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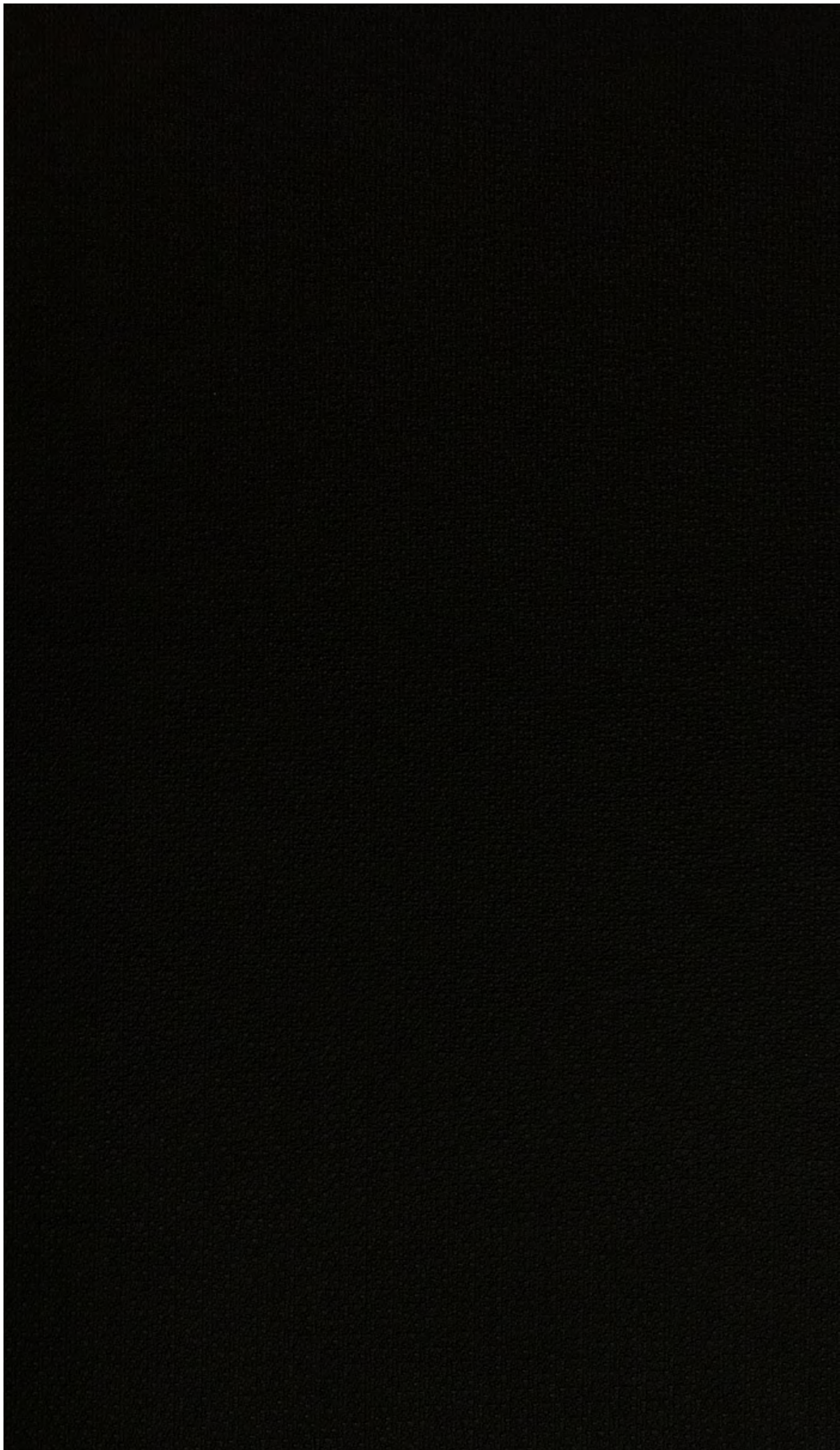
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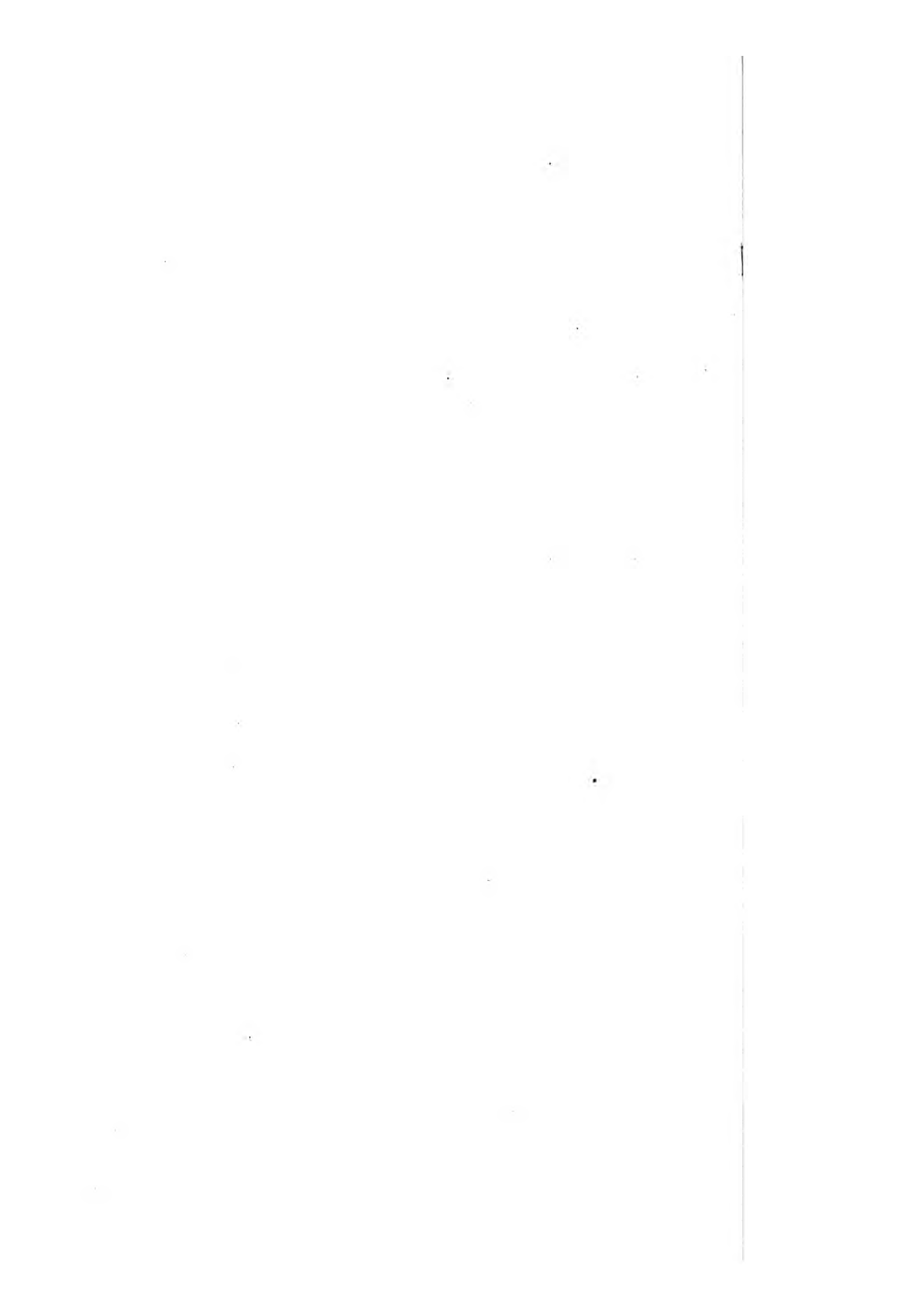
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A

# D E T E C T I O N

OF THE

## DANGEROUS TENDENCY,

BOTH FOR

## CHRISTIANITY AND PROTESTANCY,

Of a SERMON, said to be preached before an  
ASSEMBLY of DIVINES, by G. C. D. D. *On the  
Spirit of the Gospel.*

*Thou speakest against thy brother, thou slanderest thine own mother's  
son;----but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.  
Pfal. l. 20. 21.*

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By a Member of the ALETHEIAN CLUB.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for the ALETHEIAN CLUB;

And sold by J. P. COGHLAN in DUKE'S-STREET,  
Near GROSVENOR-SQUARE,

M, DCC, LXXI.

13000

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Bot. from California

South



## I N T R O D U C T I O N.



**A**MONG the many Literary Societies in our great metropolis, for the improvement of useful knowledge, there is one, *The Aletheian Club*, whose principal aim is, in the most impartial manner, and without bias or prejudice, to search after truth in religious matters. A Sermon lately published in North-Britain, and said to be the production of the celebrated author of the *Dissertation on Miracles*, fell into the hands of this Society. Finding, on perusal, that it contained many things dangerous to true religion, and that the author had used the utmost efforts of art, and all the eloquence he was master of, to gild the pill, and the more securely communicate the poison to his readers; they thought it an object worthy their attention to detect the dangerous tendency of this Sermon, and undeceive the unwary readers; many of whom they had heard, in its native country, had received it with the highest esteem and approbation. The charge of doing this they committed to Staurophilus, one of their members, who was then residing at some distance from London; informing him, at the same time, of the reception this Sermon had met



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with, and begging a speedy compliance with their request. His answer, in a letter to the Club, is here presented to the public. The pressing desire of his friends for a speedy answer hindered him from making a regular examination of the whole Sermon; he has therefore confined himself to those parts which seemed most exceptionable in it, and productive of the most dangerous consequences. Whatever opinion Dissenters may have of the Sermon and its Detection, it is not doubted, but all true members of the Church of England, and all sincere and candid lovers of truth, will be very well pleased to see the truths of religion vindicated from the aspersions of so dangerous an enemy.

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D E T E C T I O N, &c.

*In a Letter to the ALETHEIAN CLUB.*

GENTLEMEN,

I Received your very kind epistle, accompanying Dr C———'s sermon, *On the spirit of the gospel*, and am obliged to you for the honour you do me in referring the giving an answer to that performance to me. I have indeed, at present, but very little spare time for works of that kind; yet, as it is not easy for me to refuse complying with the solicitations of my friends, and especially of those for whom I have so great a regard as I have for you, I have endeavoured to steal a few moments from my other avocations; and herewith send you such obvious thoughts as occurred to me upon the subject.

I am not a little surpris'd at the general approbation which you say this piece has met with; for I own, it does not at all strike me in a light that seems to merit so great esteem; on the contrary,

A



the idea I had formed of Dr C———l, from his dissertation on miracles, and from the character which he universally possesses as a man of great parts and solid learning, is such, that, from a serious examination of this sermon, of its consequences and tendency, I should rather be apt to suspect, that it is a spurious piece; and that its author had only borrowed the Doctor's name for interested views. It is in this light then, that I would wish to attack it, in the following observations: Namely, as giving you my reasons, why I cannot allow myself to think it the work of Dr C———l, rather than as appearing to you in the character of an antagonist to so great a man; so that my design is more to vindicate the Doctor, from what I think unworthy of his name, than to combat his opinions:

You tell me, this sermon is looked upon, by all who have perused it, as “ the production of  
 “ a candid, of a humane, of a charitable heart;  
 “ as tending to establish the Christian religion in  
 “ its native purity, and, what is of still greater  
 “ importance in a Protestant country, as giving  
 “ a fatal and irrecoverable blow to Popery.” It may be so, my friends: But, in my humble opinion, it will not be long able to support so glorious a character. The generality of mankind are but superficial readers; and superficial readers, you know, are apt to be dazzled with the cursory perusal of a book genteelly written, especially when it appears under a celebrated name; for, under such a sanction, bold assertions easily pass for proofs, and sly insinuations for solid reasonings; but when the run is over, and the charms of novelty a little dispelled, reason will be apt to resume its throne, and a little serious reflection discover the

delusion. Of this, we have seen many examples, in similar cases; and, I dare venture to say, the present sermon, *on the spirit of the gospel*, will soon add one to the number. For my own part, the more I consider it, the more I am convinced, that it deserves a character directly opposite to what you say it has met with. And, I think, it will be no very difficult matter to show, as, in the following observations, I shall endeavour to do, that the author, whatever fine professions of charity he makes, is void of all charity; that he establishes tenets directly opposite to the express words of the Holy Scripture, and dangerous to Christianity itself; and that, instead of giving a blow to Popery, he has put arms in the hands of Roman-Catholicks; which, if they please to use them, as it is not to be doubted but they will, if this piece falls into their hands, may be of more real advantage to them, than if he had written directly in their favours. Now, as I can never suspect Dr C———l capable of a design of this kind, and have too high an opinion of his parts to suppose a production of such a nature could ever have escaped his pen unobserved; for this reason, I can never allow myself to think, that this sermon is really his; but must look upon it as the production of some malevolent heart, of latitudinarian principles, no less an enemy to Christianity in general, than to Protestantism in particular.

To proceed in order, then, in my animadversions upon this piece, I begin with the last of the three articles of which I have impeached it; namely, To show the great advantages which it puts in the hands of the Roman-Catholicks; be-

cause this point, being once settled, the others will appear more distinctly. In the year 1766, a great many publications appeared in several of our London papers, complaining of the great increase of Popery in that metropolis, and proposing different schemes for preventing so great an evil. A gentleman, who styled himself a *real freethinker*, considering the many disadvantages that Popery lies under in these kingdoms, and justly surpris'd, that, under such disadvantages, it should have any being at all amongst us, much less be upon the increasing hand, set himself impartially to investigate the causes of this odd phenomenon. His observations he communicated to the public, in a series of letters published in the Ledger, one of our weekly papers, which were that same year collected together, and printed by themselves in a small volume, with several other papers upon the same subject, under the title of, *A free examination into the common methods employed to prevent the growth of Popery*. The author of this little piece handles his subject in so genteel a manner, with such clearness and precision, and, at the same time, shows so much candour and humanity, in all he says, that it has justly gained him the approbation and esteem of all who have read it. The grounds upon which this ingenious writer proceeds are these: He supposes, as an axiom, which no Protestant will call in question, *That the Protestant cause is the cause of truth and of the gospel; and that of Popery, the cause of superstition and error*. He observes, as another undoubted principle, *That it can never be lawful for any party or church to controul the truth, or consecrate falsehood; and that falsehood can never be a lawful, or indeed an effectual means, to*



*defend the truth.* He takes notice, in the third place, as a notorious fact, *That all worldly motives of interest, honours, public favour, or the like, are entirely against Papists in the kingdoms of great Britain and Ireland.* Fourthly, He supposes, which I dare say none will refuse, *That the Protestant clergy, for learning, address and eloquence, by far outshone those of the Roman-Catholick communion, at least in these countries:* And lastly, He considers it as a proposition, as obvious as any in Euclid, *That truth and reason, equally supported, are, by vast odds, an over-match for falsehood and nonsense.* From these undoubted principles, he expresses his just surprize, how it is possible that Popery, under such immense disadvantages, should ever be able to make any kind of progress, or even maintain its ground without being utterly overwhelmed! And, he justly concludes, *That the cause of this surprizing mystery cannot possibly be on the Popish side which lies under every restraint; but must certainly be owing to some fatal mismanagement of their cause by the Protestants, and to some gross neglect of the advantages they enjoy.* He then proceeds to inquire, what these defects are in the procedure of Protestants against the Roman-Catholicks, which contribute so much to keep these last in being. He points out severals; and shews, in the most satisfactory manner, the fatal consequences they have to the Protestant interest, and the great advantage which they give their opponents.

Amongst the false steps made by Protestants in the establishment and support of their religion, which enables Popery to make a stand before it, this judicious author gives, with great reason, a principal place to that ungenerous practice, so

common among Protestants of all denominations in this country, of rendering Roman-Catholicks odious in the eyes of their countrymen, by calumny and misrepresentation; that this is too too often practised, is an uncontestable fact, of which I shall, by and by, give you some glaring examples; and the evil tendency of it, is set down with great precision by the above writer. In his third letter, he expresses himself thus: “ A settled  
 “ design and determined drift to render any  
 “ man or party odious to the public, and obnoxious  
 “ to the laws, may attain its end while the  
 “ passion is heated and kept up: but in the human  
 “ mind there is a reflux when the passion  
 “ is cooled, that brings it back as far to opposite  
 “ views and sentiments; and we are apt to  
 “ look upon those who have been too warmly  
 “ accused, as objects of particular pity and favour.  
 “ In cases of controversy and litigation,  
 “ it has always been found fatal to give the reins  
 “ to passion; in so much, that it does mischief  
 “ and wrong even to the cause of truth to defend  
 “ it by prevarication and falsehood, because  
 “ it gives a skilful adversary an opportunity of  
 “ raising a prejudice against the truth, by exposing  
 “ the prevarication and calumny of the  
 “ defence.”

This most judicious remark he goes on to exemplify in his fourth letter, in the following manner: “ Misrepresentation cannot serve to convert the Papist, but rather to confirm him effectually in his own opinions, as well as in his prejudices against the reformation; and it gives a candid discerning Protestant, a suspicion of the integrity of his brethren, and of the cause they defend by such unworthy means——The



“ ingenious expedient of forming and publish-  
 “ ing tenets for Papists, which they neither  
 “ believe nor teach, but the very reverse of  
 “ what they inculcate in their sermons, cate-  
 “ chisms and rules of faith, is ludicrous enough:  
 “ A man is introduced upon the stage with a  
 “ very good effect, who is persuaded to profess  
 “ himself a physician against his own knowledge;  
 “ and the comedy is certainly equally high, to  
 “ attempt to make Romanists believe, that they  
 “ are mistaken in their own tenets, and that  
 “ they actually believe what they do not believe.  
 “ If these wise creed-makers had combined to  
 “ make the world imagine, that the Popish tenets  
 “ were impregnable, and could not be attacked  
 “ with any hope of success, unless they were  
 “ misrepresented, I defy them to take any other  
 “ course half so effectual. The watchful and in-  
 “ defatigable Popish priest, who lets no advan-  
 “ tage slip, makes a most unmerciful use of this  
 “ childish stratagem. He does not fail to call up-  
 “ on his followers as witnesses, that he never  
 “ preached rebellion or disloyalty to them; but,  
 “ on the contrary, took every occasion to im-  
 “ press them with the principle of passive obe-  
 “ dience to the constitution, and of gratitude  
 “ and affection to a king; to whose lenity it is  
 “ owing, that they are treated as subjects, and  
 “ enjoy the common rights of humanity. He  
 “ appeals to them, if they were ever taught,  
 “ that it was lawful or dispensable to break faith  
 “ with hereticks; he cannot fail observing to  
 “ them, that even Protestants have no need of  
 “ witnesses to this point, seeing that the whole  
 “ kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland,  
 “ are witnesses to it; for the Catholicks of these na-

“ tions suffer publicly the hardships of the laws  
 “ by their sincerity. They pay double taxes  
 “ here; they suffer by informations, incapacities  
 “ and restraints, in Ireland; they bear the loss of  
 “ property and power; they bear insults and a  
 “ variety of disadvantages, merely because *they*  
 “ *cannot dispense with their integrity*, or make  
 “ profession to those they esteem hereticks, con-  
 “ trary to what they think.—The people the  
 “ priest appeals to, are perfect judges in this  
 “ case; they know what doctrines they have  
 “ been taught; and the conclusion they natural-  
 “ ly make from this absurd dispute, is, that the re-  
 “ formation can attack Popery only by misrepre-  
 “ sentation and imposition. Is it not provoking  
 “ to see Protestants take pains to raise prejudi-  
 “ ces in the candid and honest part of mankind  
 “ against themselves, and draw a suspicion on  
 “ their cause by the disingenuous artifices un-  
 “ der which they attack Popery?”

So far this candid and ingenious writer, whose  
 sentiments upon this subject, I have here given  
 you in his own words, both because they have  
 already been published to the world, and unan-  
 swered in our grand metropolis itself, and be-  
 cause they display in very striking colours, the  
 point I want to establish; *viz.* the gross absurdity  
 of attacking Popery by misrepresentation and  
 calumny, and the immense advantages such  
 conduct gives the Roman-Catholicks over their  
 Protestant adversaries.

After such a public and recent detection of the  
 folly and injustice of these unwarrantable mea-  
 sures, and of the fatal consequences they pro-  
 duce, one should naturally imagine, that every  
 honest heart, every man of candour and huma-

nity, would disdain to tread in such perverse paths, or prostitute his pen to such vile purposes; with what indignation then, must every generous breast be fired to see a sermon published to the world, under the respectable name of Dr C——, and said to be preached before an assembly of Protestant divines; which, on perusal, he finds to be fraught with the grossest calumnies and most unjust misrepresentations; and, at the same time, vainly pretending to vindicate the purity, the charity, the sanctity, of the Christian religion by such unchristian methods?

It would be an endless work, were I to make a regular discussion of every thing exceptionable which this sermon contains. I shall, therefore, confine myself to those parts of it which more directly concur to prove the charge I have lodged against it; and, I proceed to take notice of some of the most remarkable instances of calumny advanced in it, pointing out the immense hurt they do to the Protestant cause, both by confirming Papists in their own sentiments, and by carrying over Protestants to their side.

The first instance of this kind is what we find page 25; where, after having given us a full description of the nature of superstition, and shown, that it always arises from an ignorance or misapprehension of God, and has always more or less of demonism at the bottom, in order to bring in the Papists as guilty of this horrid monster, he proceeds thus: “ There have been times, and  
 “ there are places, in which some of the priest-  
 “ hood have maintained, that ignorance is the  
 “ mother of devotion. Have not such unwarily  
 “ betrayed, by this adage, to what family their

“ devotion belongs? Can it be related to that  
 “ religion, where the knowledge of God is of  
 “ more account than burnt-offerings? We must  
 “ own indeed, that its affinity to that worship  
 “ which Pagan Athens anciently paid to the un-  
 “ known God, cannot reasonably be disputed.”

