deviate from their general rule of conduct.(a) What else could be indeed expected from a *Laity* whose natural and acquired abilities are *below the common level*, who scarce possess those native talents *which often fall to the lot of unimproved mortality*; and from a *Clergy*, *illiterate and self-sufficient, unpleasant in their manners, ignorant of the world, confined in their ideas, divided by local prejudices, views of interest, low jealousies, and the jars of selfish passions*? (b) All this is now, I hope, quickly doing away. Your late Essay on Sunday Schools(c) is admi-

(a) How frequently have you not asserted in your writings, that persecution for the sake of religious opinions is totally irreconcilable with the very principles of the reformation. If, therefore, it is so diametrically opposite to our principles, it must of course be less deeply rooted in *our bosoms*, than in the hearts of those whose ideas are less unfavourable to it.

(b) State and Behaviour of the English Catholics, first edition, pages 128, 129, 174, 178. In my Extracts from this your chief publication, I have always made use of the first edition, because I had many reasons to believe it the most “faithful portrait of your sentiments.” The defalcations and changes which you have since thought proper to make in it seem rather to have been inspired by prudence than conviction. Before you drew the Landscape, you doubtless had viewed attentively the scene before you; and were as well acquainted with the duties of an impartial historian, as you were a twelvemonth after.

(c) An Essay on the Depravity of the Nation, with a view to the promotion of Sunday Schools, by the Rev. Joseph Berington. Robinson, 1788.

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rably calculated to destroy the *Hydra* of intolerance, which has so long reigned with almost resistless sway. Yet, if you really wish success to the liberal scheme you have there suggested, the Catholics must cease to tell their children "for what their fathers suffered;" and never must it be suggested, even in the most distant manner, that "a dangerous and corrosive poison" may be imbibed from their living "in freer habits of friendship with Protestants, than was the former practice." (a) Such hints and such *mementos* as these are highly inconsistent with that spirit of general amnesty, and those sentiments which it seems your wish to disseminate!

As under the article of *Russia* you have mentioned the *Jesuits*, I must indulge myself in a short digression on that subject which has been so much talked of, and concerning which your writers hold such various sentiments. Their suppression I have always considered as very uninteresting to religion. To the body, in general, I was always well affected, having been in the former part of my life pretty intimately acquainted with so many worthy persons of that society. But surely the Pope, as the common father of your Church, might without any stretch of his prerogative, dissolve them as a religious community! If a council may depose even this supreme pastor himself for the peace of the commonwealth, a Pope may undeniably, from similar motives, break up a particular association of men, originally founded by his consent and approbation, without deserving the severe censures that have been cast upon him for this attempt. You acknowledge (b) that from the day of their institution they had raised throughout the Christian world a suspicious jealousy—that they aspired too high—that they were ambitious and fell unpitied—that a Jesuit, whether amongst the tea shrubs in *China*, in the gardens of *Versailles*, or in a cottage in *Lancashire*, was ever a distinguishable man, with a peculiar set of features; and you know that their suppression was required by most of the Catholic sovereigns in Europe. Were not these sufficient reasons to justify their dissolution, however innocent of *other* crimes? It was, indeed, effectuated in many places by the

(a) *State and Behaviour*, second edition, 195, 197. See Appeal, page 311.

(b) *State and Behaviour*, page 168.

most cruel means, and accompanied with the most glaring acts of tyranny and injustice: But with these the *benevolent* Ganganelli had no concern. And if a *Franciscan* has presumed that he had reasons for what he did, as well as authority to do it, the *Jesuit* would have thought the same, if his decrees had only affected the children of *Francis* or of *Benedict*. Mr. *Pilling*, as an obsequious son, reveres the Pope and his determinations; the *Pope* excommunicates all who dare to censure his proceedings; Bishop *Carroll*, who thinks himself aggrieved, sets all his father's menaces at nought, and meditates to check his aspiring claims; and the *Catholic* Philosopher steps in to animate this American reformer, and thinks him a respectable and Judicious Churchman.—What judgment, Sir, must an indifferent spectator form of all these discordant scenes?

How Jews are treated at Rome, I little know; only that they are in great oppression, since they are obliged, under pain of fine and corporal punishment, to assist at certain lectures read every Saturday for their instruction. (a) But this I know full well; that if in *France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, or Flanders*, a clergyman either secular or regular should dare openly to avow his dissent from the established religion, however irreproachable his manners, or peaceable his conduct, he would end his days in confinement, if he did not secure his liberty by flight. (b) Account as you please for this undisputable fact; it is a Policy which leaves but little room for freedom either of discussion or of action. Yet this is a body of men innumera-

(a) Description historique et Critique de L'Italie, par Mr. L'Abbé Richard, in 6 vols. Paris, 1769.—I have elsewhere, through inadvertency, cited this work under the title of “Voyages D'Italie.”

(b) It has lately been asserted in one of our periodical publications, that it does not certainly appear that F. Courayer was ever cut off from the communion of the Church of Rome. The contrary is a most undoubted fact. For, besides that the circular letter which the Abbot of S. Genevieve sent to all the houses of that congregation declares that because he had advanced many errors contrary to faith, “he had incurred the major excommunication;” the sentiments which he advanced in his annotations upon Fra. Paolo's history, and which he maintained till his dying day, made him actually incur that censure “ipso facto” without requiring any formal promulgation of it. See the “Pieces justificatives” at the end of F. Courayer's Apology—the “Declaration de mes derniers sentimens sur les différens dogmes de la Religion,” lately given to the public by Dr. Bell—and Collet, or any other of the Roman Catholic Casuists.

ble beyond belief in Catholic Countries, and the most likely, from their application to books, and leisure for reflection, occasionally to alter their sentiments—although, indeed, we may well presume that restraints like these will ever prove “*an overmatch even for uncommon resolution and conviction;*”(a) especially where a previous oath has been exacted that they will never, while breath remains, depart from any doctrine of the Church of *Rome*(b).

In *Spain* and *Portugal* that liberty of thought and action which the natural rights of man entitle him to claim, is confessedly reduced within the most narrow boundaries;—and is not this intolerance? Can there be any *impropriety* in fixing the stigma of *persecution* upon a nation where sixty hundred thousand Christians are forced by the continual dread of tortures, to *believe* implicitly the tenets, and submit to all the discipline of the national establishment, however irrational and oppressive they may think it?(c) And wherefore should we not take our ideas of the Catholic system rather from a country where, being under no restraint, its genuine spirit is likely to be discovered, than from a country where those who profess it are not an hundredth part so numerous, where it scarce dares lift its head, where it is practised only as far as circumstances will allow, and where it receives a tincture not its own, from the soil on which it grows?

In the religious conflicts in France you admit that “*the greatest atrocity of conduct seems rather to belong to the Catholic party*”—that the Hugonots were headed by men whose cause received a dignity from the splendor of their virtues; and that they never merited the cruel reverse of fortune which they experienced at the revocation of the edict of *Nantes*. All this is true. No language can describe the

(a) *State and Behaviour*, page 117.

(b) “*Eandem integram et immaculatam, usque ad extremum vitæ Spiritum, constantissime, deo adjuvante, retinere et confiteri . . . Spondeo, Voveo, ac Juro.*” *Form. fidei Jussu Pii IV. ex decreto Sac. Con. Trid. excerpta.*

(c) On the subject of Toleration in foreign countries there are some very just Reflections in the *Monthly Review* for November, 1787, occasioned by Dr. Butler’s Reply to the Charges of the Bishop of Cloyne.