I do not know, gentlemen, what emotions you may feel, on reading this passage; but, for my part, it seems to involve in its bosom such an insult on candour and humanity, and much more on Christian charity, that it fills me with indignation! Though, the author here, in order to strike the deeper, puts on an air of modesty, and seems to accuse only some of the priest-hood; yet, as it is a common cant, in every body's mouth, that the Popish clergy do all they can to keep their people in ignorance, in order thereby, to support their own usurped power, and hinder their errours from being discovered; it is easy to see, that under this show of modesty, he brings his accusation with greater force against that whole body; and, I dare say, if you were to ask any of his ordinary readers, whom they think he means by the expression, *some of the priest-hood?* They would, without hesitation, answer, *the Papists*. Here then we have an accusation of the deepest dye charged upon that whole set of people; and the argument, by which they are proved guilty, when put in plain English, is this; *Superstition always rises from an ignorance or misapprehension of God, and a perversion of the sense of right and wrong; and has always something of demonism at bottom: But the Papists hold as a maxim, that ignorance is the mother of devotion, Therefore their devotion is nothing else but demoniacal superstition, and has no relation to the religion of Jesus; wherein the*



*knowledge of God is of more account than burnt-offerings. Again, as the God, whom they form to themselves, by their misapprehensions of him, is quite different from the true God, therefore the devotion they pay to that ideal God of theirs, is no better than the idolatrous worship which Pagan Athens paid to the unknown God.*

What say you, my friends? Do you think these are likely arguments to do much honour to the Protestant cause? or that they will prove very effectual for undeceiving a Romanist? Let us suppose, that some serious well-disposed Protestant, zealous for the conversion of his Popish friend, and confident in the authority of so great a man as Dr C——l, should attack his friend upon this point, and make use of the above argument, in order to convince him, that the devotion of his church is all diabolical superstition, and a kin to Heathenism itself; and let us see what answer the Roman-Catholick would naturally make to this charge.

“ The accusation you bring against my church,  
 “ *will he say*, is very heavy indeed, and, would  
 “ certainly require a most convincing proof, be-  
 “ fore you can, with a safe conscience, pro-  
 “ nounce her guilty; but alas! my friend, the  
 “ proof you bring is no proof at all, but mere  
 “ slander and calumny. I allow the description  
 “ you give of superstition to be very just, and  
 “ that it always takes its rise from an ignorance  
 “ or misapprehension of God and of his Divine  
 “ truths, in some degree or other; but I utterly  
 “ deny, that the ignorance of God, or of his  
 “ Divine truths, is, in any degree whatsoever, pro-  
 “ moted, authorized, or encouraged, by the Ro-

“ man-Catholick church. And, as I know the  
 “ uprightnes and candour of your heart, I  
 “ will be at no difficulty to convince you,  
 “ that her conduct in that respect is just the re-  
 “ verse of what your Doctor would make you  
 “ believe. In the *first* place, then, I appeal to  
 “ experience, and what every Protestant, that  
 “ goes abroad to Catholick countries, may see  
 “ with his own eyes; *viz.* the assiduity and atten-  
 “ tion which our clergy use in instructing the  
 “ people in the truths of Christianity. There we  
 “ find several religious orders of men, who, se-  
 “ questrating themselves from all worldly con-  
 “ cerns, dedicate themselves entirely to the ser-  
 “ vice of their neighbours souls, preaching the  
 “ gospel, catechising the children, and instruct-  
 “ ing the ignorant in the principles of their re-  
 “ ligion. There we find, societies or associa-  
 “ tions of young gentlemen, even among the  
 “ laity themselves, who, full of zeal for the sal-  
 “ vation of souls, have a regular time set every  
 “ week for calling together the poor beggars  
 “ and their children, in some church appointed  
 “ for the purpose, where they hear them their  
 “ catechism, or teach, by word of mouth, those  
 “ who cannot read, the truths of salvation; and,  
 “ to encourage those poor people to frequent  
 “ these meetings and profit by them, make a  
 “ collection among themselves, and give every  
 “ one an alms each time they attend them: and  
 “ of this, I have, with the utmost pleasure and  
 “ edification, been an eye-witness in the city of  
 “ Rome itself, when on my travels. I appeal to  
 “ your own experience, what you know is prac-  
 “ tised by our clergymen even in this country,  
 “ notwithstanding all the hardships we lie un-



“ der; and, I ask you, If you have not, general-  
 “ ly speaking, found such of our young peo-  
 “ ple, even of the lowest class, as you have had  
 “ occasion to know, as well, if not better, ver-  
 “ fed, in the truths of Christianity than those  
 “ who boast of greater things? I appeal to our  
 “ books of piety and devotion, published in the  
 “ language of every Catholick country, for the  
 “ use of the people, and I ask you, if they be  
 “ not full of the most solid instructions of true  
 “ Christian virtue and perfection? Nay! some  
 “ of the most celebrated books of that kind used  
 “ by the church of England herself, what are  
 “ they but mangled copies of our Catholick ori-  
 “ ginals? Witness, the imitation of Christ and  
 “ Hick’s devotions, by way of offices. I appeal  
 “ to the public decrees of our councils, to the  
 “ constitutions of our Popes, and to the works of  
 “ all our divines, whose constant doctrine it is,  
 “ that, if a person be not sufficiently instructed  
 “ in the principal truths of the Christian doctrine,  
 “ he is not capable of being admitted to the sa-  
 “ craments, and that, therefore, it is the bound-  
 “ ed duty of every pastor of souls to employ  
 “ himself assiduouly in instructing those under  
 “ his charge in these things; and that, if any  
 “ of his people’s souls be lost through ignorance  
 “ of their religion, and this ignorance be owing  
 “ to his neglect; his soul must answer for theirs  
 “ at the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Judge, my  
 “ friend, if those who profess and believe this,  
 “ will, at the same time, make it a point to keep  
 “ their people in ignorance. I appeal, in fine,  
 “ to the decrees of the great Council of Trent,  
 “ that grand oracle of the Catholick Church,  
 “ which never pretended to publish new articles

“ of faith or religion; but to declare, illustrate  
 “ and confirm, by her authority, what had been  
 “ taught and believed in all former ages of Chri-  
 “ stianity, and, for that reason, appeals, in all  
 “ her decrees, to the doctrines and practices of  
 “ these former times. This great Council, pro-  
 “ ceeding upon the above principles, in her  
 “ decree de Reform. session v. chap. 2. de-  
 “ clares, *That the preaching the word is one of the*  
 “ *chief duties of a Bishop, and, therefore, follow-*  
 “ *ing example of all preceding ages decrees,*  
 “ *That all Bishops and other prelates are bound, ei-*  
 “ *ther by themselves, or if lawfully hindered, by other*  
 “ *fit persons employed by them, to perform this duty*  
 “ *carefully; and, if they neglect it, they become subject*  
 “ *to severe punishment:” also, that all the inferiour*  
 “ *clergy, who have the charge of souls, are bound in*  
 “ *conscience, at least on Sundays and holydays, to in-*  
 “ *struct the people committed to their charge, in a*  
 “ *manner suited to their capacity, in all things neces-*  
 “ *sary for a Christian to know, and to point out to*  
 “ *them, in an easy intelligible manner, the vices they*  
 “ *ought to avoid and the virtues they ought to prac-*  
 “ *tise, in order to escape eternal punishment and at-*  
 “ *tain to heavenly glory; and if they neglect to do so,*  
 “ *even though admonished by their Bishops, and con-*  
 “ *tinue in this neglect for the space of three months,*  
 “ *the Bishop is then to subject them to church censures,*  
 “ *and employ another proper person in their place.”*  
 “ Again, in the xxiv. session and 4th chapter of  
 “ the decree de Reform. the Council, sensible of  
 “ the necessity of having this duty of the pa-  
 “ storal charge well performed, and solicitous  
 “ that all the Christian people should be tho-  
 “ roughly instructed in the truths of religion,  
 “ resumes the same subject; and descending to

“ more particulars, lays her exprefs commands  
 “ upon all *Bishops* to see this duty properly perform-  
 “ ed either by themselves or by their parish-priests, or  
 “ by others at the *Bishops* expence, and that this be  
 “ done both in town and in other parts of the diocess  
 “ where they shall see convenient, not only on Sun-  
 “ days and holydays, but also every day, if possible,  
 “ or at least thrice a week, during the times of Ad-  
 “ vent and Lent; and that the subject of these in-  
 “ structions be; to explain the sacred scripture; to in-  
 “ struct the people in the Divine law; to teach the  
 “ children the first principles of their religion, and  
 “ obedience to their parents and superiours.” And  
 again, in the viith chapter of the same decree,  
 she orders, “ That the people be well instructed in  
 “ the nature and benefits received from the holy sa-  
 “ craments, with the interiour dispositions required  
 “ in the use of them; and lastly, That those portions  
 “ of the sacred scripture, which are used for the les-  
 “ sons at Mass, be particularly explained to the peo-  
 “ ple in their own language, and that all these things  
 “ be inserted in their hearts, and they be thoroughly  
 “ instructed in the law of the Lord.” See here, my  
 “ friend, the language of our church; see here  
 “ her solicitude and anxiety for propagating  
 “ the knowledge of God and of his holy scrip-  
 “ tures among all her people; see here, the prin-  
 “ ciples on which she proceeds; compare this  
 “ with the practice of her children, as above-  
 “ mentioned, and you see she is all of a piece,  
 “ constant and uniform in what she commands  
 “ and in what she practises upon this impor-  
 “ tant subject. Now tell me, pray, which  
 “ ought I, in reason, to believe, the calumnious  
 “ assertions of our adversaries, pretending, that  
 “ our church wants to keep her children in ig-



“ norance of God and of his holy truths, or  
 “ what I have here laid before you from her  
 “ daily practice, principles and public decrees?  
 “ These are facts, my friend, open to the eyes of  
 “ the whole world, which cannot be called in  
 “ question; judge then what an appearance the  
 “ conduct of your teachers must have to us,  
 “ who, from our own happy experience, know  
 “ the falsehood of their slanderous aspersions;  
 “ such things may go down with their ignorant  
 “ hearers who know no better, but certainly it  
 “ cannot fail to fill the breast of every candid  
 “ and intelligent Christian with the utmost con-  
 “ tempt of them and their religion, &c. &c.”  
 for I do not choose to pursue this theme further;  
 what I have said is sufficient to show you, the  
 vast advantage a sensible Roman Catholick might  
 make of these unjust methods used against his  
 church, and how far he could push the above re-  
 flections in his own favour, and to the irrepara-  
 ble prejudice of the Protestant religion. For  
 what reply could his Protestant friend make to  
 the above reasoning? Could any thing stronger  
 be used to stagger him in his own principles,  
 and make him suspect the integrity of his Pro-  
 testant teachers and their cause? How much,  
 therefore, ought we to condemn the imprudence  
 and folly of those, who, by publishing such false-  
 hoods to the world, betray their own cause, and  
 give their adversaries such advantage over them?

I should now proceed to some other instance  
 of the same unjustifiable conduct; but as the ad-  
 vage, *That ignorance is the mother of devotion*, upon  
 which our author builds the above calumny, is  
 common in every body's mouth, and used in ridi-  
 cule of the Roman Catholicks, I know it will not

be disagreeable to you, Gentlemen, whose candour and love of truth I am well acquainted with, to examine it impartially, and see if there be any reason for imputing it to them; or what is the proper sense and meaning of it. In the first place then, I observe, that I never yet saw in the course of my own reading, nor heard it alledged by any other, that this proverb, was ever published in any decree of their councils, or by any of their Popes, or any public authority among them. Consequently, it is no part of their religion, it is no article of their creed, for they acknowledge nothing as such, but what has the public sanction of their Church-authority stamped upon it. Secondly, I never yet could be certainly informed, that it was taught, in the general terms above expressed, by any particular divine of their communion; so that I am really at a loss to know whence it could arise, and why it should be attributed to them at all. But, thirdly, when I conversed with some Roman-Catholick acquaintances concerning it, they referred me to one of their greatest divines for an explication of it, *viz.* St Thomas of Aquin, who is a standard among them for all theological matters, and who lived in these very middle ages, which Protestants commonly alledge were overrun with more than Cimmerian darkness, and consequently a proper season for such a proverb to gain ground in the world. This learned man then, in the second part of his *Sum of divinity*, in the article of devotion, observes, that true devotion consists in an affectionate conversion of the will to God and a continual readiness to do what is agreeable to him. Hence he infers, that whatever

increases our esteem and love to God, increases our devotion: and, on the contrary, whatever increases the esteem and love of ourselves, diminishes devotion. As, therefore, the more we know of God, of his Divine perfections, of his infinite love to us, and of what he has done for us, the more we must of course esteem and love him; therefore, all such knowledge, which is chiefly acquired by holy meditation on the great truths of religion, by increasing our esteem and love of God, increases our devotion. On the contrary, as we find from experience, that worldly learning, and the knowledge of these sciences which are esteemed among men, *generally speaking*, from the corruption of our heart, puff up our minds with vanity, fill us with self-conceit, and increase self-love; while, at the same time, they carry off the mind from giving due attention to those sacred truths which more directly, and more effectually, fill us with a sense of our own weakness, and a high esteem of God, that, therefore, such worldly learning, *generally speaking*, is rather a stop and hinderance to true devotion. This is the substance of what that learned divine says upon this subject; which is certainly most just and conformable both to the doctrine of St Paul, who assures us, *That knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*, 1 Cor. viii. 1.; and likewise to experience itself, as we daily find more love to God, more fear of offending him, and more desire of pleasing him, in poor illiterate people, who know nothing but the great truths of religion, and take delight in meditating thereon, than in those of the greatest learning, whose minds are puffed up with a vain conceit of themselves; and who, as the same holy apostle observes, *thinking they*



*know something, know nothing as yet that they ought to know*, 1 Cor. viii. 2. Now, you will easily observe, Gentlemen, that the above explication of St Thomas unriddles the whole mystery of the proverb: For if ever any Roman-Catholick author used that proverb in his writings, it is evident, from all we have seen above, that he could never mean by it, *That ignorance of God, or of the truths of Christianity, is the mother of devotion*; for this sense of it is evidently contrary to the principles, practice, and most authentic decrees of his church, and to the doctrine of their most celebrated divines; and it is in this sense only that it is, or can be, of any weight against the Catholicks. The only sense then in which it could be used by any writer of that communion, is, *That ignorance of the human sciences, and vain philosophy is, generally speaking, rather a help than a hinderance to devotion*; not so much indeed from any particular opposition that these things have of themselves to devotion; but from the pride of our heart, which commonly gathers strength and increase from them, and thereby shuts the door against true devotion; which can never exist except it be founded in true humility. But from this, every one must see, how cruelly unjust and ungenerous it is to apply the above adage, in the way it is commonly done by Protestants, against the Roman-Catholicks; and, at the same time, what arms we put into their hands by so doing, to the unspeakable detriment of the Protestant religion.

The next example of this kind is in the account given by our author, of the corruptions that have infected the morals of Christianity,

from the spirit of false religion; in which he presents us with another scene of falsehood, misrepresentation, and slander. The subjects he has chosen for his purpose here, are, *first*, The practice of Roman-Catholicks of fasting and abstinence, with their religious vows of chastity and poverty; and, *secondly*, That vulgar slander so commonly alledged against them, to the disgrace of humanity, That they have it for a principle of religion, to lie, betray and murder; when by so doing the interest of their church can be promoted. I am sensible, that in detecting the despicable conduct of this writer in what he says upon these subjects, I must be obliged to relate what account the Romanists themselves give of them, without which it will be impossible to form a proper judgment of the matter; but I shall endeavour to do this with the greatest impartiality, and leave it to your own good sense to judge and decide; being well aware, that I am writing to those whose candour and humanity will not readily misapprehend me, and whose impartiality and esteem for truth makes them readily embrace her lovely form where-ever they find it, from a Papist as well as from a Protestant.

Our author introduces what he has to say against fasting and abstinence, and monastic vows, by condemning them at once, as “*extravagancies the most marvellous, the most frantic; such as dishonoured the name of religion, and rendered men worse than useless,*” p. 52. One would naturally expect, from this severe condemnation, that he would demonstrate something very shocking and odious in these practices, and bring convincing proofs of his heavy charge against them. But here the author fails us entirely, and his

bold assertion is the principle proof we are to expect ; only, he lets us know, that these things took their rise from superstition, which makes that people believe, That “ *the less pleasure they admit on any account, and the more pain they inflict upon themselves, the more perfect they are, and the more acceptable to God* ; from which false principle, (says he), and a perverse interpretation of the scripture, all their vows of abstinence, celibacy and poverty, take their rise ; and, under the pretext of these, they dispense themselves from the duties they owe to their fellow-creatures by the irrevocable laws of nature, become useless and idle members of society and public nuisances.”

If now I apply to a Roman-Catholick, and ask what he has to say against this charge, he holds up his hands with wonder and surprize, to see a person of common sense publish to the world such calumnies. In the *first* place, he absolutely denies the absurd principle upon which all this accusation is founded, and assures me, “ That nothing is further from the doctrine of his church, than to believe that perfection consists in depriving ourselves of pleasure, and inflicting pain upon our own persons, or that the more we do so, the more perfect we are ; that to accuse the Roman-Catholicks of this is mere misrepresentation and slander, and consequently that all the author builds upon this foundation deserves no better appellation. He refers me to all their books of devotion and instruction, published for the use of their people, and in every body’s hands among them ; where we find it their unanimous doctrine, That perfection consists essentially in purity of heart,



“ and in the love of God, above all things, and  
 “ of our neighbour as ourselves, for God’s sake ;  
 “ that the more we advance in this, and in this  
 “ only, the more perfect we are ; and that all these  
 “ exterior practices of abstaining from sensual  
 “ pleasures, and inflicting bodily pains, are only to  
 “ be considered and used as means and helps for  
 “ acquiring this purity of heart, to which they  
 “ are certainly most conducive ; by lessening our  
 “ inordinate love and attachment to creatures ;  
 “ by withdrawing the fuel from our concupif-  
 “ cence ; by curbing our passions, and by restrain-  
 “ ing and diminishing the ardour of our inordi-  
 “ nate desires.” What a different idea does this  
 give us of these things, from what our charitable  
 author would make us believe ! how consonant  
 to reason and experience ! But the Catholick  
 does not stop here ; he desires me to observe  
 further : “ That this their real belief in these mat-  
 “ ters is so far from being against the scripture,  
 “ or owing to any forced interpretation of the  
 “ sacred oracles, that nothing is more clearly  
 “ contained in them, than the necessity of mor-  
 “ tifying the corruption of our flesh, by volun-  
 “ tary austerities, and the many and great advan-  
 “ tages that accrue to us from so doing. Our  
 “ blessed Saviour, Matth. ix. 15. expressly fore-  
 “ tells us, that, after his ascension, his follow-  
 “ ers should practise fasting ; and, Matth. vi.  
 “ gives rules how to do it so as to please Al-  
 “ mighty God, and obtain a reward for so do-  
 “ ing from him. In consequence of this, we  
 “ find the apostles and first Christians practising  
 “ it on several occasions, as related Acts xiii. 8.  
 “ 2 Cor. vi. 5. and xi. 27. Anna the prophetess is  
 “ praised for serving God in fastings and pray-



“ ers. Luke ii. 37. And Christ himself assures  
 “ us, that some assaults of satan are of such a  
 “ nature as not to be overcome but by *prayer and*  
 “ *fasting*, Matth. xvii 21. Mark ix. 29. Again,  
 “ does not Jesus Christ absolutely require it as  
 “ a condition of being his disciple, that we prac-  
 “ tise self-denial and mortification, and assure us,  
 “ that *Except we deny ourselves and take up our*  
 “ *cross daily and follow him we are not worthy of*  
 “ *him?* See Matth. xvi. 24. and Luke ix. 23.  
 “ compared with Matth. x. 37. 38. and Luke  
 “ xiv. 33. Does not St Paul declare to us the  
 “ necessity of the same in the most express terms,  
 “ when he tells us; *If you live after the flesh ye*  
 “ *shall die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds*  
 “ *of the body ye shall live*, Rom. viii. And again,  
 “ when he gives it as a sign of our belonging to  
 “ Christ, if we not simply mortify the flesh but  
 “ crucify it; and that not its vices alone but its  
 “ very lusts and affections also. *They that are*  
 “ *Christs* (says he) *have crucified the flesh with the*  
 “ *affections and lusts*, Gal. v. 24? And, that we  
 “ may be at no loss to understand the force of  
 “ these texts, does he not confirm them by his  
 “ own example and practice, which, he assures  
 “ us, was *to keep under his body and bring it into*  
 “ *subjection?* And observe his reason: *least that by*  
 “ *any means*, (says he), *when I have preached to o-*  
 “ *thers, I myself should be a castaway*, 1 Cor. ix. 27.  
 “ St Paul, *the vessel of election*, who was not be-  
 “ hind the chiefest of the apostles, who laboured  
 “ more abundantly than they all, is yet afraid of  
 “ himself, and afraid lest he should become a  
 “ castaway; and, to prevent this, judged it ne-  
 “ cessary, by self-denials and mortifications, *to*  
 “ *keep under his body, and bring it into subjection;*

“ and shall any one that calls himself a Christian,  
 “ dare to say St Paul was guilty of *superstition* in  
 “ so doing, and of *extravagancies the most marvel-*  
 “ *lous, the most frantic?* and yet, such must be his  
 “ condemnation, if our author’s reasoning stand  
 “ good! What shall I say of the many advan-  
 “ tages which the scripture assures us are to be  
 “ obtained by voluntary afflictions, and assures  
 “ us of this in the most convincing manner, by  
 “ pointing out to us the examples of those, who  
 “ by so doing have actually obtained them? Mo-  
 “ ses and Elias were prepared by severe fasting  
 “ to be admitted to the Divine-presence, and to  
 “ enjoy the conversation of God himself. By  
 “ fasting and abstinence, and voluntary afflic-  
 “ tions, the prayers of Daniel were heard, and  
 “ an angel sent from heaven to tell him all he de-  
 “ sired to know, Dan. ix. and x. ; who also ex-  
 “ pressly assured him, that his very chastening  
 “ himself before God was the cause why his  
 “ prayer was heard, and he (the angel) sent to  
 “ him, Dan. x. 12. By humiliations and fast-  
 “ ings, and other voluntary austerities, sack-  
 “ cloth, and lying on the ground, the impious  
 “ Ahab appeased the wrath of God, and pre-  
 “ vented the severe punishments he had been  
 “ threatened with, 1 Kings xxi. By the same  
 “ means, the Ninivites averted the anger of  
 “ God enkindled by their sins, and saved them-  
 “ selves from utter destruction. And, shall we  
 “ say, after all these plain, evident and convin-  
 “ cing testimonies of God himself in his holy  
 “ word, that to practise these things is super-  
 “ stition, *and a dishonour to the name of religion?*  
 “ and that they who practise them, and recom-  
 “ mend them as useful means of obtaining a

“ blessing from God, and of purifying their  
 “ hearts from sinful attachments, are guilty in  
 “ so doing of *frantic extravagancies*, and *misinter-*  
 “ *preting the scripture?* let reason judge and de-  
 “ termine. Seeing, therefore, that these volun-  
 “ tary self-denials and austerities are, by the ex-  
 “ press and repeated declarations of holy writ,  
 “ so powerful helps, both to purify our own  
 “ hearts, and gain admittance in prayer to the  
 “ Divine-presence, and of course to increase our  
 “ love to him; and also, to appease the wrath of  
 “ God provoked by sin, and turn away the ef-  
 “ fects of his vengeance from us; can we, with  
 “ any shadow of reason, blame or condemn,  
 “ yea, have we not rather the utmost reason to  
 “ praise and admire those generous fervent souls,  
 “ who cheerfully renounce all the most endear-  
 “ ing enjoyments of nature, and embrace a state  
 “ of life whose very essence consists in the con-  
 “ tinual practice of these austerities; and who  
 “ do so, on purpose, that, by this means, they may  
 “ more and more purify their own souls, and  
 “ offer up a continual sacrifice of themselves to  
 “ God, with fervent prayers to him, in order to  
 “ appease his wrath for the sins of the world,  
 “ and, through the merits of their dear Redeem-  
 “ er, (through whom alone all these their endea-  
 “ vours are acceptable to God), avert the judge-  
 “ ments these sins deserve, and obtain a blessing  
 “ in their stead? The word of God assures us,  
 “ that *the fervent prayer of a righteous man avail-*  
 “ *eth much*, James v. 16.; and how often have  
 “ the prayers of a single person, of a Moses, of  
 “ an Elias, obtained favours from heaven for a  
 “ whole nation? what then may we not expect,



“ when numbers of holy souls, favourites of  
 “ heaven, and friends of God, are daily pour-  
 “ ing out their most fervent prayers for the hap-  
 “ piness and prosperity of their people? But  
 “ your author tells me, these religious people  
 “ *are idle useless members of society, and public nui-*  
 “ *sances.* What an unpardonable ignorance does  
 “ this assertion discover! Pray, consider a mo-  
 “ ment. Is it possible, that the civil powers in  
 “ all Catholick countries should not perceive so  
 “ interesting an evil to the state, if it really be  
 “ so? and can common sense imagine, that they  
 “ would ever be allowed so much as an existence  
 “ by those civil powers, much less be encouraged  
 “ and protected by them, if they were found to  
 “ be public nuisances? When any of them are  
 “ but suspected of being of any prejudice to the  
 “ state, we see how rigorously they are dealt  
 “ with, so as even to be utterly extirpated; as  
 “ has of late been the case with the Jesuits in no  
 “ less than three Catholick kingdoms: no fear  
 “ of their interest with the people; no respect  
 “ for their character as religious or priests; no  
 “ dread of church-censures, could restrain the  
 “ civil powers from exerting their authority up-  
 “ on them; although perhaps it is yet a problem  
 “ whether they had really been guilty of any  
 “ thing that could in justice deserve such treat-  
 “ ment. Now, is it consistent with common  
 “ sense to suppose, that all the others would not  
 “ meet with the same fate, if they were *idle use-*  
 “ *less members of society, and public nuisances?* But  
 “ what an insult does the author offer to the  
 “ common sense of mankind, by such an asser-  
 “ tion? Is it not a common subject of conver-  
 “ sation, among such as know any thing about



“ the state of foreign nations, to observe with  
 “ admiration, the advantages these religious  
 “ people are of to their respective countries?  
 “ Some of them are employed in instructing the  
 “ people, as spiritual teachers, in the concerns  
 “ of religion ; some keep public schools for the  
 “ education of youth, and go through all the  
 “ drudgery of teaching the rudiments of gram-  
 “ mar, as well as the more sublime sciences, to  
 “ numerous auditories ; and, that without any  
 “ fee or reward from their scholars themselves,  
 “ being content with food and rayment allow-  
 “ ed them from their order. Can any thing be  
 “ of more general benefit to the people than  
 “ this, seeing, by this means, the poorest amongst  
 “ them may have the best education for their  
 “ children, without costing them a farthing? o-  
 “ thers again employ themselves in publishing,  
 “ for the benefit of mankind, the fruits of their  
 “ studies and learning ; and to them the world  
 “ is indebted for the most excellent productions  
 “ in all kind of literature. What shall I say of  
 “ numbers of those religious people, who, full  
 “ of zeal for the good of souls, go cheerfully to  
 “ the utmost corners of the earth, to preach the  
 “ gospel to the heathen world in the midst of  
 “ numberless hardships, and have been the hap-  
 “ py instruments of converting many nations  
 “ to the faith of Christ? Even the very nuns  
 “ themselves, their religious women, though  
 “ generally more retired from the world than  
 “ the others, yet are not wanting in contribu-  
 “ ting their mite to the good of their fellow crea-  
 “ tures ; how many of them teach public schools  
 “ of young girls, instructing them in what they

“ most need for their station in the world?  
 “ Whilst others give the best of education to those  
 “ young ladies who are boarded with them ; as  
 “ is well known to numbers both of our English  
 “ nobility and gentry who have got their educa-  
 “ tion among them ? And are not all these reli-  
 “ gious orders employed, as an essential duty of  
 “ their state, in pouring out their daily prayers  
 “ to heaven for the blessing of God upon their  
 “ country ? And can these be called *idle useless*  
 “ *members of society and public nuisances* ? Or can a  
 “ scanty maintenance of food and raiment be  
 “ in justice refused them ? With shame then be it  
 “ said, that such things should ever be published  
 “ among us !”

To this purpose, a Roman-Catholick would  
 talk upon these subjects : How just his reasoning  
 is, I leave to yourselves to determine ; and only  
 observe, that, as in the accusation charged upon  
 his church by our author in these points, there is  
 evident misrepresentation and calumny ; instead  
 of benefiting the Protestant cause by so doing, he  
 has only put arms in the hands of his adversary,  
 and given him an opportunity in repelling that  
 calumny, of setting forth his true doctrine in  
 such a light, as cannot fail to stagger every well  
 meaning Protestant, who gives himself the trouble  
 to think seriously upon the subject,

I come now to consider the other point our  
 author has produced as a proof of corruptions  
 which have been introduced by superstition into  
 the Christian morality ; and here indeed, for the  
 honour of human nature, I sincerely wish I could  
 draw a vail over all that he has advanced : for he  
 has in this given us a scene of such unparalleled  
 slander, accusations of such an atrocious nature,

and couched in such insinuating language, that it shocks me to peruse it, and makes me wish, if it were possible, to bury his words in eternal darkness and oblivion: But alas! the contagion is already published, and it is most necessary some remedy be applied to prevent its spreading; for the venom of his words creeps into the readers heart before he is aware; extinguishes in his breast every sense of pity and compassion towards the accused; excites the most indignant passions against his innocent fellow creatures, and utterly extinguishes all feelings of Christian charity. O! how unworthy the name of a Christian, to be the unjust, the guilty cause of such evils; and yet this would appear to be the most darling theme of our auther; in which he seems to exert the utmost effort of his genius and eloquence in order to strike the surer blow, and more deeply wound the unwary reader's heart with his malicious and deadly poison. He begins this hideous scene page 55. by telling us, *another engine of superstition, by which she hath tainted the morals of the Gospel, is a distinction she hath suggested between the cause of God and the cause of virtue and integrity; these, she artfully insinuates, may, in certain circumstances, be found to clash: when that happens, the latter must be sacrificed to the former, &c.* He then goes on, with great energy indeed, to show the shocking impiety of such horrid maxims, which one should scarce imagine could ever enter into the heart of man. But it is no difficult matter to fight against a phantom of one's own invention, and the more he displays the horror of the crime, the more he excites aversion in the heart of his readers against those whom he brings in as guilty of it. Had he here candidly told us,



that there were a handful of heretics, (for such appellation they most certainly deserved who could hold such antichristian tenets), who appeared in Spain about the end of the fourth century, and who held it lawful to swear and perjure themselves rather than discover the secret abominations of their sect; and that the same *accursed casuistry* was renewed again about the beginning of the fifteenth century by the Flagellants, another set of heretics about the borders of Germany and Italy, of whom more by and by; and that both the one and the other were loudly condemned by the whole Christian world, and cut off from the communion of the Roman-Catholicks themselves, upon account of these very impieties, he would have acted the part of an honest man and a lover of truth; but, instead of that, he *artfully insinuates*, and even boldly affirms, that the whole body of the Roman-Catholicks, who condemned and anathematized these errors, were the very persons who embraced and approved them; and, that the innocent reader may suspect no foul play, but easily swallow down the gilded poison, he cunningly introduces one of that communion as defending those impieties, marks in the margin the words which he puts in the mouth of this pretended antagonist, no doubt that his readers may imagine they are citations from some of their own authors, and then brings him in as appealing to the *authorities of learned theologues, profound scholars, invincible doctors, yea rescripts of Popes and the practice of councils, to prove, that it is not contrary to the will of heaven, to lie, to betray, to murder*, when the supposed interest of their Church requires it.

I will not trouble you in describing the emotions



that were excited in my breast on perusing this passage; but, before I begin to enter into the merits of the cause, I must observe, that the Papists and our author must stand or fall by the determination of this question. If the Papists be really what this author here describes them; if they do adopt these damnable tenets; if they do hold, that lying, treachery and murder can ever become lawful for any end whatsoever, then they are without all dispute the most execrable wretches upon the face of God's earth, intolerable in any Protestant state, and justly deserve the odium and abhorrence of all mankind: But if, on the contrary, they be perfectly innocent of the charge; if they abhor and detest such impieties; if they even absolutely refuse to admit any one into their communion who holds them, then it evidently follows, That—oh, my God! that such a consequence should ever fall upon a member of any Protestant Church.—It follows, I say, that the author of this unchristian sermon is guilty of the most diabolical calumny, and has done an irreparable injury to the cause of that Church of which he pretends to be a member. Here, my friends, there is no medium, either the Papists are, or they are not guilty of what this author lays to their charge, and consequently either this author is, or he is not guilty of the most damnable detraction; a detraction so much the more to be abhorred, as it essentially tends “to stir up in the  
 “ hearts of Protestants an eternal enmity against  
 “ Catholics, to dissever the followers of Christ  
 “ past all hopes of reconciliation, and, in Prote-  
 “ stant governments to devote the Papists to  
 “ death and destruction; and, at the same time, to  
 “ prevent, in the breasts of those who hold the

“ sword, the common feelings of commiseration  
 “ that spring up in favour of the distressed.”

Now, in examining this important subject, it is necessary, in the first place, to give a true state of the question, that we may not beat the air in vain and run in the dark without knowing where. It must, therefore, be carefully observed, that we do not inquire whether or not any Papist has ever in fact broke his word to Protestants; this is not the point. Papists have broke their word to Protestants, and they have broke it as often with other Papists; and Protestants have done the same by them. But the question is precisely this, whether Papists in so doing act according to the principles of their religion? whether they hold it lawful to do so? or if, in doing so, they act in direct opposition to their religion, and follow the bent of passion in opposition to principle; as is the case with Protestants when they behave in the same perfidious manner? Again, it must be observed, that the argument commonly used in this case, viz. *Papists are often guilty of breach of faith, therefore they believe it lawful to do so*, is a mere childish argument and has equal force against Protestants themselves. “ Nothing can put this  
 “ observation in a fairer light, says the above cited  
 “ author of the Free Examination, than to make  
 “ the Protestant and Papist change sides in the dis-  
 “ pute. Let us for a few moments suppose the Papist  
 “ charging Protestants with a principle of breach  
 “ of faith and even of dispensing with the most  
 “ solemn engagements to God as well as to men;  
 “ what an ample field has he to walk in? *As*  
 “ *soon as your pious ministers, (says he), took up the*  
 “ *principles of your religion, they absolved them-*  
 “ *selves from the vows they made of chastity, of o-*

“ *bedience, and of observing their religious duties;*  
 “ *which were particularly tremendous, because they*  
 “ *were contracts of the soul with the Deity. Your*  
 “ *patron and first Archbishop in England, Cranmer,*  
 “ *after he had imbibed his new principles, made his*  
 “ *qualifying vows with duplicity, he went to the al-*  
 “ *tar with a concerted design to perjure himself, and*  
 “ *lived after in the most criminal opposition to his*  
 “ *conscience during king Henry’s reign. The ever*  
 “ *memorable and glorious queen Elizabeth swore, at*  
 “ *her coronation, to preserve and support the esta-*  
 “ *blished religion; which oath she not only broke with*  
 “ *the greatest tranquillity; but it appears very plain-*  
 “ *ly from her behaviour, that she only took it for con-*  
 “ *veniency, and did not intend to keep it when she*  
 “ *solemnly swore to it. This principle advances a-*  
 “ *long with the Reformation every where, as close*  
 “ *as Milton’s death accompanies sin. The sectaries*  
 “ *in Scotland and England had sworn fealty to the*  
 “ *king whom they deposed and murdered. The Cal-*  
 “ *vinists in France were in nothing behind their bre-*  
 “ *thren in England but in success; they were guilty*  
 “ *of the same kind of perjury, over and over, by the*  
 “ *advice of their godly clergy. These rebellions are*  
 “ *distinguished from all others by the perfidious prin-*  
 “ *ciple I speak of. Look narrowly into the solemn*  
 “ *leagues and covenants; look at the declarations of*  
 “ *Protestant Dissidents; and you universally see them*  
 “ *set out with the most sacred vows of loyalty to the*  
 “ *monarchs and to the governments they afterwards*  
 “ *treacherously destroy, as soon as they have acquired*  
 “ *the power of doing so. In short, where-ever the*  
 “ *Protestant religion got footing, it never failed to*  
 “ *bring along with it this horrid principle that has*  
 “ *rent so many governments, and torn down so many*



“ princes out of their thrones. A principle that is  
 “ universal, and meets your eyes on every side, does  
 “ not stand in need of any particular examples to  
 “ prove it: but the cruel breach of the capitulation  
 “ of Montbrisson, and the massacre of the garrison,  
 “ is too affecting to be passed over. As soon as  
 “ Francis de Beaumont, Baron des Adrets, a Pro-  
 “ testant general, who fought for his religious prin-  
 “ ciples, had, under the faith of a capitulation, got  
 “ the garrison and their brave general into his power,  
 “ he ordered them to be brought to the top of the  
 “ platform on the castle; where he diverted himself  
 “ with looking on them precipitated to the bottom;  
 “ where his barbarous soldiers received them, with  
 “ shouts of joy and exultation, on the points of their  
 “ halberds and pikes. But, as I said, there is no  
 “ need of particular instances to prove my argument.  
 “ Pursue the Protestant religion in all nations, and  
 “ you see it instantly dissolve the allegiance of its fol-  
 “ lowers to princes of a different religion, and breach  
 “ of fidelity followed close by bloodshed, rapine and  
 “ desolation.—You see, Gentlemen, I have made  
 “ my Popish declaimer run over exactly the same  
 “ cant of those Protestants, who, from some par-  
 “ ticular facts, charge Catholicks with a prin-  
 “ ciple of breach of faith; and, if I had a mind  
 “ to spin out the discourse, and imitate those  
 “ doleful gentlemen, you are well aware, that I  
 “ need only transcribe from the histories of Eu-  
 “ rope, with the addition of an exclamation a-  
 “ gainst Protestant treachery and rebellion, at  
 “ the close of every tale, to make out two or  
 “ three handsome volumes in folio.” But it is  
 plainly a full and sufficient answer to all this, to  
 say, That those, and all such instances of Prote-  
 stant breach of faith, are to be placed to the cor-



ruptions of human nature, which no religion can eradicate; and by no means to religious principle, which Protestants openly disclaim. And are not Catholicks descended from Adam as well as Protestants? are they not co-heirs with them of the same corrupt nature? and is it not an equally full and sufficient answer to all such instances of breach of faith among them, that they ought to be placed to the corruptions of human nature, as well as in Protestants; and by no means to principle which they no less strenuously disavow than the Protestants do? Certainly the argument militates with equal force in both cases; and therefore can never prove, that such a principle is held by the one more than by the other.

We must therefore look for other kind of arguments than instances of breach of faith among Catholicks, before we can condemn them as guilty of holding such a principle. It cannot be called in question that the author of this sermon, wherein they are so loudly accused of this crime, whether it be Dr C——, or whoever else, is a man of parts and penetration, as well as of the most insinuating address. His good-will in the cause is evident from the whole sermon, and therefore it cannot be doubted but he has brought the strongest and most convincing arguments he could find to make good his charge against his devoted adversaries. Let us see then what proofs he brings. Proofs did I say! why truly, there is not the shadow of a proof in all he says. Trusting to the credulity and good-nature of his easy audience, he does not even attempt it. He begins by boldly affirming, that superstition had introduced into the Christian morality *a distinction between the*

*cause of God and the cause of virtue*; and you must take his word that it is so. He supposes this and all the consequences he draws from it to be undoubted facts, without ever offering the smallest argument to prove them. He artfully indeed introduces a Papist arguing in defence of these impious tenets; and the only shadow of an argument which he is pleased to put, even in the mouth of this his fictitious adversary, is a vague appeal to the authority of *learned Divines, rescripts of Popes, and decrees of Councils*; but, however liberal he is in his citations from scripture and other authors, he takes great care not to give us the smallest hint where these divines, rescripts and decrees, are to be found. Does not this conduct carry suspicion in its front? does it not betray a secret consciousness, that these pretended authorities are all fictitious? In fact, as this is the only appearance of an argument that he produces to prove his charge, and even this has no other foundation than his own bold assertion; the Catholick, on the other hand, with equal boldness, and a more conscious sense of the truth of what he says, absolutely denies, that any such *approved divines* of his communion, any such *rescripts of Popes, or decrees of Councils*, can be produced; nay, he even challenges the author, in the face of the world, to produce them if he can, and is willing to venture the whole issue of his cause upon his doing so.

No doubt, if the author should attempt to answer this challenge, he would appeal to the affair of John Huf, and the decrees of the Councils of Constance and Lateran; as these are the only instances of the kind which Protestant declaimers have recourse to, as authentic proofs of the charge

here alledged against the Papists. But our author was too conscious of the weakness of these proofs to cite them by name; and wisely judged it would be more for his purpose to make a general appeal to these things, which he knew few or none of his readers would take the trouble, or have the opportunity to investigate. But, that we may leave nothing in obscurity concerning this dispute, but throw all the light we can upon our subject, I shall here give you a succinct account of that affair, and a clear examination of the decrees of these Councils.

John Hufs, Rector of the university of Prague in Bohemia, about the beginning of the fifteenth century, began to renew and publish opinions, that had been some time before condemned in Wickleff, and his followers, as absolutely inconsistent with all civil authority as well as with the then universally received religious principles of Christianity, to which he also added several other such of his own. The Emperor Sigismond, brother and heir presumptive of Winceflaws King of Bohemia, being afraid for the fatal consequences of this dangerous doctrine, obliged John Hufs to go to the Council of Constance, which was then sitting, in order to have his opinions examined by that Council; and he gave him a safe-guard or passport for that purpose. This passport is related by L'Enfant, the Calvinist writer of the history of that Council, and consequently no wise biased in its favour; and it evidently contains nothing more but a recommendation of him to all the Princes of the Empire through whose territories he had to go, to let him pass unmolested, to entertain him kindly, and to furnish him and all that were with him, in all necessaries cost free. Ac-



cordingly he and his company arrived safe at the Council in Novemembr 1414. During the space of seven months, his cause was brought in from time to time before the Council, and all liberty allowed him to say whatever he pleased in his own defence; but his person was kept in custody, to hinder him from spreading his poisonous doctrines, and least, finding it impracticable to defend his tenets, he should withdraw himself from the Council and prevent an entire discussion of the matter; which in fact, before his confinement, he attempted to do, as is attested by Reichental and Dacher two contemporary authors. After the most exact discussion, his doctrines being found absolutely contrary to the received and established maxims both of Church and state, the Council, proceeding upon the same principles that the most celebrated Protestant synods and leaders have since done, condemned his doctrines as heretical; and, as he himself persisted obstinately to defend and sustain them, declared him an heretick, excommunicated him, and delivered him over to the civil power to do with him as their own laws directed; and further than this the Council did not go. The Emperor had it now in his power to save Hufs; but, fully convinced of the fatal tendency of his doctrines, and having before his eyes the rebellions and civil embroils, which from these very doctrines the Wickliffites had raised in England, thirty or forty years before, he judged it more for the common welfare to let the established laws of the empire take place, and Hufs was condemned to be burnt, and burnt accordingly. “ The  
 “ enterprizes of Ziska and of the Taborites, dis-  
 “ ciples of Hufs, which soon after filled Bohe-  
 “ mia with rebellion and bloodshed, demonstrate,



“ that the Emperor was no despicable politician,  
 “ and that he perfectly comprehended all he had  
 “ to fear from the spirit and tendency of Hufs’s  
 “ doctrines.”