sufferings of this devoted people. (a) Yet the grievances under which they still labour are great and various: Where, according to your own confession, children may be ravished from their parents, to be educated in the principles of *Rome*: where Protestants are deprived of the common rights of burial amongst other Christians; and where you yourself have seen “*five thousand people assembled to worship their maker in a retired valley, exposed to the rays of a scorching sun, and even this was illegal!*” Notwithstanding you so severely arraign the *absurd* laws of your own country, and lament your slavery in this “*land of boasted freedom,*” how different is the treatment that the English Catholics have met with here for this century back, from the barbarous usage which the foreign Protestants have experienced during the same period in *Dauphiny, Languedoc, the Vivarais,* and other places in the South of France? And no one can wonder at the severity of such proceedings, who has seen the declaration given at *Verfailles* in 1728, and renewed in 1745. By this it is declared that all religious meetings whatever of the *reformed* are prohibited under pain of the gallies for life and confiscation of goods—that all amongst them who preach or discharge any other pastoral function shall be put to death—that all who know of such ministers, and do not inform against them, shall become liable to the gallies—that all their children shall be carried to the parish Church to be baptised, within four and twenty hours after they are born—that none shall send their children to be educated out of the kingdom, under pain of a yearly fine of two hundred and seventy pounds sterling, or more, in proportion to their abilities and estates—that all sick persons, of what state or quality soever, particularly those who have heretofore professed the pretended reformed Religion, shall, in private and without witness, be exhorted to receive the sacraments of the Church (b): that if they refuse them, and declare openly that they are resolved to

(a) See the “*Plaintes des Protestans cruellement opprimés dans le royaume de France,*” Cologne, 1686, by Mr. Claude: And Pajon’s “*Remarques sur l’avertissement Pastoral du Clergé de France.*” Amsterdam, 1685, re-printed in 1731 and 1761.

(b) The cruel vexations that the great Aubertin was exposed to in his last moments from the Curé de S. Sulpice and others, may be seen in Blondel’s Preface to his famous Treatise “*De Eucharistia.*”

die in the Protestant Religion, they shall, if they recover, be sentenced to perpetual banishment, with confiscation of goods ; But if, on the contrary, they die in this wretched disposition, their memory shall be branded and arraigned, and every thing be forfeited which they possessed—that no Attorney, Physician, Apothecary, Midwife, Bookseller, or Printer shall be permitted to exercise his calling without conforming to the Catholic Religion, &c. What, Sir, would become of your Religion in half a century, were the same restrictions, penalties, and prohibitions enforced in England with regard to Christenings, Schools, Marriages, Preachers, Meetings, &c, as are contained in the 18 articles of the above mentioned declaration? With what face then can any Roman Catholic dare to talk of tolerance at all, when in *France, Spain, Italy, Portugal*, and their dependances, the chief establishments of his Religion, Protestants are still so severely handled, or meet with so little countenance ; and where the minds of their own subjects are so fettered with penal restraints? Are these nations part of that “*splendid groupe*” in which England is presumed to make so “*sordid a figure*”?

As for *England*, I would wish at any time to say little about it on the present business. Much have I said already to reconcile the minds of Protestants to your persons, and to soften the voice of prejudice against you, in a variety of articles imputed to your charge. (a) It was an homage due to truth, which I

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have

(a) I have asserted frequently that it is no part of a Roman Catholic's faith to believe that the Pope can dispense with all oaths and engagements whatever ; and that, on the contrary, they hold this doctrine to be both impious and absurd. To this it has been replied, that they have in every age laid claim to this extraordinary prerogative, and that even the great and good Ganganelli reduced it often to practice, as appeared from the Bull which he gave on the suppression of the Jesuits, and the many other thousand similar grants which he made to individuals, by which he annulled the most solemn oaths and vows repeatedly renewed, and released them from all their obligations of poverty, continency or obedience. † But it should be observed, that these dispensations regarded such cases alone in which no third person was concerned, and affected only the private duties of his children ; and that in every other circumstance, this dispensing power has never been generally considered in any other light than as an usurped pretension.

I had also said that the maxims of “keeping no faith with Heretics,” and that “sovereigns excommunicated by Rome may be deposed

have never wished to recall. But you would have rather chosen your society to appear as a body of inoffensive, loyal, humane, and liberal men, groaning beneath the iron hand of oppression merely for conscience sake; and I cannot say that I had ever reason to consider them precisely in so favourable a point of view. You "*suspect*," you say, that the attachment of the *Hugonots* to the French government "*is not*

posed and murdered by their subjects" were disowned by Catholics; and, as far as my observations extended, were ever treated with derision and contempt. In contradiction to this assertion it is now objected, that the letter of the Archbishop of Rhodes who had the superintendance over the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland in 1768, is a manifest proof that these absurd and dangerous sentiments are not yet erased from the wild conceits of some of the foreign clergy—Since the Pope's Legate therein most positively asserts that "to declare abominable and pernicious the above-mentioned doctrines is a most intolerable sentiment." That this is the real sense of *Ghilini's Letter*, they say appears most evidently, by comparing both that, and the oath itself to which it relates, with the awkward apologies of those who have attempted to explain them; as the "*doctrina abominabilis et perniciofa*," on account of which he declares the test oath is "*prorsus intolerabile . . . in tota sua extensione illicitum*," and not obligatory in conscience whenever it is already taken, relates equally to both the above-mentioned doctrines. \* I have been at the trouble of examining the letter, oath, and apologies; and must acknowledge that the objection is fairly stated. But I again reply, that it is unfair to require that any society of men should be made responsible for the sentiments of any individual, however great or learned;—though at the same time I think the circumstance of this official letter of the Pope's Legate, a very forcible argument against the security of Oral Tradition. I likewise thought it not a little striking, whilst reflecting upon this subject, that although the sentiments inculcated by the Titular Bishop of Ossory in his "*Hibernia Dominicana*" were reprobated in Ireland, by the Bishops assembled at Thurles in 1775, † yet we do not find that they were ever disavowed at Rome; any more than the personal infallibility of the Pope, a doctrine long maintained in Italy, and which was surely a most "*obstinate error*" in a matter nearly connected with faith.

† \* † See on these several points respectively, Dr. Wharton's *Address*, &c. Philadelphia, 1785—A candid and impartial *Sketch of the Life of Pope Clement XIV*, vol. 3, page 35—The present *State of the Church of Ireland*, by Richard Lord Bishop of Cloyne, seventh edition. London, 1787—A *Justification of the Tenets of the Roman Catholic Religion*, and a refutation of the charges brought against its clergy by the Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Cloyne. By Dr. James Butler. London, 1787, &c.

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*the most sincere.*" What, Sir, is your *secret motive* (a) to disbelieve the most authentic declarations of their great national synod in 1744, assembled purposely to *confirm and strengthen themselves in the inviolable fidelity they owed to their King?* And as their grievances have since that time been "*daily lightened,*" it is natural to believe their sentiments are at least equally liberal and patriotic as they were in those unpropitious days. But if one may judge by *countenances*, or by an acquaintance of many years with the opinions and wishes of individuals, I even more than *suspect*, in spite of all your plausible assurances, that the Catholics in *England* have generally been as little attached to our government, as the Hugonots are to theirs; especially before they renounced in 1778 the mad allegiance to the house of *Stuarts*, with which till then they were intoxicated. However, notwithstanding all past occurrences, and the many expressions in your writings which I think most highly censurable and injudicious, I am thoroughly persuaded that many who now seem to take the lead in your society, persons who from their rank in life as well as from their abilities both natural and improved are well entitled to that preeminence, are equally distinguishable by their liberal views and tolerant spirit, as they are by an unfeigned attachment to the civil constitution of this kingdom. The revolution is singular, and sudden. But if the success of their endeavours is equal to the zeal with which they have embarked in thus reforming the ideas of their community at large, we may justly hope that in a short course of years every odious distinction between Catholic and Protestant will gradually die away, and universal harmony prevail between every different society of Christians, whatever peculiar tenets in Religion they may still think proper to adopt. From the recollection of past circumstances, as well as from the prevalence of some peculiar notions, it must be a work of time,

(a) "I suspect there must be some secret motive for this incredulity (of the public, which with great humanity always refuses to give credit to the assertions of the Catholics); For it is the disposition of a virtuous mind not to doubt the assertions of honest men. The liar thinks no man can speak truth—because he never does it himself." *State and Behaviour*, page 142. Believe me, Sir, "*Hæ nugæ seria ducunt in Mala*"—You have much too frequently indulged yourself in such invidious and wanton reflections.