Now, allow me, Gentlemen, to appeal to yourselves, and to ask you, Do you find any thing in the conduct of this Council that can, with any shadow of reason, be interpreted a breach of faith with Hufs, or that can give any sanction or encouragement to others to be guilty of that crime? Hufs himself was so confident of being able to defend his own doctrines before the Council, that, in a paper addressed to the King and Queen, before he left Prague, and in another which he fixed up at Nuremberg on his journey, he declared his intent was to make his appearance in the Council, to answer all that might be laid to his charge; and he invited all those who suspected him of heresy, to repair hither, and demonstrate, before the Pope and doctors, whether he held any false or erroneous opinions. He was, therefore, willing to be tried by the Council, and stand to the consequences of that trial; and of course the passport was given him by no means to protect him from being tried by the Council, and condemned or acquitted according to the merits of his cause, but merely to preserve him from all injuries on his journey to the Council; as the whole import of the passport, related by L’Enfant, manifestly implies. How ridiculous, then, is it to alledge, as is commonly done, that the trial, censure and condemnation of Hufs, was an infringement of the public faith which had been given him, and an instance of breach of faith in a general Council of Roman-Catholick Bishops? In the *first* place, the Coun-

cil certainly gave him no promise, and consequently could not be guilty of a breach of faith: again, though the public faith had been broken to him, this could never prove, that the Council held it lawful to do so; as we have seen above at large. But, in fact, malice itself, without the help of misrepresentation, cannot possibly shew, from the conduct of these fathers, that they were guilty of such a thing.

Let us now, then proceed to consider the decree itself of the Council, published upon this occasion, and which Protestants generally make the greatest handle of in this matter. The decree is related by L'Enfant, as follows: " The present  
 " Synod of Constance declares, That every safe-  
 " conduct granted by the Emperor, kings, and  
 " other temporal princes, to hereticks, or per-  
 " sons accused of heresy, in hopes of reclaiming  
 " them, ought not to be of any prejudice to the  
 " Catholick faith, or to the Ecclesiastical jurif-  
 " diction, nor to hinder but such persons may,  
 " and ought to be examined, judged and pu-  
 " nished, according as justice shall require, if  
 " those hereticks shall refuse to revoke their er-  
 " rors, even though they should not have come  
 " hither; and the person who shall have promi-  
 " sed them security, shall not, in this case, be ob-  
 " liged to keep his promise, by whatever tie he  
 " may have been engaged, *when he has done all*  
 " *that is in his power to do.*" Such is the famous  
 decree as related by the above-named Protestant  
 historian. Now, for the understanding the pur-  
 port and meaning of it, we must observe, that  
 among the Roman-Catholicks it is a fixed prin-  
 ciple, That the powers of spiritual and temporal  
 jurisdiction are perfectly distinct, and independ-

dent of one another; each of them supreme in their kind, derived immediately from God, and subject to him alone. Both of these powers had joined together at the Council of Constance to have John Hus brought before the Council, to give an account of, and be tried for those pestilential doctrines which he was spreading among the people. This trial was solely and entirely the province of the spiritual powers; the bringing the accused person to the Council, and the inflicting such corporal punishment upon him, if found guilty by the Council, as the civil law appointed, was solely the business of the civil powers; to whom the temporal jurisdiction belongs. Accordingly the Emperor granted Hus a safe-conduct, to protect him on his journey to the Council, and defend him from any injury by the way; and this, as we have seen above from L' Enfant himself, being the sole end of the passport, was accordingly most exactly performed. Hus, being now come to the Council, was no longer in the Emperor's hands, but wholly under the jurisdiction of that court till his trial should be ended; but the Council, for the reasons we have seen above, judged it necessary to put him under confinement, which was accordingly done. This step however the Emperor at first was pleased to take amiss, and, jealous of his own honour and stirred up by the partisans of Hus, who made a handle of every thing that could appear to favour him, thought the confinement of Hus before his condemnation, was a breach of the safe-conduct he had given him. But the Council answered him, That his business was only to bring Hus safe to Constance; that,



Being arrived there, he was no longer under the civil jurisdiction; that the Emperor could not give him a protection beyond the length his Imperial authority went, without prejudicing the Catholick-faith or Ecclesiastal jurisdiction; which no safe-guard granted by secular powers ought to do, especially as the Council had just reasons for the step they had taken; that if he (the Emperor) had promised any thing farther than protecting him in his journey to the Council, he had in so doing gone beyond the extent of his own authority, and engaged for more than he could perform, and therefore was not obliged to keep that promise, especially after doing all that was in his power to fulfil it. These reasons entirely satisfied the Emperor, who declared to the Commissioners of the Council, when they addressed him upon this subject, *That the Council was free in all matters belonging to faith, and might proceed according to the rules against all accused of heresy, and pass judgment upon them after public hearing according as they deserved.* Vander Hardt tom. iv. p. 32. Upon this then it was judged proper, as a defence of the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and a precedent in future cases, to emit the above decree; the plain naked sense of which is clear and manifest to every one who considers the circumstances in which it was given. But some Protestants have been pleased to confound the obvious meaning of this decree, in order to find in it a liberty given to Catholicks, to break faith with those whom they esteem hereticks, and to cancel the fealty they owe to a Protestant government. This indeed is a comment with a witness! But unfortunately for the comment, the express words of the decree are diametrically



the reverse ; for, it declares the civil magistrate freed from such rash promise as he has made beyond the limits of his authority only, *after he has done all in his power to fulfil it.* We shall by and by see more fully, what was the true doctrine of this Council about the point in question ; at present I must say a word to another of its Canons commonly appealed to by Protestants, to make out their charge ; and also, to one of the fourth Council of Lateran used by them for the same purpose : The answer to both these is very short, *viz.* That they are both spurious, and never were made by either of these Councils. Even Mr Collier himself, our English Protestant historian, in the fifth book of his first volume of Ecclesiastic history, acknowledges, That that of Lateran is not found in any copy coeval with the Council, but is transcribed from a later record. In fact it was first produced to light by a German, some hundred years after the time of the Council, who found it in a manuscript compiled by somebody, he knew not who. And, as for the other ascribed to the Council of Constance, it never appeared in any printed or authentic collection of the acts of that Council, it is only transcribed by L'Enfant, the Calvinist historian, who says, he got it in a copy found in the Vienna library. Both the one and the other are rejected by all Catholicks as spurious, except Bellarmine and some few Popish schoolmen, who were imposed upon by that of Lateran ; but their opinions thereupon are universally condemned.

Here then, Gentlemen, you evidently see, that if the author of the sermon, *on the spirit of the gospel*, in appealing to rescripts and Councils, to

prove his charge against the Papists, has those in view which I have here examined, they are just as much to his purpose as if he had cited the Alcoran or Talmud; and besides these, and these alone, I challenge him, in the face of the whole world, to produce any one approved divine of the Roman-Catholick communion, any authentic rescript or decree of their Councils, that either holds, approves, or even insinuates the damnable doctrine which he lays to their charge, viz. *That it can ever become lawful to lie, betray or murder, even though they should imagine the good of their Church required it.* And, if he cannot produce such proof, as I am confidently certain he cannot—Good God! what idea must the discerning public form of his heart, who is capable to asperse so numerous a body as the Roman-Catholicks are, in so horrid a manner, and to poison the hearts of his readers with the most envenomed aversion against their innocent fellow creatures, by such abominable calumnies?

Here then I might rest the whole matter without going further; for surely, in all reason and equity, till the accuser makes good his charge, the accused have a just right to be deemed innocent; and if the other fails in his proof, he must undoubtedly stand condemned, in the eyes of every unprejudiced person, of the most infamous calumny and defamation. But, as I am engaged in defence of the truth, and writing to those who glory in being her most devoted votaries, I shall now proceed to show you, from the most convincing positive proofs, that the Roman-Catholicks are absolutely innocent of what our author, with such subtle address, lays to their charge: and the principal proof I shall bring

for this purpose, are the decrees of this very Council of Constance, which will set what I advance beyond the reach of contradiction.

About the end of the year 1407, John *Sanspeur* Duke of Burgundy, having caused assassinate Louis of France Duke of Orleans and only brother to the King Charles VI. formed a party for himself and raised a civil war. Among his partizans was one John Petit, a doctor of Paris, who had gained a great reputation for his learning and eloquence. This unhappy man publicly defended the murder of Louis, and among several other shocking propositions which, in his fiery party zeal, he published on this occasion, one of the most obnoxious was as follows: *Any tyrant whatsoever may and ought lawfully and meritoriously to be murdered by any vassal or subject of his own; even by secret snares and subtle flattery or adulation; and that notwithstanding any oath given, or agreement entered into with him; and without waiting for the sentence or command of any judge whatsoever †.* This scandalous doctrine was soon after condemned by Jean de Montaigu, then Bishop of Paris; but this not being sufficient to stop the evil, it was delated by the famous Gerson to the Council of Constance, who, after again and again hearing the partizans in defence of it, at last pronounced this famous sentence of condemnation upon it. “*The sacred synod solicitous to combat this error and root it out entirely, declares and defines, that this doctrine is erroneous in faith and in morals; and therefore*

† Quilibet tyrannus potest et debet licite et meritorie occidi per quemcunque vassallum suum vel subditum, etiam per clanculares infidias et subtiles bladtias vel adulationes, non obstante quocunque, praestito Juramento seu confaederatione factis cum eo, non expectata sententia vel mandato judicis cujuscunque.



*rejects and condemns it as heretical, scandalous, and opening a door to frauds, deceit, lies, treachery and perjury. And, moreover, declares and discerns, that those, who obstinately assert this most pernicious doctrine, are heretics; and as such are to be punished according to the Sacred Canons †.*" Here, Gentlemen, we see the sense of this Council and consequently, of the Roman-Catholick Church in her own words, in her own language; and I the more willingly relate this decree, because it is not only a most authentic proof that the Papists detest and abhor the damnable doctrine with which they are branded by our author, but also clearly demonstrates their innocence in another point, of which they are no less currently accused in this country, *viz.* Of approving, and thinking it lawful to murder sovereigns when they become hereticks or tyrants. Here that doctrine is solemnly condemned by a General Council of that Church, which all her members look upon as infallible in its decrees concerning faith and manners, and to which they are therefore obliged to adhere as to the decrees of Christ himself. With what face then, can calumny itself dare to accuse them of such tenets, after so full, so authentic a condemnation of them? And observe the reasons given by the Council for this condemnation, not only because it is heretical and scandalous in itself to assert it to be lawful to kill even tyrants by private authority; but also, because to assert

† Adversus hunc errorem satagens S. Synodus exurgere, ipsum que funditus tollere, declarat et definit hujusmodi doctrinam erroneam esse in fide et in moribus, ipsam que tanquam haereticam, scandalosam, et ad fraudes, deceptiones, mendacia, prodiones, perjuria vias dantem, reprobatur et condemnat. Declarat insuper et discernit quod pertinaciter doctrinam hanc perniciosissimam asserentes sunt haeretici et tanquam tales juxta canonicas sanctiones puniendi. Act. Conc. Constant. sess. 15.



this to be lawful, notwithstanding any oath given, or agreement entered on with the party, opens a door to frauds, deceit, lies, treachery and perjury; and, can any honest heart, after this, dare to assert, that this Council authorizes, lies, treachery and perjury?—Good God! what a world do we dwell in, where such things are publicly asserted! What a disgrace are such authors to human nature!

I shall now produce another decree of this same Council, which no less convincingly proves the innocence of Papists in the point before us, than what we have already seen, and may cover with shame all such as endeavour to impeach them with favouring breach of faith to hereticks. You must know that the Flagellants, a sect of hereticks censured by this Council, among other errors held, as L'Enfant acknowledges, what follows: “ *That although all oaths, after what manner*  
“ *soever taken, were prohibited, yet it were better*  
“ *the Flagellants should be sworn and foresworn be-*  
“ *fore the Inquisition, than that they should betray*  
“ *themselves and their brethren, seeing that perjury*  
“ *might be expiated by flagellation.*” This impious sect then this very Council condemns; and in a bull of Pope Martin V. published by the authority of this Council, (and inserted among its acts by Caranza, in his Sum. Concil.), which was sent to all countries suspected of heresy, among the questions ordered to be put as a test to suspected persons are these two: “ Whether he be-  
“ lieves, that it is not lawfull to swear in any  
“ case?” and, “ Whether he does not think, that  
“ all wilful perjury, committed upon any occa-  
“ sion whatsoever, for the preservation of one’s  
“ life, or another man’s, or even for the sake of

“ *the faith, is not a mortal sin?*” Here, then, this very Council that is impeached for teaching, or at least countenancing breach of faith for the sake of religion, has made it expressly a term of Catholick communion, *That it is not lawful for a man to perjure himself on any account, even for the sake of the faith.* Blush for shame, O Slander! Calumny, be confounded! “ Lo! those very Fathers whom you accuse as guilty of allowing perjury and breach of faith, for the good of their church, by a writing, left to the perusal of all generations, in express terms, and about whose meaning there is no doubt or mistake, exclude out of their Church those who hold that very doctrine, and make their holding it a mark of separation from Popery! What a terrible, what a confounding evidence, is this rescript, against the misrepresenters of the Council of Constance, and of the principles of Papists!”

After such authentic and unanswerable proofs of the true doctrine of the Roman-Catholicks, I shall now briefly add a few more, taken from their practice; and earnestly wish our author would seriously consider these following questions. Do not all the Roman-Catholicks in the world reject with horror the impious tenets he imputes to them? Does not every one among them strenuously maintain, that he is obliged in conscience to keep good faith with all mankind? Are not all their catechisms, sermons, and books of instruction, filled with the same truths? Is not their practice, in general, every where consonant to this their profession? Do they not here in England and Ireland suffer the loss of power and property, penalties and exclusions, the public odium, and

Sometimes imprisonment and banishment, and even death itself, rather than forfeit their integrity, or act with duplicity, especially in matters of religion? In foreign countries, where they are trusted and used as subjects, do they not defend their Protestant sovereigns with their lives and fortunes against all Popish invaders? And even in our late wars in America, were not our Scotch Highland battalions, which gained such conquests for us, composed in a great part of Roman-Catholics, both officers and soldiers, who behaved as gallantly, and with as much fidelity, against their Popish enemies, as their Protestant comrades did themselves? And does not every one who deals with them, both at home and abroad, find as much sincerity, honesty and fidelity, in them, as in any Protestant whatever? Nay, have we not known instances of some Protestants, of the first rank in the nation, who have preferred Popish domestic servants to others, from a conscious experience of their entire fidelity? If, therefore, these things be so, as they most certainly are, being notorious to the whole world, I demand, what more convincing evidence can possibly be required of their sincerity? what higher and clearer instances can possibly be given, by any body of people, of their real principles? What then must every honest British heart think of that horrid spirit of detraction and falsehood that first suggested the calumny against them? With what indignation must every lover of truth be fired on reading the infamous sermon, where so much art, and such insinuating address is used, to propagate the charge, by corrupting the reader's mind ere he is aware? "As a man, I blush for it, whilst  
 "I am obliged to expose it!"



To display the enormity of such calumnies is too disagreeable a subject for me to dwell longer upon it. I shall therefore conclude what I have to say on this head by returning to the main point I have in view; namely, to show the vast advantage this infamous conduct gives the Papist, and the irreparable damage it does to the Protestant cause. Tell me then, my friends, what impression, think you, must the reading our author's sermon, on this subject, make on the mind of a Roman-Catholick? What can he think of the Protestant religion when supported by such malicious falsehoods? What can he think of its leaders and teachers who are capable of publishing to the world such enormous calumnies? Could a more effectual method be taken to confirm him in his own religion and invincibly prejudice him against the Reformation? Does not this very circumstance alone suffice to account for that amazing phænomenon, *that Popery should be able to make a stand in these kingdoms, where every consideration is against it?* But what shall I say of the unmerciful use the Papist may make of these calumnies among his Protestant acquaintances? Ought not every Protestant to tremble for the consequences this may have? and do we not frequently see instances of sincere well meaning Protestants who become profelytes to Popery chiefly from this most unwarrantable conduct of those who ought to preserve them against it? How easy is it for an attentive Papist to say a thousand pretty things in favour of his religion from this head, which cannot possibly fail to make the deepest impression on his Protestant hearer? but there is one particular advantage of the greatest weight, which that part of our sermon, which I have been last considering, gives the Roman-



Catholick, and which, therefore, I cannot pass over in silence; and it is this; These people, you know, glory in applying to their own Church infallibility and holiness of doctrine, both as to faith and morals: the principal proof Protestants bring against this assertion is an appeal to facts, and endeavouring to show that they actually teach doctrines in faith contrary to the written word, and in morality contrary to holiness: but what an invincible argument has the author of our sermon put in their hands to repel this proof! “ you see, (will the wary Papist say to his Protestant friend), you see what way your greatest “ doctors are forced to argue against us: Here “ is a champion of the Reformation, a Dr C——I, “ an antagonist of H——e, a man renowned for “ abilities and learning, sets himself on purpose “ to prove our doctrine of morality to be cor- “ rupted: Is it to be thought that he is not per- “ fectly known to the *fort* and *foible* of his argu- “ ment? Can we doubt but he will produce the “ most convincing proofs his cause affords to “ make good his charge against us? no body, “ sure, can call in question either his abilities or “ his good will to the cause; seeing, therefore, “ that the arguments he brings are all founded “ in falsehood, calumny and misrepresentation, “ and like Satan’s speech in Milton are *hollow all,* “ *semblance of worth not substance*, can there be a “ more convincing proof of the holiness and pu- “ rity of our doctrine? Can there be a greater “ evidence that he had not a single point of our “ real doctrine which he could lay hold of? Would “ a Dr C——I have ever made use of such notori- “ ous lies, if he had found any one of our real

“ tenets which he could condemn with truth?  
 “ &c.” for you easily see how far this argument may be pushed to the unspeakable detriment of Protestantism. And can those be looked upon as friends to that cause who put such unanswerable arguments in the hands of its adversaries?— Wherefore, I earnestly conjure all my zealous countrymen, who would undertake to write against Popery, not to ruin their cause by such an unwarrantable and unchristian management of it. Are there not sufficient grounds from the real doctrine of Papists to show the absurdity of their tenets? Why then have recourse to falsehood? Why betray the truth by a behaviour so much below the dignity of a man of honour? Why give the adversary such arms against one’s self, by a conduct no less unjust than infamous? Examine, therefore, the ground before you enter the lists; know your adversary before you engage with him; and study well his real tenets before you attack them.

I dare say, what I have hitherto advanced is sufficient to convince you how little our author deserves the character of being an able defender of the Protestant cause, and how little the world is obliged to him for this performance; in which he has offered such unpardonable insults to the judgments of his readers, and used such vile insinuating artifice to corrupt their hearts by surprising their understandings. Neither are these examples, I have brought, the only instances of the kind which he has advanced; several other such like are interspersed through the whole piece; some of which I shall have occasion to take notice of afterwards, and, in the mean time, as what is above is more than sufficient to demon-

strate the fatal consequences this sermon may have to the Protestant religion, I shall now proceed to consider the effects it may have on Christianity itself.

But, in the first place, after what we have seen, will any man say, that this sermon is the *production of a candid, of a humane, of a charitable heart?* Can its author have the most distant pretensions to the character of that Divine, that God-like virtue of charity, after such uncharitable, such unchristian behaviour? Indeed, if charity consists in venting the most horrid calumnies against our innocent fellow creatures, in blackening their character with the most odious colours, in pointing them out as objects of public hatred and aversion, in sowing the seeds of eternal discord between the members of Jesus Christ, in corrupting the hearts of our brethren with the most irreconcilable enmity against their fellow Christians; if, I say, charity consists in these things, then it must be candidly acknowledged, that no one has a better pretension to that virtue than the author of this sermon. But alas! my friends, by the author's own confession, these are the evident fruits of the diabolical spirit, not of the Spirit of God; for, as he himself tells us, page 121. *We know no worse devils than contention, bitterness, spiritual pride, uncharitable judgments, detractions, malevolence; "it must be owned " then, that the affinity of this sermon with those " infernal beings cannot reasonably be disputed."* With what an ill grace then do those exhortations to charity which we find towards the close of his Sermon, come from such a pen! *Let us never, (says he), descend to the unchristian artifice of ingratiating ourselves by traducing others. . . Nay, where*

*we know we meet with this treatment from others, let us abhor the thought of retaliating; imitating rather the conduct of our Lord, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. Let our great policy for influencing those of other communions, be, to show forth in every thing, the meekness, the gentleness, the moderation of Christ.* How well the author has observed these heavenly maxims, how strictly he has adhered to them in practice, let what we have seen above, from his own sermon, demonstrate: But we need not be surpris'd at these warm exhortations to charity from such a hand. We are assured from the word of God itself, that *Satan can transform himself into an angel of light,* when occasion requires it for deluding souls; and that he quoted scripture to tempt our Saviour.

I observed above, in the beginning of this Epistle, that our author gives strong specimens in this sermon of his being no less an enemy to Christianity than to Protestantism. I have shown how just reasons we have to suspect him of this last, and shall now proceed to show the dangerous stab he endeavours to give to the former. I must first, however, detect a piece of logical sleight which he is guilty of, very unworthy indeed of a philosopher; but which could not well fail to impose upon inattentive readers, and produce in their minds the effect he intended. The great end he has in view in the bulk of his sermon, is to persuade his readers, that the whole Christian world had fallen into the grossest superstition, and to excite in their minds the most shocking idea of that crime. For this purpose, he begins by giving a description of superstition, and justly enough observes, That it consists in



that slavish fear of a Superiour being, which rises in the mind without any reasonable cause, and which seeks for a remedy in things of its own invention, no ways proportioned to, or connected with the effect intended, that is, to give it in his own words, p. 17.: “ The panicks of superstition often arise  
 “ unaccountably, at least from no adequate cause,  
 “ and *always tend* to what is insignificant, if not  
 “ pernicious—Even where there is a real cause  
 “ of fear, the effect we should often call ridicu-  
 “ lous—The fears of the people are alarmed by  
 “ a general calamity. At once ignorant, timid  
 “ and credulous, they will admit any thing as  
 “ the cause of their suffering, and will recur to  
 “ any thing, as an expedient for relieving them,  
 “ which *the knavery or folly* of those they have a  
 “ confidence in shall suggest.” Here we have a very just, though hideous, description of superstition in its proper colours; which our author displays more at large, both before and after the passage here cited. And, from what he says, we may observe, *1mo*, That superstition always supposes a real fear of evil, whether this fear arises from a real or imaginary cause. *2do*, That it *always tends to what is insignificant, if not pernicious*, as a means to remedy this evil. *3tio*, That the mind being clouded with this fear, is apt to be imposed upon by whatever *knavery or folly* shall suggest, and to have recourse to any remedy proposed by them, though in no respect proportioned, or even conducive to the effect intended, either of its own nature, or by any Divine appointment. *4to*, That it is accompanied, however, with a firm belief and full persuasion of obtaining the desired benefit from those insignificant means in which it confides. And this last is properly the essential

part of superstition ; the other parts of it, without this, being only affectation or folly. The superstition of the Heathens was attended with all these conditions. They were oppressed with a slavish, though most groundless, fear of the anger of their pretended gods, who were nothing but dumb idols, or at best but devils. They had recourse to the most insignificant, and often pernicious, means to appease them, or to obtain favours from them ; witness all their superstitious rites ; their cutting themselves with knives, as Baal's prophets did, and their human sacrifices. They were the dupes of the knavery and folly of their diviners and augurs, having recourse to whatever was suggested by them as a remedy to the evil they feared, though never so unconnected with the end proposed ; such as that mentioned by our author, of driving a nail through a door, to put a stop to the pestilence ; and they had an entire confidence in these means, and firmly expected a remedy from them. The same observations hold equally true in many Christians, who allow themselves to be gulled by fortune-tellers and diviners, and have recourse to the idle and inadequate means suggested by them, either for obtaining some good, or averting evil ; of which, I am sorry to say, there are too many instances among the country-people in this island ; and especially, as I have been informed, in that part of it to which our author belongs. So much, then, for the true nature of superstition, according to the genuine description of it laid down by this writer.

He then goes on to observe, with just regret, how much the chosen people under the old law were apt to be influenced by this demon of su-

perdition. This is a truth no one, who has read the Bible, will call in question; the continual proneness of that people to forsake the service and worship of the true God, the God of their fathers, and to rush headlong into all the vain and superstitious rites of their Heathen neighbours, even so as to *sacrifice their sons and daughters to devils*, Psal. cvi. 37. 38. are convincing proofs of its fatal influence among them. But what surprises me, is to find, That our author makes no use of these just and obvious proofs to show the superstition of the Israelites; but brings them in guilty of that crime for a reason the most foreign to the principles he himself had laid down about the nature of it, that can possibly be imagined; because, forsooth, they were diligent and assiduous in offering up to Almighty God those holy sacrifices he had appointed as a part of their religion, and as a means to appease his anger, and which, therefore, he expressly required at their hands! Could it ever have entered into your minds, that such a reason as this would ever have been alledged by any man of sense, to prove that the Israelites were guilty of superstition, after laying down the above description of it? Superstition, says our author, *always tends to what is insignificant, if not pernicious; and has recourse to whatever knavery or folly shall suggest.* Tell me, then, Were the sacrifices of the law *insignificant or pernicious?* Were they not types and emblems of Jesus Christ, and as such most agreeable to Almighty God? Was the ignorant, timid and credulous people, induced to have recourse to these sacrifices by *the knavery and folly of those who had their confidence?* Did not God himself express-



ly command them to be offered up to him, as an essential part of his then religion, and as one means, among others, to appease his wrath enkindled by sin? Does he not tell us himself, Levit. vi. 7. after giving orders for the trespass-offering, *That the priest shall make atonement for him (the sinner) before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he has done in trespassing therein?* Do we not see, among others, a most remarkable example how efficacious these sacrifices were to appease the wrath of God, and to stop his vengeance against sinners, in Numb. xvi.; where we learn, that a violent plague was sent upon the people for their murmuring, of which no less than fourteen thousand and seven hundred died almost in an instant; and yet, no sooner did Aaron offer up the sacrifice of incense in atonement for their sin, then God was immediately appeased, and the plague stopped? Were not the sons of Eli condemned as guilty of a very *great sin before the Lord*, because, by their evil conduct, the people were hindered and kept back from offering up these sacrifices? 1 Sam. ii. 17. And does not Almighty God often complain by his prophets of the negligence of the people in performing this duty, and for offering up improper victims? These, and numberless other considerations of the like nature, of which the Old Testament is full, show convincingly, that the sacrifices of the old law were expressly ordained by Almighty God, as an essential and most necessary part of his religion, thereby to render him that external honour which was due to him, and as a means, among others, to appease his wrath enkindled by sin. And shall the assiduity of the people in performing this duty, be alledged as a



proof of their being superstitious? What connection has this with superstition?

“ But (says our author) they had but too strong a propensity to imagine, that for *the most atrocious crimes*, they could atone by numerous and costly victims. Nor did they im-  
 “ molate these agreeably to the intention of their law, as symbolical expressions of gratitude or of penance, and as engagements to reformation ; but as a proper equivalent for benefits received and satisfaction for sins committed, and consequently as a full discharge of all the debts they owed to the Divine justice.” How many misrepresentations are contained in these few lines ! how apt to inflame the imagination of the incautious reader, and carry off his attention from the sleight used by the author ! but how little to the author’s purpose when properly attended to ! In the first place then, I admit, that the Jews believed, that their sacrifices were a partial means to please God of his own appointment, and most efficacious for that end, when joined with the other conditions required ; and the above considerations from scripture evidently show, that they were so. But can our author bring one single plain text from these sacred oracles, to prove, that they believed or imagined, that by numerous and costly victims *alone* they could atone for the most atrocious crimes, or even for any crimes at all ? And yet this is what the above caricatura necessarily supposes, or it is only words in the air. Again what does our author mean by *numerous and costly victims* ? does the scripture condemn that people for doing more than their law required in the sacri-

fices they offered, either as to number or value? for this is what he would insinuate by that expression. We often indeed find complaints against them for offering the worst of their things to God; for which very reason the prophet Malachi tells them, that their sacrifices were at last to be entirely rejected; but where do we find them blamed for offering *too numerous or too costly victims*? Can our author bring one single plain text that accuseth them of this? How unworthy then is it in one, who pretends to be *a master of Israel*, to use such unjust exaggerations against God's chosen people? But what shall we say of the following most uncharitable assertion, when he affirms, *That they looked upon these exterior sacrifices alone* (for this is necessarily supposed, otherwise he only fights with a shadow) *as a proper equivalent for favours received, and consequently, as a full discharge of all the debts they owed to the Divine justice*? I dare the author to produce one single text of the whole scripture that asserts this; and till he produce such a text, we must necessarily look upon this whole passage as an artful texture of falsehood and misrepresentation, to impose upon his readers.

But does he not bring texts to prove his theme? Does he not cite the very words of the fiftieth Psalm, *where Almighty God complains of the grossness and absurdity of their sentiments*? Nothing can show more clearly the dearth of proof under which our author labours, than this very Psalm which he has cited, and which contains the most convincing proof against himself, as will easily appear, if we consider the context and the scope of the Psalm. The scope and general design of this Psalm is to warn sinners to repent-

ance, from the consideration of the general judgment; and it is divided into three parts. In the first six verses is contained a striking description of the awful majesty of God, when he shall come at the last day to *judge his people*. In the second part, which ends with the fifteenth verse, is related what God will then say to his faithful servants; and the very first thing he tells them is, that *he will not reprove them for their sacrifices or their burnt-offerings*; for in these they had done faithfully what he had ordered them, and had offered them up *continually before him*, v. 8.: besides, that these things were of their own nature less essential, and of which he had no need upon his own account, and were only a duty because commanded; and, therefore, he has only to exhort them to be equally diligent in joining with these the interior sacrifice of thanksgiving, obedience and confidence in him, in all their tribulations. In the third and last part, he addresses himself to sinners, and severely reproaches them, by no means for superstition, or thinking to cancel *atrocious crimes by costly victims*, as our author would have us believe; there is not a single hint of this in all he says to them; but he reproaches them for their hypocrisy, in daring to put on an outward shew of piety, by *declaring his statutes, and taking his covenant in their mouth*, whilst in their hearts they *hated instruction, and cast his words behind them*, and took part with thieves, and adulterers, and slandered their brother by lies and calumnies; for which things he threatens to *tear them in pieces, when there will be none to deliver them*. Let our author look to himself here; and let any one judge what a perversion of the scripture it is, to bring in this Psalm as a proof

of the horrid crime which he charges upon the people of God, of looking upon *costly victims alone as a full discharge of all they owed to the Divine justice!* The very first text he cites from it to prove this, is spoken by Almighty God to his faithful servants, to whom he declares, in express terms, that he has nothing to find fault with in regard to their sacrifices: *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings,* says he, *to have been continually before me,* v. 8. Now, would the Almighty have had nothing to reprove them for in their sacrifices, if they had used them in the criminal manner alledged by our author? And, as for what he says to sinners, how ridiculous is it in our author to tell us, that God “acquaints them, that as long as they continued insensible and impenitent, the very oblations they offered, served but to aggravate their guilt;” and cites, in proof of this, these words, spoken indeed to them, “*What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?*” when it is evident, that in all that passage there is not one single word either of *impenitence*, or *oblations*, or *offerings*, or *aggravations of guilt*; but a reproof for hypocrisy and crimes? Open your eyes, ye admirers of this sermon; see here in what manner you are deluded under a shew of scripture, and read in your too hasty approbation, the subtlety indeed and address of the author; but, at the same time, the humiliating lesson of your own weakness!

But, at least, does not what he cites from Isaiah come nearer the point? Is not that something more to his purpose? Read the whole passage, from the 10th to the 21st verse of the first chap-



ter of that prophet, and then you will be able to judge. There we find Almighty God declaring, that the sacrifices, and oblations, and incense, and holydays, and even prayers of his people, were not only useless to the offerers, but even iniquitous and criminal; and, therefore, an abomination to him, and a trouble to him, and that his soul hated them, and that he was weary of them: But why so? those things were surely agreeable to God of themselves? He expressly commanded his people to perform them; nay, he declares, that all these things which he had commanded them in his law were righteous: *What nation, says he, is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day, Deut. iv. 8.* And, does he not every where declare, that not only the sacrifices themselves, the things offered; but also the altar, the vessels, the instruments, used in offering them, were all most holy? Does he not command the utmost respect to be paid to them? Does he not severely punish those who pollute or profane them? Dan. v. What is it then that he finds fault with by Isaiah in his people? Is it for pretending to atone for their crimes, by performing these duties? Far from it; the prophet gives no such reason; nay, we have seen above, that these things were expressly appointed by Almighty God, as a partial means for this very end: but he tells us plainly, that what he blames in them was the profaning these sacred institutions, for presuming to offer these holy sacrifices with polluted hands, with *hands full of blood,* as God himself nervously expresses it, v. 15. But what connection is there between this and the superstition with which the author charges them?

Had he brought this text to prove them guilty of sacrilege, of profaning holy things, he would have done something to the purpose; but to alledge it as a proof, That that people believed they could *atone for the most atrocious crimes by numerous and costly victims alone*, has something in it peculiarly insulting to the reader's understanding. Upon the whole, then, we must conclude, that the strong caricatura the author draws to warm his reader's imagination, and persuade him the people of God were guilty of the crimes he lays to their charge, is all a fiction of his own, without any foundation in truth or scripture.

In fact, the real case is this: Almighty God in those days required several duties from his people, in order to gain and preserve his favour, as he does from us Christians at present; some of these consisted in the interior dispositions of the heart, others in the exterior duties of religion; both the one and the other were necessarily to be performed; the former as being essentially required of their own nature, as well as commanded; the latter as being expressly ordained and commanded by Almighty God for that end. This the Jews perfectly well knew; it was continually inculcated to them, both in their law and by their prophets; and we may, with equal reason, say, that Christians do not know, or do not believe, that repentance and amendment of life is necessary for salvation, because Christian preachers are continually inculcating the necessity of these things to the people, and assuring them, that exactness in exterior duties without these will not do; as to say, that the Jews did not know, or did not believe, that the same conditions were required of them also, and that the external sacrifices would

not do alone, because they are frequently put in mind of this by their prophets. The performance of these last, however, was more easy, and cost little to self-love; the former were more difficult, and more repugnant to flesh and blood: the natural consequence was, that that carnal minded people were diligent and punctual in performing what was exterior and easy; but, influenced by their passions, and following the bent of their corrupt inclinations, in opposition to what they knew to be their duty, were negligent and careless in cleansing and reforming the inward man. This neglect, this carelessness is, what Almighty God frequently reproveth them for by his prophets. But can this be called superstition? Does the being diligent in performing one branch of duty and omitting others, deserve that severe condemnation? If so, I am afraid, few of us will escape the imputation. And, though the expressions used by the prophets sometimes seem to condemn the external duties, when performed without the interior dispositions, yet we have seen that this condemnation falls not upon the things themselves, but upon the abuse, the profanation of them; and, we may, with equal reason, call it superstition in the wicked to pray, because the scripture assures, that *the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*; or in sinners to praise God, because *praise is not comely in the mouth of a sinner*; or in the unworthy receiver to approach to the Holy Communion, because, by so doing, he profanes these sacred mysteries; *is guilty of the body and blood of our Lord, and eats and drinks damnation to himself*. In a word, to prove the Jews guilty of superstition, from their



diligence in performing all the exterior of their religion, in a manner worthy of a philosopher, and consequentially to his own principles, our author must show, *1mo*, That the exterior of religion, in the old law, was *all insignificant or pernicious*; *2do*, That it was the *suggestions of knavery or folly*; *3tio*, That it was no-wise proportioned nor conducive to the effect intended, *viz.* the appeasing Almighty God, neither of its own nature, nor by Divine appointment; and, *4to*, That that people, however, had a firm persuasion and a full belief of obtaining that end from these insignificant means *alone*; for, all these four conditions are required, according to our author's own description of it, to constitute the *demon superstition*. Till these, therefore, be clearly proved, we must rest fully satisfied, that it is quite unphilosophical in our author to pretend to prove the people of God guilty of superstition from this head.

But, you will say, To what purpose insist so long in detecting our author's sophistry upon this point? The reason is this, Because, it is upon this sophistry alone, that he builds all the charges of superstition which he makes against Christians of every denomination, and from it draws consequences subversive of Christianity itself. He is determined, at all events, to condemn the whole Christian world of the ugly monster *superstition*. The only handle that can be laid hold on to bring this about, is the great reverence and esteem which all Christians pay to the exterior parts of religion, especially their sacraments. He is well aware, however, that they believe, and pretend they can prove, that many of these external duties, and especially the sacraments, were expressly instituted and ordained by Jesus Christ him-



self, as an essential part of his religion, and as a powerful means, among others, when properly used, for sanctifying the soul; and, therefore, justly deserving all the reverence and esteem paid to them. To prove them guilty of superstition from this handle, the plain and obvious method would be to show, that these things were not instituted nor commanded by Jesus Christ; that they in no respect contribute to sanctify the souls of those that use them properly; that they are *mere human inventions, frivolous and insignificant; the suggestions of knavery and folly*. Had he done this, he would have done something to the purpose, and acted consequentially to his own principles. But he was well aware how difficult a task this would be. He knew his adversaries were too well armed for the combat, and, therefore, he wisely chose to decline the fight, and seek for that victory in sleight and deception; which he could never have expected in the open field. For this end, he begins by giving a just description of the true nature of superstition, adding such circumstances as naturally would excite in the mind an abhorrence and detestation of it; then he cunningly makes a transition from its true nature, to what, with a little gilding of rhetorick, is made to bear a resemblance to the monster; and, by this means, the name being still retained, though the thing be changed, the unattentive reader, ere he is aware, is brought in to give verdict against the Jews as guilty of all the horrors of superstition for their diligence in performing the exterior of their religion, though commanded by God himself; this being once gained, the parallel is very easy, to bring in the Christian world as guilty of the same

from a similar reason. This parallel, however, he does not draw immediately after his condemnation of the Jews; but having prepared his reader for it, he adds, “ We shall afterwards have occasion to observe, that many, who have been more highly favoured than even Israel was, and more fully enlightened by the celestial beams of Divine truth, have not escaped incurring the same imputation.” In this manner he lays the foundation of his impious doctrine, of which it was necessary to detect the malice and weakness, that the superstructure which he builds upon it may be more solidly overturned; which I shall now endeavour to do, and first, by examining what he says of self-denials and mortification.

From what the author acknowledges, p. 53. that it is a duty of religion *to subdue sensual desires; to bring the body into subjection to the law of the mind; that it is even necessary not to be votaries of pleasure, if we would be agreeable to God; and that we must avoid covetousness, and restrain all anxiety about worldly things;* from those concessions, I say, it evidently follows, that some degree of voluntary mortification is absolutely necessary; since, without that, it is impossible to comply with these duties; nay, since it is plain, that these duties essentially consist in some degree of such mortification. If we consider attentively what was advanced above by the Roman Catholic from the scripture, in vindication of what his church teaches concerning the practice of self-denial, we will be forced to acknowledge, that the plain obvious sense of the scripture greatly authorizes such voluntary acts of mortification. To what is there said, I must add a little more here of the scripture-doctrine, concerning volun-

tary poverty and celibacy; which seem to be the two points of self-abnegation, at which our author has a particular aversion. With regard to the former, St Paul writing to Timothy upon this head, says, *They that will be rich fall into temptations, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil,* 1 Tim. vi. 9. I do not know if a stronger expression could be used to convince men of the danger of loving money, and of the desire of acquiring riches, than what the apostle here uses; and the natural consequence of this text is, that, to lay aside all desire of becoming rich, to be perfectly content with the absolutely necessaries of life, is not only a most efficacious means of avoiding that *destruction and perdition* which Almighty God assures us is the consequence of the desire of riches, but also of advancing the soul in virtue and perfection, by freeing us from all those *temptations and snares, and* rooting out those *foolish and hurtful lusts* which spring from the same corrupted source. The apostle, therefore, conformable to this doctrine, advises us in the preceding verse, that *having food and raiment, therewith we should be content.* Now, considering the propensity of our nature to the love and desire of riches, the attaining this very disposition of indifference towards them, which the scripture here lays down as so necessary, is a very high degree of mortification, and, doubtless, will require many severe struggles with self-love, many severe voluntary self-denials, before one can perfectly acquire it. Our blessed Saviour, however, in the gospel, goes a step further upon this head, and not only recommends *poverty of spirit, or the want of affec-*



tion or desire for riches, by pronouncing a blessing upon it, and assuring us that the kingdom of heaven will be its happy reward, *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,* Matth. v. 3. But, he expressly recommends and exhorts us to the voluntary practice of *actual poverty*, as the ultimate steps to lead us to Christian-perfection, and promises eternal happiness as the reward of those who practise it. Let us only consider the account given us by the two Evangelists, St Matthew and St Mark, of what passed upon this subject; *And there came one running, and kneeled to him and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* Mark x. 17. *And he said unto him, If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments,* Matth. xix. 17. *The young man said unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: What lack I yet?* (ibid.) *And Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest,* Mark x. *If thou wilt be perfect go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven;* Matth. xix. *and come take up the cross and follow me,* Mark x. This beautiful passage needs no comment, it speaks for its own meaning in the most intelligible terms: A person puts the very question to the Son of God; what he had to do in order to be saved? He is immediately answered, That, to enter into life, the first step is, to keep the commandments. Supported by the testimony of a good conscience, he replies, That this he had constantly done from his youth upwards, and demanded what more was still wanting? Christ upon this beholding him, *loved him*; a sure sign, that what he had said was true: and thereupon, desirous of carrying him to the summit of perfection, he



told him, that one thing was yet wanting for that purpose, and that was, *The giving all he had to the poor, and the following Jesus Christ in actual poverty, and in carrying the cross*; now I demand, could our blessed Redeemer have declared in stronger terms how excellent a means voluntary actual poverty is for leading our souls to perfection? This young man had lived an innocent and holy life in continual obedience to the commands of God, so as even to be beloved by Jesus Christ on that account; yet this was not enough, one thing was still wanting, and that, by the express declaration of Christ, was the practice of voluntary poverty, in order to complete the work of his perfection; and that this, in the very literal sense, was our Saviour's meaning, is plain from what follows: The apostles had actually left all they had in this world to follow Christ in poverty, and in the cross; and St Peter, on this occasion, puts his Master in mind they had done so, *Lo!* (says he), *we have left all and followed thee*, Mark. x. 28. And Jesus immediately encouraged them, and all who should afterwards follow their example in that respect, by the glorious promise he made, That whosoever should leave any thing in this life for his sake, should receive the hundred fold here, *viz.* in that interior peace and content which should be their portion in this life, &c. and, in the world to come, life everlasting. I shall not from these texts draw such consequences in favour of the monastical or eremitical state of life as a Roman Catholick would probably do; every intelligent reader will easily see what advantage he may make of the above testimonies in favour of his tenets; all that I shall contend for as the plain and obvious truth contained in the above passages of holy scriptures, is,

That voluntarily to divest ourselves of what we possess in this world for the sake of Jesus Christ, in order thereby to be enabled to serve him with the greater purity of heart, and with the greater security, is by no means against the spirit of Christianity, is even recommended in the strongest terms by Christ himself, as a most necessary means to arrive at Christian-perfection, and to procure an ample reward from him: and whosoever refuses to subscribe to this with me, is bound to show, from texts of scripture as plain as those I have here cited, that what I contend for is not the plain and obvious meaning of these texts, or that St Paul and our Saviour were only in jest in what they said.