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But if no improper opposition on *our side*, and no imprudence on *yours* should prove a bar to the full accomplishment of this desirable event, I hope it will produce a cordiality between us, which till now has on either side, I fear, been very insincere.—I forget, however, that your *reflections* are my present object. (a)

Amongst the circumstances which render the situation of the English Catholics peculiarly hard, you mention one which the foreign Protestants cannot alledge, namely, that when the reformation began, you "*were in the possession of your Religion;*" and consequently that we "*dispossessed you of your inheritance*" and are now *fattening in your seats*. (b) As your people are so often reminded of this circumstance, give me also leave to observe that neither do you seem even yet to have relinquished your title to them, nor your hopes to repossess them, however distant the prospect may appear. For in the English convents abroad, and among your missionaries in this country, you still keep up the ideal names of Cathedral Priors, Deans, and Canons in those Churches which you formerly held, to prevent prescription, and be in readiness to fill your ancient stalls, should any fortunate alteration of government and religion take place. (c) Indeed, it is not easy to resign such treasures without reluctance and regret. For the lands which formerly belonged to the Abbey of St *Alban* are said at this day to be worth 200,000—and those of *Glastonbury*, 300,000 pounds a year :

(a) On those several subjects which are more particularly connected with the history of the Reformation in England, such as the supremacy of our King, and that of the Bishop of Rome—the deposing power which this latter assumed—the affair of the divorce—the state, utility, and suppression of the Monasteries—the Alienation of the Church and Abbey Lands, and the security of those who now possess them—the extortions of the Court of Rome—the persecutions under Mary and Elizabeth—the characters of Pole, Thomas-a-Becket, and Cranmer—the Council of Trent—the principles and practices of the reformed &c, much useful information may be found in Dr. Neve's "*Animadversions on Mr. Phillips's Life of Reginald Pole,*" and in the excellent "*Review*" of the same, by Gloucester Ridley. See also Bishop Burnet's *History of the English Reformation*, and the "*Collectanea Curiosa,*" Vol. 2. N. 13, which contains a defence of several passages in the Bishop's work, which had been unjustly censured by Mr. Collier.

(b) *Address to Protestant Dissenters*; page 41.

(c) If my memory misgives me not, I think I was myself, when a Member of that Society, a titular Prebendary of Durham.—*O quantum est in rebus inane!*

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The recollection therefore that these possessions once were yours might justify some resentment when this wondrous revolution first took place. But as all temporal property is ever in a fluctuating state, and your Clergy will scarce put in their claim as to a *paternal* inheritance, these considerations may well be laid aside, after such a lapse of time. To be for ever reviving such ideas as these amongst your people, is not the way to stifle our mutual animosities. Yet the former prosperity of your society, and their present sufferings, are frequently held up to their view by your writers. Though I had expressed my detestation of the Savage riots in 1780 in the strongest terms, nevertheless, because I slightly mentioned the various sufferings of Protestants in Catholic countries, you accuse me of intolerance; whilst even so late as 1784, a Catholic biographer has been seen to amplify upon the *persecutions* which you have within these few years suffered in England, through more than seventy pages of his work (a)—and this, at a time when an act of Parliament had just been granted in your favour, and when the minds of the established clergy, as well as the civil power, seemed perfectly inclined to give you gradually every kind of relief which the prejudices of the times would bear. Even you yourself, although you wish us to observe that your society has never had “*recourse to violence*” in their defence, yet seem to regret that your ancestors did not play “*a better game*,” (b) (the consequences of which misconduct “their children have severely felt”) by openly rebelling against their Sovereign, to redress the injuries under which they groaned. (c)—“*Man surely is a partial being!*”

CONCLUSION.—I am now at length arrived at the *Conclusion* of your *Reflections*; and notwithstanding your frequent boast of candour, fairness, and freedom from prepossessions of every kind, I cannot look back upon these, and the several other writings which you have given to the public, without considering them as in no wise entitled to this very favourable de-

(a) The Life of the Ven. and Right Rev. Richard Challoner Bishop of Debra and Apostolic Vicar. By M. James Barnard. London, Coghlan, 1784.