Having thus seen what the sacred scripture teaches concerning voluntary poverty, let us now consider what idea it gives us of the state of celibacy. That the care of a wife and family, and the obligation of providing for them is a great weight upon the mind, that it is very apt to foment our natural attachment to riches, that it fills the mind with a thousand worldly thoughts and solitudes, and is of course a very great hinderance to our applying with the whole bent of the soul to the *one thing necessary*, by distracting the heart and dividing the affections, is a truth which daily experience convincingly teaches us, and which the holy apostle St Paul declares in express terms, both with regard to men and women: On the contrary, that a person who is free from these distractions, and has nothing to think of but what concerns his advancement in purity of heart and christian perfection, can apply himself with greater freedom to these holy duties, make greater advances in them, and adhere with greater ardour and a more

fervent love to Jesus Christ, having nothing to divide his affections from him, is no less conformable, to reason, to experience, and to the word of God than the former. Let us see how St Paul expresses himself upon this subject, “ *I would have you, (says he), without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin: The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction,* 1 Cor. vii. 32, &c. You see here how beautifully this great apostle describes the pre-eminency of the unmarried above the married state, from these very considerations I mentioned above, and almost in the same words; he does not condemn the married state; far from it: on the contrary, he well knew how honourable that is, and how necessary for the bulk of mankind, and had a little above in this same chapter exhorted those who have not the gift of continency to enter into it; and, therefore, in the passage I have cited, he does not command us to embrace the single state, lest he should *lay a snare upon us*, by laying a command on all, which all have not the ability to perform; but, he exhorts us to it, by setting forth the excellency of it, the ease and freedom of mind that accompany it, the liberty it gives the soul to attend to God without anxiety, and with



the whole bent of her affections; and he wishes that we should embrace it, *I would have you (says he) be without carefulness, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction; and, conformable to this doctrine, he concludes a little after: So then, he that giveth his virgin in marriage doth well: but he that giveth her not in marriage doth better: thereby clearly pointing out both the excellency of the married state, and the super-excellency of the unmarried state above it. But there is nothing which more clearly shows us the great pre-eminency of the unmarried state, than the glorious and especial rewards prepared for those who embrace it in heaven, by which they are distinguished from all the other saints in that happy kingdom. These are described to us by the beloved disciple, from what he saw himself, in the following words: And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads—And they sung as it were a new song before the throne—and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty-four thousand that are redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. Rev. xiv. 1. &c.* Nothing sure can give us a more exalted idea of the holy state of virginity, than these peculiar marks of honour and favour which, we are here assured, are prepared in heaven for those who embrace it. They have the sacred and adorable name of the Father written on their fore-



*heads*; to distinguish them from all the other saints, and to show how dearly they belong to him; their happy and delightful employment is to be continually *singing a new song* in praise of their heavenly spouse, which no other saint can sing; nay, nor so much as learn, but themselves: they are the immediate attendants upon Jesus Christ, *following the Lamb*, as his chaste and holy spouses, *where-ever he goes*; they are in a special manner chosen and redeemed from among men, having received the sacred gift of chastity, which was not bestowed upon all: in a word, they are the first-fruits unto God, the most chosen flowers of his church, and without guile or fault before his throne. How glorious are these sacred prerogatives! how excellent that holy state which procures them! I omit several other testimonies of holy scripture to the same purpose; these being fully sufficient for all I pretend to prove, which is, That voluntarily to deprive one's self of the carnal pleasures of the married state, and to embrace a life of perpetual chastity, in order thereby to be more at liberty to serve God, and attend to the advancement of the soul in purity and Divine love, is by no means contrary to the spirit of Christianity, but most conformable thereto; nay, a most powerful means to purify the soul, and to make great progress in perfection; and for which there are most distinguishing rewards prepared by God in the life to come.

If then these things be so; if, as our author acknowledges, the exercises of self-denial be, at least in some degree, absolutely necessary; if they be authorized in the most general terms by the holy scripture; if voluntary poverty, and a life

of perpetual chastity, be so conformable to the doctrine of Christianity, and so efficacious means to advance the soul in purity of affections and in Divine love, what idea shall we form of the principles of our author, who has used the utmost effort of his genius and art to persuade his readers, that all these things are no better than heathen superstition? Is not this giving a stab to the very vitals of the Christian religion? But let us see the disingenuous methods he uses for this end. First, to pre-occupy the reader's judgement against them, he begins, p. 53. as we have seen above, by condemning the practices of those virtues as *extravagancies the most marvellous, the most frantic, as dishonouring the name of religion, as rendering men worse than useless.* Then he goes on, by a base misrepresentation, to tell his reader, that the Papists (who, to the shame of the Reformation, are the only people that make profession of practising these virtues so highly recommended by the word of God, he represents them, I say,) as placing perfection in the external practices of those virtues alone, and, therefore, carrying them to an extravagant excess, in order thereby, as they imagine, to be the more perfect. Lastly, by the help of the logical sleight above detected, he condemns them for so doing of the demon Superstition, and brings them in upon an equal footing in this respect with the *votaries of Baal*, the Mahometan dervises, the Indian fakiers, and the Chinese bonzas. Good God! is it possible the man can be a Christian who talks at this rate? What! are the sacred virtues of following Christ, in self-denial, voluntary poverty, and perpetual chastity, *insignificant or pernicious*; as all the vain cruelties exercised upon themselves by these Turks and

Heathens most undoubtedly are? Are these Christian virtues, which are so warmly recommended to us by Almighty God in his holy word, are they, I say, the *suggestions of knavery and folly*, as the practices of those Heathens are by all Christians confessed to be? Does the daily and continual exercise of those holy virtues bear no proportion to the end proposed to be obtained by them, *viz.* the purifying the soul, and advancing her in Divine love? or do the higher austerities of the fakiers and bonzas contribute as much to the obtaining their ends, the appeasing the wrath of their dumb idols, and obtaining favours from them? Or, finally, have these Christian virtues, practised in honour of the God of heaven, and by the counsel and recommendation of Jesus Christ himself, have they, I say, no more efficacy to obtain favour from him, *than the tortures so unmercifully inflicted on their own flesh by the Chinese bonzas, in honour of the demon Fo?* Be ashamed, O Britain! that such blasphemies should be published to the world by any of your unhappy sons. But what terms shall I find sufficient to express what our *worthy* author adds here in his notes, to the disgrace of the name of a Christian? Having told us in the text, that for their god Fo the Chinese bonzas *con over their rosaries, and make processions and pilgrimages*, he adds, in the note: “ But whether the syllables, *O mi to Fo*,  
 “ pronounced by a Chinese, have more or less  
 “ virtue than the syllables *Jesu, Maria*, pronoun-  
 “ ced by a Romanist, let him, who thinks a sound  
 “ mind hath any concern in religion, say.” Sayest thou so, my friend! Is it then a doubt with thee, whether the invocation of the devil, or a dumb idol, or the calling upon the Lord Jesus



Christ, have more or less virtue in it? And will any doubt remain after this with thy Christian readers, whether or not the author of this sermon be a Christian? It is not my province here to inquire, how far the Papists are justifiable in their rosaries, processions, or pilgrimages, and in their invocations of the names of Jesus and Mary; let them answer for these things themselves: but this we are certain of, that whatever they do of this kind, is intended by them in honour of the true God, and of Jesus Christ his Son; and if what they do with this intention be not in itself a criminal or prohibited action, certainly the doing it with the view of honouring God, renders it, at least excuseable, if not justifiable; for it is an undoubted principle of sound morality, that every action, of itself indifferent, takes its whole praise or blame from the intention with which it is used. My taking a walk, for example, to Hide-park, is in itself neither good nor evil: if I go there on purpose to meet a poor man, and give him an alms, this design makes my going there an act of Christian charity, even though I should not meet with the object: on the contrary, if I go there with the intention of picking some one's pocket, or committing a robbery; this intention, without doubt, makes my going an act of injustice, and offensive to God, even though I should miss my design. In the same manner, my taking a journey to Jerusalem, considered in itself, is a thing perfectly indifferent, neither good nor evil: if my motive for going there be merely to satisfy a vain curiosity, and to be able afterwards to vaunt that I have seen these places; my journey, by this means, becomes a journey of pride and vanity: but if, on the contrary, my



desire of seeing those countries be for love to Jesus Christ, to excite in my heart more feeling sentiments of devotion towards him, by the moving sight of those very places where he was pleased to perform the great work of our redemption; let any one, who has ever felt the effects of love in his breast, say, whether, in this case, my pilgrimage to Jerusalem would be an act of devotion, and agreeable to God, or an act of demoniacal superstition, as our author would have it? But (says he) *the Chinese bonzas make processions and pilgrimages in honour of their god Fo.* What then? Why? the consequence our author would wish to lead us to, by his sophistical argumentation, detected above at large, is this: “ These exterior  
 “ acts in honour of the idol Fo, are certainly su-  
 “ perstitious: Israel, in like manner, *as we have*  
 “ *seen above,* from their attachment to the exte-  
 “ rior of their religion *alone,* were guilty of the  
 “ like superstition; therefore the same exterior  
 “ professions of our devotion towards the only  
 “ living and true God, are superstitions also. *Su-*  
 “ *perstition* (says he) *is the same under every deno-*  
 “ *mination; the form and the garb may be different,*  
 “ *but the spirit is the same.*” And in this lies the whole force and energy of his argument. But, my God! what a strange way of arguing is this in the mouth of a Christian? What! because the devil, who always wants to imitate the works of God, inspires his votaries to honour him by the same exterior actions by which Christians endeavour to honour the God of heaven, shall we, therefore, conclude, that these last, done in honour of God, are no less criminal and superstitious than those done in honour of the devil? May we not, with equal reason, say, that

it is criminal and superstitious to pray to the true God, because the Heathens also pray to their false deities? Our author readily grants the consequence, and fairly acknowledges, that a Christian invoking the name of Jesus, Son of Mary, can reap no more benefit by it, than a Chinese bonza calling upon the idol Fo!

I come now to consider another grand attempt which this author makes to undermine the Christian religion, by endeavouring, under an appearance of zeal for its simplicity and purity, to enervate the whole force and efficacy of its sacraments. Before he comes close to the point upon this head, he prepares his reader's mind by throwing out, in his usual way, several gross misrepresentations and unjust sneers at what he terms the corruptions of ritual worship; but speaks with such confusion and seeming incoherency upon this subject that the reader is confounded and scarce knows what he would be at: only, from the severe censures passed upon these corruptions, and the odious terms used in speaking of them, there is impressed in the mind a secret indignation and aversion at something, without being told for a while what that something is, and a readiness, or even impatience to pass sentence of condemnation upon it when ever the writer shall be pleased to discover it. When in this manner he has inflamed the imagination to the pitch he wants it, he then discovers the odious monster, which is the folly of believing that the sacraments of Jesus Christ are ordained and appointed by him as an efficacious means of bringing his heavenly grace to our souls!

Time will not allow me to point out the several inconsistencies which our author is guilty of

on this subject, nor to clear up the real doctrine of Christianity concerning religious ceremonies in general, from the calumnies and false lights under which he represents them. I shall, therefore, confine myself solely to what our religion teaches us concerning the sacraments; this being by far of most importance, and what the author chiefly wants to destroy. In doing this I am under no necessity of appearing as an advocate for any particular set of Christians: The Church of England and the Church of Rome are here embarked on the same bottom; their doctrine in this respect is much the same as to the nature and efficacy of the sacraments; they only differ as to the number they admit: The Greek church, and all the different churches in the East, teach the same doctrine, in which also most of the Protestant churches abroad, the Calvinists excepted, agree; and, even among the Calvinists themselves, our author's antichristian system has not been universally received; their people in general are still strongly persuaded of the necessity of baptism for salvation, notwithstanding the opinion of many of their leaders to the contrary. It is therefore the common cause of Christianity which I am here to engage in against a writer, who, by the subtile address with which he endeavours to rob it of one of its greatest treasures, convincingly shews how little he is a friend to that sacred institution.

Experience teaches us, that there are many disputes in the world, carried on with the greatest acrimony, which would entirely cease, were the points in debate clearly explained. Truth carries that amiable quality along with it, that, in



many cases, a plain, simple, distinct explication of it, is its best proof, and the opposition it meets with, for the most part, has its principal source in ignorance and misapprehension. This is particularly true of all those truths of Christianity which are founded in the law of nature, for, upon hearing these proposed to us, we immediately acknowledge them to be just and true: Even those supernatural truths, which we know only from revelation, carry along with them something so endearing, so comforting to our weakness, so suited to our wants, and so worthy of the Supreme being, that a sincere mind, sensible of its own miseries, when it becomes properly acquainted with them, and is not warped by prejudice, nor hardened by its passions, cannot help being inclined to believe them, and wishing they were true, even before he considers the proofs of their being so. Nay, the very positive institutions of Christianity themselves, those external ordinances which its author was pleased to make use of for our benefit, are so well adapted to the ends for which they are appointed, and show such an amiable condescension to our infirmities as greatly influences the mind in their favours.

Man, under the guilt of sin, and in disgrace with his Maker, is doubtless in a most miserable situation; being separated from Jesus Christ, like the vine-branch cut off from the vine, he is fit only to be cast into the fire and to be burned, John xv. Neither is it in his own power, in this unhappy state, to do the smallest thing, or take the least step towards his salvation, or for recovering the favour of his God, without a particular assistance of the grace of God to enable him to do so: *Without me, (says Jesus Christ), you can do*



*nothing*, John xv. 5. The grace of justification, by which we are cleansed from the guilt of our sins, and restored to the friendship and favour of God, is of such infinite value, that it is impossible for sinful man, by his own natural strength, ever to do any thing that can deserve it; it is a free gift of God bestowed upon us, out of his infinite liberality and mercy, through the merits of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. But then, as this grace of God, both that by which we are cleansed from our sins, and that by which we are enabled to do good, is the pure gift of God, he does not bestow it upon all promiscuously; he being free master of his own gifts may surely demand what conditions he pleases upon our part, to dispose us for receiving them, and may appoint what means he pleases for bestowing them upon us; those, who, being properly disposed, apply to the means appointed, undoubtedly will receive the promised grace; and those who either reject the means, or want the dispositions required, can never expect that favour. Now the Christian religion discovers to us both the one and the other: It assures us, that the Divine goodness has appointed means for bestowing his grace upon us, and that he requires certain dispositions upon our part to fit us for receiving it, and at the same time points out to us what those means, and what those dispositions are.

Had man been a being purely spiritual, consisting of a soul alone without the body, Almighty God would doubtless have bestowed his gifts upon him in a manner suited to such a being, and therefore in a manner purely spiritual; but

the case with us is quite different: We are composed of a body along with a soul, and, in our present state of weakness and corruption, this last is in such subjection to the former, that things purely spiritual seldom make a proper impression upon us; nay, by far the greatest part of mankind are such slaves to their senses, that they seem incapable of comprehending any thing but what falls under these organs; so that even the great truths of religion which they are bound to know, must be suited to their capacity, and made easy and familiar to them by similitudes taken from sensible objects, in order to make them properly understand them. The greatest and most essential gifts and favours which we stand in need of from God in this life, are certainly the grace of justification, by which our sins are pardoned, and we restored to his friendship; and the particular help and aid of his actual or assisting grace, by which we are enabled to avoid relapsing into sin, and to persevere in his service: and when we have been so unhappy as to fall from him by sin, nothing sure can be a greater comfort to us than to have, upon our endeavouring to return to him, a well grounded hope and confidence, that he has bestowed his holy grace upon us, and received us again into favour. Now, Almighty God, out of the most amiable condescension to this our weakness, and acting in a manner entirely adapted to our state, has been pleased to appoint such means of bestowing his grace upon us as both fall under the test of our senses, and, at the same time, give us all necessary assurance of receiving the grace we want; for he has instituted and ordained certain outward sensible forms or rites to be used, with this

express intention, that whenever these are performed exactly in the manner appointed by him, and on a person who is not indisposed for receiving it, he never will fail in his part to pour down his grace into that person's soul, according to the design for which that rite was intended. These outward forms are what the Christian religion calls sacraments, and are so ordered by their Divine author as both to represent the nature of the grace which he bestows upon us by their means, and, at the same time, to be a pledge and assurance to us of our receiving it. This is what the Church of England in her public catechism explains in a very judicious and concise manner; where we find a sacrament defined to be *an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof*; and in this she entirely agrees with the Church of Rome, and indeed with the common notion and belief of all Christians, a few Calvinists excepted.

From the above explication of a sacrament, we may make the following observations, for the better and more ample understanding this important matter; for in the sacraments we must consider, *1mo*, The outward sensible sign or form ordained to be used; this part is, properly speaking, what is understood by the word sacrament; and the performing this belongs to those who are appointed and authorized by Jesus Christ as his ministers for this purpose. *2do*, The inward grace which the sacrament brings to our souls, and of which it is a sign: this grace is the effect of the sacrament, and the pouring it into our souls is the work of God, and the fruits, of the merits, of the passion and



death of Jesus Christ. *3<sup>to</sup>*, The connection between the outward sign performed and the inward grace received: this connection on the part of God is infallible, founded upon his fidelity and immutability; for having once been pleased to ordain these outward forms as the instruments, canals, or means, by which his grace should be brought to our souls, and having instituted them as an essential part of the Christian religion; by so doing he has evidently engaged himself to produce the effect whenever the sacrament is performed according to his appointment; and therefore, as God is immutable and faithful to his engagements; so the connection between the outward sign and the inward grace of the sacraments, is, upon the part of God, infallible. *4<sup>to</sup>*. The dispositions required in the receiver to prepare him for receiving the grace. These dispositions are different according to the nature of the sacrament received; but are in adults, both from the nature of the things themselves, and also by God's express appointment, of absolute necessity: so that if the receiver have not the dispositions required, though the outward sensible form be exactly used, the grace will not be bestowed; not for any failing on the part of God, but because the soul is not capable of receiving it: and, on the contrary, the more perfect his dispositions are the more abundantly does he receive of the fruits of these holy mysteries.

From these principles the following consequences necessarily flow: *1<sup>mo</sup>*, That no power upon earth can change what was ordained by Jesus Christ in the outward forms of the sacraments, without destroying them entirely; for, as the connection between these outward forms and



the inward grace they bring to our souls, is not a natural connection, but solely depending upon the free will and pleasure of God, it follows, that if any change be made in what he ordained to be done, it is no more the same form to which his grace was connected; and consequently ceases to be a sacrament at all. *2do*, That this doctrine of the sacraments is a source of vast comfort and consolation to our souls; for though we can never have an absolute certainty of receiving the grace, because we can never have an absolute certainty that our own dispositions are such as they ought to be; yet, as we are absolutely certain of the effects of the sacraments on the part of God, and can have a very high probability of our own dispositions, this is sufficient for a well-grounded hope and confidence in God, through the merits of our blessed Redeemer; which, being all the certainty Almighty God allows us in this life, serves, on the one hand, to make us work out our salvation with fear and trembling, to keep us humble; and preserve us from pride; and, on the other hand, gives us a sufficient ground to hope and confide in the mercies of God, and fills the mind with comfort and consolation. *3tio*, As the effects of the sacraments are connected with the exact performance of the external rite, by a person properly authorized for that purpose; hence it follows, that whatever state that person's soul be in with regard to God, though in the state of mortal sin, and at enmity with God; yet that puts no stop to the effects of the sacrament in the worthy receiver: all that is required in the minister for the validity of the sacrament is, that he be properly authorized, and exactly perform the sacramental action. And in this we see again the in-

finite goodness of God, who, for our greater consolation, would not let the efficacy of his sacraments depend on the sanctity of the minister, because this being a circumstance of which we could have no certain knowledge, nor even probable conjecture; had this been required, we should have been deprived of all solid ground of hope, and been in perpetual doubts and fears whether we had received the sacrament or not. 4<sup>to</sup>, Seeing that these outward forms are ordained by Jesus Christ, as the instruments by which his grace is brought to our souls, they certainly, upon that account, contract a very considerable degree of sanctity, and deserve the greatest respect from us; so that to profane them by ridicule or mockery, and much more to receive them ill disposed, would doubtless be a very grievous crime in the sight of God, an abuse of those holy means of grace, and a mocking of him who ordained them. St Paul expresses this crime in the strongest terms to us, when he says of the unworthy receiver, *That he is guilty of the body and blood of our Lord; and that he eats and drinks his own damnation,* 1 Cor. xi. 5<sup>to</sup>, For the same reasons, we see the necessity we are under of receiving the sacraments; for as they are ordained by Christ as the means by which he bestows his grace upon our souls, and as the ultimate condition for this purpose, presupposing all the other conditions required, as dispositions on our side; it follows, that as he is free master of his gifts and graces, and may demand what conditions he pleases from his creatures in order to receive them, it is not enough that we perform some of these conditions, we must perform them all; and the sacrament being the last required, and the one which serves

as the very instrument of bestowing upon us the grace intended, it is plain, that the other conditions without this will not do, and that, therefore, it is absolutely necessary to receive the sacraments where they can be had, in order to obtain the grace connected with them; I say, *where they can be had*, because it is not to our present purpose to inquire, what is incumbent on those to do, who, though most desirous, are yet in an utter impossibility of receiving them, or in what manner God will treat with them.

Having thus laid down, in the plainest manner, what the Christian religion teaches us concerning the nature and efficacy of its sacraments, what has been the constant and universal doctrine of the great body of Christians throughout all preceding ages, (as could easily be shown, if necessary, from their own writers), and what to this day, is taught by the whole Roman-Catholick church, as well as by the Church of England, concerning them, I must now ask every sincere well-meaning Christian, Whether or not he finds any thing in all this doctrine which is in the smallest degree contrary to virtue and holiness, or an encouragement to sin, or a handle to superstition? On the contrary, is it not a doctrine full of consolation to poor sinners, a source of hope and confidence to us, and a most powerful incitement to gratitude and love for our kind Benefactor? Is it not, at the same time, the strongest encouragement to virtue and piety, seeing, without virtuous and pious dispositions, we can expect no benefit from these holy mysteries; and the more virtuous and pious we are, the greater abundance of graces we will receive from them?



Can any thing display, in a more amiable manner, the infinite goodness and condescension of God to the weakness of his creatures? What judgment then must we pass on him, who, by a most execrable attempt, has endeavoured to rob the sacraments of Jesus Christ of all their virtue, to take away all their efficacy, to deprive our poor souls of the consolation we receive from them, and who represents the whole Christian world as guilty of the blackest superstition, for believing that Jesus Christ bestows his grace upon us by their means? But I now proceed to show the proofs and grounds on which the above doctrine is founded.

It will be necessary, however, in the first place, to determine precisely the point in debate with our author; for, to say the truth, it is not easy to know what he would be at, in what he says upon this subject. He tells us, p. 63. that *the outward institutions are the means devised by Infinite Wisdom for our improvement in faith and holiness*; by this he would seem to allow their efficacy for that end; for if Infinite Wisdom has made choice of outward forms or institutions as means for our improvement, it would be too bold an impeachment of Infinite Wisdom, to say, they were either improper or ineffectual for that purpose. But, in the next page, he tells us, that *It is impossible for an unprejudiced mind to examine the gospel with attention, and not perceive that it is repugnant to its genius, to lay any stress on mere externals*; and that *every ceremonial performance is represented as incapable of recommending the soul to God*. Now, if *Infinite Wisdom has devised outward institutions as means for our improvement in faith and holiness*, and, proper means for that end they surely must be,



since they are ordained by Infinite Wisdom for that purpose, I do not see how it is possible not to lay some stress upon them; and, if by them we may be improved in faith and holiness, how is it possible that they should not be capable to recommend us to God? Again, p. 66. he says, *The few exterior rites which the institution of Christ admits are regarded purely as means; and a little after he adds, But is there not something more in them? have we not ground to believe they are accompanied with the Divine benediction? Yes, doubtless; the pious and suitable use of them is so accompanied.* Here again he seems to agree to the truth; he allows them to be *means*, and, when properly used, *efficacious means* of procuring the Divine benediction, which, without doubt, he says, *accompanies the pious and suitable use of them.* What then is this Divine benediction? wherein does it consist? Is it the grace of God, either that which justifies sinners, or that which enables the just to persevere in their justice? No; that he will not allow; for, when he comes to give a particular instance, he makes choice of the rite of baptism, and condemns, as the very essence of superstition, the ascribing to this rite the remission of sins; and from thence deducing the indispensable necessity of this ordinance to salvation, see p. 69, and 70. From all these seemingly incoherent and contradictory expressions of our author, what can be drawn of his real sentiments, as far as I can comprehend, is as follows: *Imo*, That the outward forms ordained by Jesus Christ as his sacraments, when used without the necessary internal dispositions, are of no service to the soul; and this no Christian will dispute with him; nay, every serious

Christian will go a step further, and acknowledge, that, instead of being of service, in that case, they are of hurt, and that being profaned by such undue use, they bring a curse instead of a blessing to the unworthy receiver; but this perhaps our reverend author will not agree to, lest from the contrary reason, he be forced to acknowledge a contrary conclusion, with regard to those who receive them worthily. Again, *2do*, He allows, however, that the pious and suitable use of them is *doubtless accompanied with the Divine benediction*; here the infallible connection on the part of God between the pious use of the outward rites and the inward benediction, is evidently acknowledged. What this benediction is, however, he does not tell us; only, *3tio*, He positively affirms, and uses all the force of his rhetoric to prove that this benediction is by no means the grace of justification, nor any grace whatever *that can recommend the soul to God*, p. 64.; and consequently, that the use of these rites is by no means necessary to salvation. It is therefore precisely in this third point where I am to attack him, and shall endeavour to prove, in the most convincing manner, that, according to the institution of Jesus Christ, the sacramental rites are the infallible means, on the part of God, of bringing the grace of justification, as well as that actual grace by which we are enabled to persevere, to the soul of the worthy receiver; and that they are, upon this account, essentially necessary to salvation.

I begin with the sacrament of the Lord's supper, for the efficacy of which the proofs are particularly conclusive and express; but of which our author has wisely avoided making any men-

tion. The outward rite or external form of which this sacrament consists, according to the universal belief of all Christians, is the action of receiving into our stomach the consecrated elements, which are the symbols or signs of the interior grace thereby communicated to our souls; for as bread and wine, when received into our stomachs, feed and nourish our bodies, and preserve the natural life of the body, so the grace, which is bestowed upon the worthy receiver by this sacrament, feeds and nourishes the soul, and preserves the spiritual life of the soul. Thus the Church of England in her catechism, putting this question, *What are the benefits whereof we are partakers by the Lord's supper?* gives this answer: *The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.* Now, that the worthy receiving of this sacrament does actually bring this grace to the soul is clear and manifest from the express words of holy scripture: For, *1mo*, Our blessed Saviour assures us, that he himself, who is the origin and fountain of all grace, by means of this holy sacrament, comes to take up his abode in our souls, and dwell there, *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him,* John vi. 56. *2do*, He assures us also, that, as he alone is the true spiritual life of our souls, by means of this sacrament, he communicates this life to our souls and makes us live by him, *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me,* v. 57. *3tio*, He again and again promises eternal life to the action of worthily receiving the sacrament, which surely can have no other sense but that this sacra-

ment brings an ample grace to the soul, which both justifies her more and more in the sight of God, and enables her to persevere in his service here; by both of which eternal life is the more secured to her hereafter. *I am the living bread, (says he), which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, John vi. 51. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day, ver. 54. This is that bread which came down from heaven; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever, ver. 58.* 4to, And to show that this life of the soul, was by God's appointment absolutely connected with the due performance of the outward rite, viz. the receiving the consecrated symbols into our bowels, and that all the dispositions we can have are incapable of procuring this life without the use of the sacrament: see how strongly he expresses himself, and that introduced with his usual asseveration, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you, ibid. ver. 53.* Do not all these express declarations of Jesus Christ prove, beyond reply, that that interior grace which is the life of our souls, and which he calls the communicating his own Divine self to our souls, is absolutely annexed to the exterior rite of receiving the sacred symbols into our bowels? and that, in such a manner, that except the rite be used, the grace will not be bestowed? Can any thing more clearly prove the necessity of this ordinance for salvation in all such as are capable of receiving it? All which is still further confirmed by St Paul, who assures us, that the unworthy receiver, who profanes this outward ordinance by ap-



proaching to receive it unprepared, is guilty of a crime of the deepest dye; no less than that of being *guilty of the body and blood of our Lord*, and that upon this account *he eats and drinks his own damnation*, 1 Cor. xi. Does not this demonstrate to us beyond contradiction, the sanctity of this holy ordinance, the sacred respect that is due to it, and how strong and powerful a means it is of recommending our souls to God? With what face then can our author say, that *It is repugnant to the very genius of the gospel to lay any stress on mere externals*; and that *every ceremonial performance is there represented as incapable of recommending the soul to God*. Are not these assertions directly the reverse of what the gospel declares in the plainest terms, with regard to the external rite of receiving the Lord's supper? Is not this rite represented to us as so holy and venerable, that the performing it is essentially accompanied either with the life or death of the receiver, according as he is disposed when receiving it? And does this deserve no stress to be laid upon it? or does he who says so believe the scripture? But, let us go on now to consider the sacrament of baptism, for the robbing of which of all its virtue our author employs his pen with so much keenness, thereby giving proof of his regard for the Christian religion; which has at all times held baptism in the highest esteem and veneration, and looked upon it as one of the most necessary means of our salvation: upon this subject then I shall *first* show, That baptism, where it can be had, is indispensibly necessary for salvation. *Secondly*, That by it our sins are remitted, and the grace of justification brought to our souls: and, *Thirdly*, I shall consider the argu-

ments our reverend author brings to the contrary.

Now, that baptism is necessary for salvation, is evident; 1. from its being laid down as a condition of salvation by our Saviour himself at its institution; where, after giving his apostles commission to teach all nations the sacred truths he had revealed to them, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, he immediately adds, *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned*, Mark xvi. In which words we must observe, That our Saviour here with the same breath commanded the apostles to baptize as well as to teach; that, consequently, upon the part of the people, he requires of them to be baptized as well as to believe what the apostles taught them: *Lastly*, That he promises salvation not to faith alone, but to faith and baptism together; from which it is plain, that baptism is no less necessary for salvation than faith, since both, with the same breath, are expressly proposed by Jesus Christ as conditions for that end: besides, nobody doubts, from these words of our Saviour, but that faith is absolutely necessary for salvation; I desire then, that a difference may be shown, why, from our Saviour's words, the other is not necessary also. It is true, in the damnatory clause, he mentions only faith, *He that believeth not shall be damned*; but the evident reason why baptism was not added here also, is, because in adults, of whom alone our Saviour speaks in all this passage, actual faith, or belief of the truths taught by the apostles, is absolutely pre-required as a disposition for baptism, so that those who refused to believe could not be baptized; the want of

baptism then is necessarily included in their not believing; and that clause, in its full sense, runs thus: *He that believeth not, and of consequence is not baptized, shall be damned*; which still further shows baptism to be no less necessary to salvation than belief. Another proof we have of the necessity of baptism in our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus, related John iii.; where he first declares the absolute necessity of a new birth before one can enter the kingdom of heaven, *Except a man be born again, (says he), he cannot see the kingdom of God, v. 3.* This new-birth, this regeneration, is the work of the Holy Ghost in our souls, by whom we are not only purified from the filth of sin, but also adorned with his grace, so as to become new creatures in the sight of God; by our natural birth from our earthly parents we are born carnal minded, sullied with sin, subject to death, and altogether earthly; by our new-birth, which is the work of the Spirit, we become heavenly minded, holy, fit for the kingdom of heaven, and spiritual: Thus Christ himself explains this birth to Nicodemus in a few words, *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, v. 6.* Now, this new-birth, so absolutely necessary for salvation, when do we receive it? how is it bestowed upon us? Jesus Christ himself goes on to answer this, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, ver. 5.* Here then we see clearly, that this new-birth is bestowed upon us by water; that by the use of this outward rite the Spirit of God is brought unto our souls to regenerate them, to give us that spiritual

birth here spoken of; and that these two, the outward rite and the inward regeneration, are so connected, by the Divine appointment, that if the rite be not used, the new-birth will not be bestowed, and of course, we can never see the kingdom of God; could any thing more clearly demonstrate the necessity of baptism for salvation than these words? *Except a man, (says he), be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* This is still further confirmed, in the third place, by St Peter, who compares baptism to the ark of Noah, and observes, that as the ark of Noah saved those who were saved from the waters of the deluge, *the like figure whereunto, (says he), even baptism doth also now save us—by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,* 1 Pet. iii. 21. Here you see salvation is expressly attributed to baptism, which consequently is a necessary means thereunto, especially if we go on with the comparison made here by the apostle between it and the ark of Noah; for as the ark not only was the means of saving such as were saved from the deluge, but so necessary for that purpose, that none were saved without it; so now baptism is not only a means of salvation, but so necessary, that where it can be had there is no being saved without it. Before I quit this passage, I cannot help taking notice of another circumstance of it which illustrates what I said above; namely, that the apostle here observes, that baptism saveth us, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;* intimating thereby, that all the efficacy of this holy rite is drawn from the merits of Jesus Christ, which by its means are applied to our souls; and in the intermediate part of the verse, he shows us how this is done, viz. *Not by the putting away the filth*



*of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God; by the renewing of the inward man, by that new-birth which it gives us, purifying our consciences before God.*

Now, in all these three strong passages of scripture which I have brought to prove the necessity of baptism, I beg leave to observe, that the question, about their sense and meaning, is not, whether the art of man can wrest them to any other sense different from what I have here given them, and in which the whole Christian world has, from the very beginning understood them? but whether this sense in which they have been always understood, be not the plain, natural, obvious sense of the words? and therefore whether the belief of the necessity of baptism to salvation, be not entirely conformable to the plain, natural, obvious sense of scripture? and consequently, whether or not the denial of it be not an evident wresting and perverting of the sacred text? But what I have here advanced will still further appear when we consider the second point I proposed to prove; to wit, that sins are actually remitted by baptism, and that it is a necessary means of God's appointment for that purpose.

This, you will easily perceive, is partly proved already; for the two last passages of scripture brought above, to show the necessity of baptism, at the same time prove the efficacy of it; our Saviour declaring to Nicodemus the absolute necessity of a new-birth, at the same time declares, that the sacred rite of baptism is the means by which this new-birth is obtained, and so necessary for this end, that except we receive this new-birth *by water and the Spirit we cannot enter into the kingdom of*

God. St Peter also declares to us the same truth, when telling us that we are saved by baptism, he tells us also, that it does so, not by washing away the filth of the flesh, but by the grace of justification which it brings to the soul, by which we are washed from our sins, and acquire *the testimony of a good conscience towards God*. But besides these there are several other very strong and convincing proofs of this truth from other parts of these sacred oracles. And, *first*, From the account given us in the acts of the apostles, of the three thousand Jews who were converted to the faith of Christ by St Peter's first sermon among them on Pentecost-Sunday. These people, seeing the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, and hearing Jesus Christ preached to them in so convincing a manner by that great apostle, *were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Here now observe, that these people believing what St Peter had told them had true faith in Jesus Christ; they also had at least a beginning repentance, for *they were pricked in their hearts*; they were, at the same time, most sincere in desiring to know and to do, what was necessary for their salvation, and therefore put this very question to the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* To this question St Peter immediately answered, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*, Acts ii. 37. 38. How convincing a proof have we in this answer of the truth before us! he saw these people believed in Jesus Christ, and therefore made no mention of faith which they already had; but he declares, that what was yet wanting

to them was a sincere repentance in the first place, as a necessary disposition for receiving the grace of justification; and then the sacrament of baptism as the ultimate condition on our part required by Almighty God, to which he has infallibly annexed that grace; *Be baptized, (says he), every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.* Is it not surprising, that any one who attentively considers this passage, should dare to call in doubt that the grace of justification is annexed to the external rite of baptism? Here the very question is put to the apostles, *What must be done for the remission of sins?* and St Peter answers, *repentance and baptism;* Would ever he have added baptism as a necessary means for this end, if repentance alone could have done it? But observe how he expresses himself, *Be baptized (says he) for the remission of sins;* thereby plainly declaring that this was the means for obtaining that favour.

Another beautiful proof of this point we have from St Paul, in his epistle to Titus. I shall relate the whole passage, that the connection of what he says may the better appear. *We ourselves also (says he) were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, Tit. iii.* I do not know whether I should attempt to make any applica-

tion of this beautiful passage or not, as it is so clear of itself, and speaks so strongly for the whole doctrine above delivered. Here we see, that the work of our justification is not due to any righteousness that we have done, but owing to the pure mercy of God; that the instrument or means by which he saves us is the sacred rite of baptism; *he saved us by the washing of regeneration, that sacred washing by which we are born again, and by which the Holy Ghost comes to our souls to renew our inward man and give us the spiritual birth: we see also, that this holy sacrament, by which the Holy Ghost is shed abundantly on us, has all its efficacy through Jesus Christ our Saviour: finally, that by the grace we here receive we are justified or cleansed from our sins, and become heirs of eternal life.* One must here shut his eyes against the light, not to see, that the grace of justification, the spiritual birth of our souls, and our renewal by the Holy Ghost, are all produced in our souls by the sacred rite of baptism, as the instrument or means, to the proper use of which the Divine providence has annexed these graces. What then can we think of our Reverend Author, who laughs at the belief of these truths, and looks upon them as no better than magical spells!

The next proof I bring is from the same holy apostle, in his epistle to the Ephesians; where, speaking of the infinite love of Jesus Christ to his church, he gives the ordaining this holy rite of washing with water to be the instrument or means of cleansing and purifying her from all spot and wrinkle; he gives this, I say, as an instance and proof of his most ardent love and affection for her: *Husbands, (says he), love your wives, as Christ*



also loved the church, and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, Ephes. v. 25. 26. See here how this great apostle expressly declares, that Christ gave himself for his church; that is, suffered and died for her, on purpose that he might cleanse and sanctify her by the sacrament of baptism, which consists essentially in the washing of water, accompanied by the sacred words pronounced at that time, viz. the name of the holy and adorable Trinity. This then is the means appointed and ordained by Jesus Christ for applying the merits of his sufferings and death to his church; that is, for bringing the grace of justification to the souls of her members, thereby cleansing and sanctifying them before him for their sins.

The last proof I shall bring from scripture, which indeed is so conclusive as, of itself alone, to put the matter beyond all doubt, is from the conversion of St Paul; the history of which is given us in the ninth and twenty-second chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Here we are informed, that when our Saviour appeared to this great man, and reprov'd him for so violently persecuting him, and at the same time discovered himself to him, and told him who he was, St Paul was immediately converted; and not only believed in Jesus Christ, but gave himself up to his good pleasure, in the most perfect manner, saying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts ix. 6. After this, going into the city of Damascus, he continued there praying to God for three days, without either eating or drinking, v. 9. 11. at the end of these three days, Ananias was sent to him in order to restore his sight, and tell him

what to do, v. 17. Now it is evident, that if faith, repentance, prayer, and even fasting joined with it, were able to bring the grace of justification to a soul, and to wash away sin, St Paul must without doubt have at this time been justified, since we see in what a perfect degree these dispositions were in his soul. Was he then justified by these? Were his sins washed away by his faith and repentance? or even by his prayer and fasting? or by his continuing for three days in the exercise of these holy virtues? They certainly were not; these were only dispositions, necessary indeed to prepare his soul for receiving that grace of justification; but he wanted as yet the sacred rite of baptism, the ultimate condition to which that grace was annexed; and therefore Ananias, though he knew, by revelation from Jesus Christ himself, all that had happened to him, and that he was a chosen vessel before God; though he knew his faith, his repentance, his fasting and his prayer; yet he knew, at the same time, that all this was not sufficient without the sacrament of baptism to wash away his sins. And, therefore, as St Paul himself assures us, when he went into him, and restored to him his sight, after a short declaration of what God had in view for him, he immediately adds, *And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*, Acts xxii. 16. What a glorious triumph for the truth is contained in these words! what a confusion for its enemies! what a condemnation of the impious attempt to rob this most holy sacrament of that supernatural and divine virtue communicated to it by Jesus Christ our Redeemer, for the inestimable advantage of our souls! It would be doing an injury

to this sacred text, to explain or apply it; it is its own best and most excellent interpreter.

Thus we see in what a clear, precise and express manner, the holy scripture, again and again, declares to us the necessity of baptism to salvation; and that by it our sins are washed away, and the grace of justification is brought to our souls. Let us now then take a view of those arguments which our author brings against those truths in support of his own antichristian opinion. And here I must observe, that after so many plain and express testimonies of the word of God in defence of the truth, we might justly demand of any one that should dare to attack it, at least an equal number of no less clear and express texts for their system: but I shall be more condescending; I shall only put it to our Reverend author to show, if he can, but one single plain text for his assertion: nay, I shall make yet a fairer offer, which is, That if he can bring one single text that plainly says, *By baptism our sins are not washed away; or, that the outward rite is not necessary for salvation; or, that faith and repentance are sufficient without baptism;* if I say, he can show any one such plain text in all the Bible, I shall yield the whole victory to him, and acknowledge he is in the right. What! not one plain text against so many clear and evident testimonies? and shall any Christian then look upon his attempt without horror? or consider it in any other light than as blasphemous? But how then does he attempt to prove what he advances? Why? it must be owned, that he puts on a greater shew of argumentation on this subject than most others he teaches; but alas! what arguments

does he use? a shew! an appearance! set off with an air of confidence, very well adapted to impose upon inattentive readers; but, when examined, *light as the wind, and void of all solidity*. How indeed can it be otherwise? what but appearances can be brought against the evident truths of God? However, he attempts it, and brings three different reasons in support of his opinion; the first of which is altogether ridiculous; the second rather against himself; and the third a childish futility, known in the schools by the term *begging the question*, or supposing what he ought to prove. But let us examine them thoroughly, one by one.

His first argument is proposed in the following words, p. 71.: “ Of such formalists in devotion  
 “ as can suppose that the most precious gifts of  
 “ heaven depend upon external rites, allow me  
 “ to ask, Was not the faith and confession of the  
 “ thief on the cross available to his salvation  
 “ without baptism?” I readily answer, It was so. What then? Does it thence follow, that baptism is not necessary to salvation? Ridiculous conclusion! Pray, Reverend Sir, allow me to ask you another question in return, Why did you not bring in the example of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and Moses and Elias, and all the holy saints of old as well as the thief upon the cross to prove your theme? was not their faith and obedience available to their salvation without baptism? would not their names have graced your sermon as well as his? and their heroic virtues and high favour with God have afforded a great field wherein to display your rhetoric? and would not the conclusion have flowed as justly from their example as from the



one you brought? No, a school-boy would answer, the conclusion could not possibly flow from them, because these holy men lived long before baptism was instituted by Jesus Christ as a means to apply the merits of his death to our souls. And was not the case the very same with the good thief? he was indeed nearer the time than they were, but still he was before it; Christ had not yet died when he was received into favour; the price of our redemption was not yet fully paid, and the sacrament of baptism was not ordained, as a means to apply that price to our souls, for at least six weeks after; viz. at the ascension, when Christ gave his apostles commission and command to teach and baptize all nations. So that this mighty argument, which our author puts in the front of his proof, and in which, from his manner of proposing it, he seems to place a particular confidence, when put in its native light, runs thus: “ The good thief was  
 “ justified by his faith and confession, without  
 “ baptism, before the price of our redemption  
 “ was completed, and at least six weeks before  
 “ that sacrament was ordained as a necessary  
 “ means to apply the merits of that price to our  
 “ souls; therefore, after that price was complete-  
 “ ly paid, and after baptism was ordained and  
 “ commanded to be used as a means of applying  
 “ it to our souls, yet it was no-wise useful, even  
 “ then, nor necessary to salvation.” *Risum tene-*  
*atis amici!* And will any body make me believe, that such an argument as this could ever drop from Dr C——’s pen? What! the mighty hero that beat down H——’s boasted Achilles, and beat him down to the ground past all hopes of

rising, ever demean himself to that degree, as to publish such trifling stuff to the world, which a school-boy would be ashamed of!