(b) Preface to State and Behaviour, page viii.

(c) Preface to second edition of Ditto, page xxiii. Your general reasoning applies equally well to similar circumstances in every period of the English History.

scription. The Religion, Policy, Government, Ministry, and Magistrates of your country have alternately become the objects of your censure; (a) and the short sketch you have given us of its history is intermixed with too much satire either to please or to persuade an attentive reader. For although on one hand the *fair present* (b) you have made us is offered in a style that breathes nothing but candour, toleration, love, honour, and attachment; yet, on the other, you repeatedly insinuate very opposite sentiments. I will nevertheless, in justice to you and to my own feelings, acknowledge that I am satisfied your sentiments are much more uniformly tolerant and loyal than the language of your writings may seem to indicate. In a word, I believe you loyal, patriotic, and sincere in your professions to your country; and in the foregoing remarks have rather reviewed the *writer* than the *man*:—But I cannot join the characters of *fair* and *liberal* in the same unqualified manner; as the *Reflections* now before me appear a real *abatement* to your title in these respects.

As you had not read the *Postscript* or Appendix to my Appeal, it would, I think, have been more becoming to sum up the evidence against my work in a less dictatorial style. Though not essentially connected with the foregoing part, especially with regard to Mr. Pilling's *Caveat*, you might have indulged it with a cursory perusal, and let them both have "*floated on the surface of your mind*" together. This petulant remark, for it really deserves no other name, seems added to ward off the reproach of raising accusations against me, which, if you were supposed to have seen my Appendix, must have appeared ungenerous and groundless in the extreme.—Or was it only a scornful flourish of contempt? The matter it contained was surely of sufficient importance to have suspended, for a few hours at least, your attention to the life and loves of *Heloise*!

I never wished you to say "*soft things*" in your animadversions upon my Appeal; nor did I stand in awe of your asperity. But, for your own sake, for mine, and for the

(a) *State and Behaviour*, pages 4, 5, 24, 43, 53, 54, 57, 59, 103, 112, 121, 124, 136, 141, 189, first edition.

(b) *Reflections*, page 5.

fake of truth and honesty, I could have wished you had dealt more fairly on this occasion, both with the public and your opponent—sensible as you are that *insinuations* have often “*a worse impression on the mind*” than the most express assertions. (a) So far, nevertheless, am I from thinking that you have made any observations which are likely to “*crumble into dust the substance*” of my Appeal, that you have in many points given it the strongest, though not perhaps the most cordial support. You complain of the “*wilderness of matter*” which I have accumulated. This should have appeared a trifling consideration to a person who had so long laboured in roads that were “*nearly choaked up with rubbish,*” whilst he perused the voluminous compilations of the Controvertists of the two last centuries. And, after all, this *wilderness of matter*, in which is comprised almost every thing relating to the Controversy between the reformed and Roman Churches, was contained in one single octavo volume! (b)

You have intimated that it was your wish to bring your writings before the public in a form that might raise some attention; that you had studied the amusement of your readers, and aimed at some address to interest them in your performance. Thus far, you possibly may boast your triumph. But yet I think it is a triumph which as a man you should be ashamed of, and as a Christian look back upon with regret. As for argument, you have dedicated but few pages to it. Whether these be found conclusive, I must leave to others to determine. With such talents and such acquirements as you possess, it would be extraordinary indeed if you could not draw up a tale which would keep that creed in countenance which you have so long assented to and taught—And this is the utmost you will ever be able to effect, with all your ingenuity and learning. You have said repeatedly that what your Church teaches must unavoidably be true in some sense or other, and an habit of forty

(a) Address to Protestant Dissenters, page 54.

(b) The learned Dallæus has left us above two thousand long pages in 4to. upon “the object of Religious Adoration” only; Arnould, three bulky volumes on the Eucharist; I have a Roman Catholic Catechism in six large tomes of many hundred pages each; and you yourself have written a more expensive work than mine, upon the subject of Immaterialism only!



years has warranted the assertion. The impressions made by time are ever deeply fixed, particularly if stamped in early years; and are erased with difficulty even from the stoutest minds. It cannot therefore be a matter of surprise, if reason, or what is called reason, should be disposed to give its most solemn approbation to that which seems to others the most irrational. (a) This probably it is which on either side gives that conclusiveness to our mutual reasoning, which we cannot discern in that of our opponent. How could it otherwise be possible that such opposite convictions should take place upon a subject which lies within the sphere of common sense, and upon which it is so much our interest not to be deceived by any partial views, or any unworthy motives? We have seen that sometimes on a sudden the most unexpected revolutions take place. Should this be ever your case, I hope that your conduct will in every point be regulated by your convictions only, and not by the *construction* which prejudice or ill nature may be likely to put upon it.

Once freed from the restraint of authority, you say that you would adopt a more rational faith than mine. This, Sir, is a privilege I do not boast of. My Creed and hopes are, I trust, founded upon the best authority, the written word of God. As to your query how long the Established Church will hold me, I will only say that it will retain me in its bosom, till I discover a better:—one that maintains a more equal medium between fanaticism, superstition, and indifference; where the doctrines are more conformable to revelation, and the discipline, to reason; where fewer defects are found, and a free and liberal mind has a fairer field to range in. These are, I apprehend, the dispositions in which every good Christian ought to be: And these are the motives which attach me to the Church of England. In some points relative to morality and religion both you and I submit, although we do not pretend to assert that they are perfectly free from all obscurity. A man is sometimes called upon to act, though partly in the shade. Complete evidence on each occurrence, or absolute perfection in the object of his choice, are seldom within his reach. If he sees enough to guide him to that which seemeth best, he may, nay often

(a) Life of Abeillard, page 43.

must proceed : and it would be a ridiculous excuse for a man to remain irresolute and unactive, that possibly there might exist a more perfect plan of action than that which he had adopted. I was not unacquainted with the principles of other societies dissenting from that of Rome ; but they did not meet my approbation. And I still gave that the preference, in the service of which I am now engaged, although I had seen the "Free and candid disquisitions," the "Essay on spirit," the "Confessional," the "Apology of *Ben Mordecai*" and most of the writings of Dr. *Priestley* upon this subject. It was indeed my wish to adhere to an Episcopal Church, which retained, as far as circumstances would admit, that form of *Hierarchy* which seems to have been established in the most primitive ages. My choice, however, was neither precipitate nor unreflected. The sole motive which prevented my conforming sooner, was the article of *Subscription*, so generally talked of, and yet so little understood by many who are most severe in passing their censures on it. This for a while detained me in suspense, till I had opportunity and leisure to discuss the argument with a person both of literary and religious eminence. My decision may be wrong ; but it was not inconsiderately made—and I have not hitherto seen any reason to apprehend that I shall ever regret the step I have taken.

To your *Reflections* you have subjoined a brief exposition of your principles, which you wish me to meet and compare with my own creed. By the references at the bottom of the page it seems to have been compiled at a time when the scriptures claimed a greater authority and respect than you are now willing to allow them. Be this, however, as it may ; I do not see that I am called upon by present circumstances, to state the articles of my belief ;—more especially as this is entirely foreign to the point in debate. What either you or I believe, the public is little concerned to know. But whether the doctrines of the Reformed or of the Roman Church be most conformable to the dictates of reason and the principles of revealed Religion, is a subject into which many Christians may be deeply interested to inquire. Convinced how greatly the mind of man is warped by early habits, and satisfied that every system involves some difficulties and obscurities which

it will never in all likelyhood be possible [to remove equally to the satisfaction of all mankind, I cannot expect that *my* creed would meet with universal approbation, were I even to detail it in its utmost extent. But yet it seems to me most fully evident, that I have said enough to discredit *yours*. In this persuasion I conclude my Review;—wishing you every possible success in that Reform which you seem so desirous to introduce. Whether it arises from *your* endeavours or *mine*, I shall equally rejoice.

I am, Sir,

With real sentiments of Friendship,

And every best wish,

Sincerely your's,

JOHN HAWKINS.