—————*If thou be he ;  
But oh ! how fallen ! how changed !*

Let us see, then, what he brings in the next place. Here indeed he has rather a better appearance than in the former case; and I do not doubt but many of his admirers, at first sight, will think his second reason conclusive and unanswerable. It is taken from the example of Cornelius and his companions, upon whom, while St Peter was preaching to them, and instructing them in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost descended in the then usual visible manner, a sure proof of their being *in a state of acceptance with God* before baptism; assigned by St Peter as the very reason why he admitted them to that sacrament; and alluding to which, he afterwards said, *God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did to us: and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith,* Acts xv. This, you see, is the whole of his argument; which consists of two reasons: “Cornelius was in a state of acceptance with God before baptism; therefore, baptism is not a necessary means of justification.” Again, “St Peter declared, that God had purified their hearts by faith before they were baptized; therefore baptism is not a necessary means for this purpose.” As for the first of these reasons, I am afraid it would prove more than our author adverts to, more than, I hope, he would be willing to allow, and therefore nothing at all. For, was not this very Cornelius in a state of ac-

ceptance with God before he heard of Jesus Christ, or had faith in him? did not Almighty God send an angel from heaven to him, to tell him what to do? and did not this very angel assure him, that his alms had ascended up to heaven as a memorial in his favours? and was not this a most assured demonstration of his being in a *state of acceptance with God, even then before he had heard of Jesus Christ?* Shall we then conclude, that the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ is not necessary to salvation? and yet this conclusion is perfectly as just as the one our author makes. In fact, every sinner, whose heart Almighty God begins to touch with his grace, and move to repent, and pray, and return to God, may, with all propriety, be said to be in a state of *acceptance with God*; because he certainly is in a state in which God is willing, is desirous, to accept of him, calls him to his friendship, and even makes large advances on his part for this purpose, by giving him the necessary helps and graces of his Holy Spirit to enable him to return; but we cannot conclude from that, that such a sinner is already justified; something more is still wanting; and this we shall see clearly was Cornelius's case. That this may appear the more evident, let us compare it with what happened to St Paul at his conversion. We have seen above, that this great apostle had faith in Jesus Christ, and had repentance, as well as Cornelius; he had even a great degree of solid devotion, resigning himself entirely to the Divine will, and ready to do whatever his Lord should require of him; that he also fasted and prayed with great ardour; and yet, that he was not for all this justified; his sins were not washed away by these things, baptism was still necessary for this pur-

pose. Now, it was certainly the Holy Ghost, by his assisting grace, that wrought all these virtuous dispositions both in the one and in the other, both in St Paul and Cornelius; for without that assistance we are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5.; and the orthodox Christian faith assures us, that the very first step to the conversion of a sinner, is the work of God; the sinner being utterly incapable of himself to do the least thing towards his repentance; nay, the holy scripture assures us, that *no man can say* (in a way conducive to his salvation) *that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Here, then, it is evident, that the Holy Ghost operates in the hearts of sinners prior to their justification, these excellent virtues of faith, repentance and prayer, and thereby disposes them for receiving the grace of justification: consequently his doing so in Cornelius, is indeed a proof that Cornelius was then in a state of acceptance with God; that God was calling him to an entire reconciliation with himself, and disposing his soul for that end by these virtues; but is by no means a proof, that by these virtues he was justified, and his sins washed away from his soul, which is the point in question; since we see the same virtues were bestowed upon St Paul, and that in a more eminent degree; and yet he was not thereby justified, something else being still required in order to cleanse his soul from the unhappy stains of sin. Seeing then that these virtues of faith and repentance, which the Holy Ghost operated in the souls of Cornelius and his companions, were no proof of their being justified before baptism, but only of their being thereby prepared and disposed for re-



ceiving that grace, let us now inquire, whether or not the miraculous gift bestowed upon them of speaking strange languages, by which the Holy Ghost gave sensible proof of his Divine presence, ought to be looked upon as a proof of their being then justified. But here our author himself affords us sufficient reason to conclude they ought not; for p. 7. speaking upon the effects which the holy Ghost produces in our souls, he says: “ When any of the disciples of Jesus are said in “ scripture to receive the spirit, it is always “ meant, That by the operation of that Divine “ person on their minds, they obtain either the “ more ordinary graces of faith, hope and cha- “ rity, which are essential to the Christian life; “ or the more extraordinary, the power of work- “ ing miracles, of prophecy, of speaking strange “ languages, and other such like. These gifts “ the wisdom of God thought fit to bestow in “ the early times of Christianity, that by means “ of such incontestable evidences of its divinity, “ its doctrine might be more quickly propaga- “ ted in the world. But as they were intended “ solely for answering a particular and tempora- “ ry end, they were but circumstantial and tem- “ porary. When once the end was effected, “ there was no more occasion for the means. “ Accordingly they have long since ceased in the “ church of Christ. Whereas, the first mention- “ ed, though more common in the dispensation, “ yet being of the essence of his religion, and “ therefore more excellent in their nature, must “ continue whilst he hath followers on the earth.”

In this judicious passage our author justly lays down the great difference between the ordinary graces of faith, hope, charity, repentance and

the like; and the extraordinary graces of working miracles, speaking strange languages and prophecy; the former are essential to the very being of a Christian, the others only circumstantial and accidental; the former permanent and perpetual in the church of Christ, the later only temporary; the former more excellent in their nature, the later less so; we may also add, as that in which this greater excellency consists, that the former essentially tend to the sanctification of the soul in which they reside, the later are only intended for obtaining some external end, and for the benefit of others more than of the person who possesses them. From this then it clearly follows, that if those graces which are essential to the Christian life, are of their own nature more excellent, and directly tend to the sanctification of the soul, are, notwithstanding this, no proof of the justification of the soul in which they reside; but, as we have clearly proved, are only dispositions for receiving that grace; much less can those other less important graces be a proof, that the soul which possesses them is justified: In fact, as these last are chiefly intended for some exterior end, and more for the benefit of others than of him on whom they are bestowed; we hence find, that even sinners have been favoured with them: Thus Judas himself who was a devil, and a thief from the beginning, was sent with the rest of the apostles to cure diseases and work miracles. Consequently, neither the faith and repentance of Cornelius, nor the miraculous signs of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him are proofs that he was then justified, or the guilt of sin washed away from his soul; and therefore, the proof our author would bring from this, of

example, that baptism is not necessary for our justification, is absolutely groundless and inconclusive.

But what then was the reason, why the Holy Ghost would descend upon Cornelius and his companions in a visible manner! What was the end to be gained by this so extraordinary conduct? This will easily appear, to any one who attentively considers the whole history of this memorable event. Though the vocation of the Gentiles to the knowledge and service of the true God had been often foretold by the prophets; yet, neither the apostles nor first Christians had any idea that it was so soon to be accomplished; nay they even, for some considerable time after they began to preach the gospel, thought it unlawful to keep company with the Gentiles, much less to communicate to them the sacred truths of religion; in so much, that after the persecution of Stephen, *they that were scattered abroad, upon that occasion, preached the word to none but the Jews only*, Acts. xi. 19. And when St Peter came to Cornelius, and began to speak to those whom he had convened at his house, the first words he uttered to them were these: *Ye know (says he), how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come into one of another nation.* Acts x. 28. But, as the time was now come appointed by the Divine Providence for accomplishing the prophecies, and for communicating the fruits of our Saviour's passion and death to all mankind, and as St Peter was made choice of by Almighty God, to begin this great work in Cornelius and his companions, it was necessary, to give both to St



Peter and the other brethren with him, convincing proofs of what the will of God required from them in this matter. Accordingly, the miraculous vision of the sheet was sent to St Peter to diminish his prejudices against the Gentiles, and he was immediately admonished by the Holy Ghost of the arrival of those sent by Cornelius, with orders to go with them, *doubting nothing, for that God had sent them*; this had all the desired effect upon the apostle; for after he had heard from Cornelius the occasion of his sending for him, he declared, *Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*, Acts x. 34. 35. And even upon his first entering into the house he acknowledged, that *God had shewed him, that he should not call any thing common or unclean*, v. 28. But although St Peter was by these means fully satisfied himself as to the vocation of Cornelius and his companions; yet it was necessary that something should be done to convince the brethren that went with him of the same, and which might also give satisfaction to all others as to the propriety of his conduct; this Almighty God did in the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon these people, which fully satisfied St Peter's companions that all this was the work of God, and gave him a just handle for baptizing them, and saying, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized*, Acts x. 47. 48. In which words it is evidently supposed, that had not this visible sign of the will of God been given, all would not have been satisfied, but would have still thought it unlawful to admit



these Gentiles into the church; and that they were not in a condition for receiving the sacrament of baptism. What confirms all this still more, is, that when, afterwards, St Peter returned to Jerusalem, and was reprehended by the rest of the brethren for going in to the Gentiles, he, in his own vindication, related the whole affair to them, and concluded with these words: *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I that I could withstand God?* Acts xi. 17.; where he clearly shows, that the descent of the Holy Ghost upon that people was intended to convince St Peter and all others, that Almighty God called them to his holy church, had prepared their hearts for that end, and consequently that they had a just title to have the work of their justification completed by the holy sacrament of baptism appointed by Jesus Christ for that purpose; which therefore St Peter commanded to be given them. Upon the whole, then, we evidently see: *First*, That, from the testimonies of holy scripture brought above to prove the necessity of baptism in order to complete our justification, and especially from what we have seen from the conversion of St Paul, the faith, repentance, and other virtues of Cornelius and his companions, are no proof that they had received the grace of justification before baptism; but only that their souls were perfectly well disposed by these virtues for receiving it. *Secondly*, That from the concession and acknowledgment of our author, as well as from the nature of the thing itself, the visible effects of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, were much less a

proof of their being then cleansed from their sins prior to their being baptized. *Thirdly*, That there was a temporary and exterior end to be gained, which required these visible indications of the Divine will; and for obtaining of which they were accordingly used: And, *Fourthly*, That the proof used by our author from the example of Cornelius to show that baptism is not a necessary means of our justification, is absolutely inconclusive. To these I shall add one other observation, in the *fifth* place, which is, That even this history, especially when compared with the above texts, which so clearly prove the necessity of baptism, is itself a corroborating proof of that necessity; since we see, that St Peter, even after all the proofs Almighty God had given of his good will towards Cornelius and his companions, and of his calling them to the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ; yea, after his seeing the Holy Ghost bestowed upon them in the same visible miraculous manner in which he had come upon the apostles themselves, yet still judged it absolutely necessary, for completing the work, that they should be baptized; for he proposes it to them not as a matter of indifference; which, according to our author's system, might be either done or let alone, without any good or evil consequence from either way; but he *commanded them to be baptized*, as a thing which ought to be done, as a thing of consequence and of necessity; and declares, that if he had not done so, his refusing it would have been a withstanding God; that is, an opposing him, a contradicting him, a resisting his holy will, so clearly manifested to him, Acts xi. 17.

From what has been said, it is easy to see the

proper signification of the expression used by St Peter, Acts xv. when alluding to this affair of Cornelius, he said, *God gave them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, purifying their hearts by faith.* To *purify the heart*, may either signify that perfect and complete purification which is performed by the grace of justification; or it may signify, that imperfect and partial purification which consists in faith and repentance, and those other virtues, which the Holy Ghost operates in the hearts of repenting sinners, in order thereby to dispose them for receiving the grace of justification. Now, all the arguments brought above to prove that baptism is the means appointed by God to bring the grace of justification to our souls, and that it is therefore necessary for our salvation, prove, at the same time, that St Peter uses the above expression of *purifying their hearts by faith*, only in this last sense, *viz.* as thereby disposing them for receiving the grace of baptism, which he himself knew to be so necessary, even after all that purification by faith, that he absolutely commanded it to be given them, and looked upon all that had been already done, even the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, only as convincing proofs, that God called them to baptism, and had disposed them thereto; whose holy will he could by no means oppose. *What was I, (said he), that I should withstand God?* Acts xi. 17.

We come now to consider the third argument used by our author to prove the insignificancy of baptism, which will be quickly discussed; for as it is totally founded in a false supposition, and what is called *a begging the question*, by exposing the weakness of the foundation, we at once e-



nervate the whole force of his reasoning, and destroy the edifice built thereupon.—“ It will  
 “ scarce be pretended, (says he), that baptism is  
 “ of greater efficacy under the new œconomy,  
 “ than circumcision was under the old.” This is the ground-work which he lays down, and all the force of his reasoning here must stand or fall by the truth or falsehood of this foundation. Is it not, however, very surprizing, to see a person, who pretends to be a Christian; yea, who publishes this sermon under the character of a Christian teacher, lay down such a position as this is? How different a way of speaking do we find in the writings of all the ancient Christians in every age? These, with St Paul, and the whole tenor and scope of the scripture, represent all the ceremonial part of the law of Moses, as nothing else but types and figures of the good things then to come: the institutions of Moses were figures, those of Jesus Christ were the things figured; theirs were the shadows, ours the substance; theirs the types, ours the originals; and it is particularly to be remarked, that circumcision was a type or figure of baptism: Shall we then say, that the figures were as efficacious as the things figured? that the shadow was equal to the substance? that the type was equal to the original? What a degrading idea does this give us of the Christian religion? But let us hear our author himself upon this subject. He says, p. 65.  
 “ As to the Jewish ceremonies, they are termed  
 “ a yoke of bondage; a yoke which neither they  
 “ of that age, nor their fathers, were able to  
 “ bear. The church, or common-wealth of  
 “ God, whilst under them, was considered as in  
 “ a state of non-age; like a child not arrived at



“ the full exercise of reason, under tutors and  
 “ preceptors, subjected to many cumbersome  
 “ regulations, which derived their utility and  
 “ fitness from his insufficiency. They are there-  
 “ fore styled *the elements of this world, and weak  
 “ and beggarly elements.*” This description of the  
 nature of the ceremonial part of the Mosaic in-  
 stitution, which our author takes from the very  
 words of the scripture, shows clearly, that all its  
 outward rites were incapable of sanctifying the  
 soul; but I suppose the author will not pretend  
 that the pious and suitable use of them was not  
 accompanied with the Divine benediction; nay,  
 it is easy to show from the holy scripture, that a  
 punctual and pious observance of these ceremo-  
 nial institutions was most beneficial in those days,  
 and had the promise of many holy blessings an-  
 nexed to it; though not that of bringing the  
 grace of justification to the soul. Are we then in  
 no better state under the law of grace than the  
 Jews were under that of Moses? Are the out-  
 ward ordinances of Jesus Christ in themselves on-  
 ly *weak and beggarly elements*? Is no more benef-  
 it to be expected from them than such a blessing  
 as was got from the pious and suitable use of those  
 of Moses? But, let us come to the point: Un-  
 der the old law the price of our redemption was  
 not yet paid; Christ had not yet merited those  
 heavenly graces for man, which were the effects  
 of his precious blood shed for us upon the cross;  
 hence, all the ceremonial institutions of the old  
 law were only figures of Jesus Christ, and of the  
 good things to be bestowed by him on mankind.  
 In consequence of this, we do not find any pro-  
 mises of grace annexed to these outward forms  
 of the law, not even to those which most nearly

represented our blessed Saviour ; thus, it is not said of the paschal lamb, a very lively figure of Christ, *He that eats this flesh shall live for ever ;* neither is it said of circumcision, *Except a man be born again by circumcision, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven ;* of the manna itself, that heavenly food, and of the amazing streams that flowed from the rock, it is not said, *Except ye eat this manna and drink this water, ye have no life in you ;* neither is it said of circumcision, though a figure of baptism ; *Repent and be circumcised for the remission of sins ;* on the contrary, after our Saviour had come into the world, and paid the price of our redemption, we find the most glorious promises made to his holy sacraments ; both such as these just mentioned, and many others, which evidently show that those sacred ordinances were appointed as the means or instruments to convey to our souls the fruits of his sufferings, and those heavenly graces which he had obtained for our sanctification. Hence there is an immense difference between the efficacy of baptism under the new œconomy, and of circumcision under the old : the former is the substance, the latter only the shadow ; the one the original, the other only a figure ; this last only an empty sign, the former an efficacious means of our sanctification ; as all the clear evidences which I have brought above from holy writ most convincingly show. How pitiful and childish is it then, in our author, to bring in an argument of this kind in so serious a subject ! an argument which consists in a putid begging of the question, and supposing what he ought to prove ! What an insult does he thereby offer to the understanding of his readers ! Wherefore, till he prove the above

position, viz. that baptism is of no more efficacy in the new law than circumcision was in the old, which is the disputed point; and that all the clear texts of scripture, which I have cited above, to show the necessity and efficacy of baptism, are words without a meaning, or signify quite the reverse of what they evidently imply; till he do this, I say, he must excuse me if I look upon his third argument as below my regard.

I have only one observation more to add upon this subject, which is, to caution the reader against another gross misrepresentation, of which our author is guilty in this third argument, and repeats it more than once in his sermon; it is this: St Paul, both in his epistle to the Romans, and in that to the Galatians, argues very strongly against those who looked upon circumcision, and other legal observances of meats and days, as necessary to salvation under the gospel. Now, says our author, p. 73. 74. the arguments of the apostle “are not levelled against the ceremony  
“ of circumcision, but against the principle by  
“ which the ceremony was enforced, and which  
“ he considers as subversive of the spirit of reli-  
“ gion: What was that principle? *It was that*  
“ *which attached the pardon of sin, and the favour*  
“ *of God, to external observances.*” In this answer lies the most manifest misrepresentation. He repeats it, however, again, p. 97.; where, speaking of the severity of St Paul in condemning those who maintained the indispensable necessity of circumcision to salvation, he says, “Was it that the  
“ Jewish rites were worse than any other? No;  
“ but it was because that doctrine, which made  
“ the favour of heaven depend on mere ceremo-



“nies, was totally subversive of the spirit of the gospel.” If in these expressions the author means no more, than that mere external observances of *human invention, or even those of the law*, are no-wise capable of bringing any grace to our souls; and that to confide in any such is subversive of the spirit of the gospel, nobody would dispute the point with him; but then, such a meaning would be nothing to his purpose at all. But if by these expressions he means, either that Almighty God cannot, or has not ordained, under the gospel, certain outward forms, to the pious performance of which he has annexed the infusion of his grace into our souls, or that Almighty God having done so, it is subversive of the spirit of the gospel for us to use them for that end; and either of these must be his meaning, if he means any thing at all; then all these clear and evident texts, which we have seen above, for the efficacy both of the worthily receiving the Lord’s supper, and of baptism, stand up against him and condemn him; and I defy him to show one single text in the whole scripture which says, that St Paul condemned the Jewish ceremonies under the gospel, from the above principle which he alledges. The true reason of St Paul’s conduct is this: We have seen above, that the external ordinances of the old law were incapable of bringing the grace of justification to the soul; that they were only shadows of the good things then to come, and figures of those ordinances of Jesus Christ to which that grace was annexed. So long, however, as the Mosaic dispensation was in force, its members were obliged to perform all its ordinances, as being a part of that religion ordained by God himself. Almighty God, when he first instituted circumcision, or-



dained it as a mere sign of the covenant he made with Abraham and his posterity? *Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, says he to Abraham, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you, Gen. xvii. 11; but he absolutely required that all his posterity should observe it, under pain of death, The uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant, ibid. v. 14; and the same command is renewed again under Moses, Exod. xii. and Lev. xii. Now, whosoever was circumcised, and by that means initiated in the Mosaic institution, became immediately obliged to the observance of the whole law. Thus St Paul declares to the Galatians, For I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law, Gal. v. 3. This was the state of affairs then while the Mosaic dispensation remained in force. But when our Saviour came into the world, he put an end to all these legal observances, by instituting a more perfect religion, by fulfilling all these figures, and substituting in their place the good things which they represented; and then these figures were all done away, and all obligation of observing them ceased. Thus the same great apostle tells us, There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, Heb. vii. 18. 19. Again, he says, That the first tabernacle was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience; but Christ being come a high-priest of good things to come, ob-*

*tained for us an eternal redemption, Heb. ix. 9. &c.* In which words the apostle, making the contrast between the ordinances of the old law, and the good things we enjoy under the gospel, declares, that the difference consisted in this, that the former were only figures of the latter, and that they could not make men perfect as to conscience; whereas Christ, under the new law, has obtained for us *an eternal redemption*, and, as he adds, ver. 14. *his blood purifies our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* See the whole passage, as also the following chapter. Those then who lived under the law, *were in bondage under the elements of the world*, Gal. iv. 3. being subjected to the rigorous observance of all those empty ceremonies, which could not sanctify their souls, as being only figures and shadows, and which St Paul therefore calls *weak and beggarly elements*, Gal. iv. 9.; but when the fulness of time was come, Christ appeared amongst us, on purpose to redeem those that were under the law from that bondage, Gal. iv. 4, 5, and to restore us to the liberty of the sons of God. Hence, after the coming of Christ, and the promulgation of his gospel, to assert and maintain the necessity of circumcision, or other legal ceremonies, to salvation, was annulling the very end of his coming; was making void all he had done for us; was asserting an absolute falsehood, contrary to the truths revealed by God; was reducing us again to the bondage of the ceremonial law, and making Christ of no profit, of no use, to our souls. These are the true reasons for which St Paul inveighs so strongly against those who maintained, that circumcision was necessary under the gospel: but as for the fictitious reason invented by our

author, that great apostle never once gives the smallest hint of any such thing; nay, when we consider the proofs we have brought above from the holy scripture, and especially from what happened to St Paul himself at his conversion, which so incontestably show, that God Almighty has actually appointed the outward forms of his sacraments as the means of bringing his grace to our souls, and has even made his favour depend upon the pious use of these external observances, telling us, that *except we receive the holy communion, we have no life in us*, John vi. 53.; and that *except we be born of water and of the spirit, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*, John iii. 5.; when we consider this, I say, we evidently see, that it is impossible it could ever once enter into St Paul's mind to think, that the making the favour of heaven depend upon the pious use of external observances, was subversive of the spirit of the gospel; he knew too well what his blessed Master had appointed for this very purpose, ever to harbour such a thought. What the apostle then condemns, is not the general principle of believing that the favour of heaven and the pardon of sins may, by the Divine appointment, be made to depend on the use of external observances; but it is the attaching those favours to such external observances as God had not appointed for that end; it was the attempt to keep in force the observance of those legal ceremonies which were abolished by the coming of Christ, and by this means to subject Christians, who were the free-born children, to all the bondage of the slaves. And this is expressly what St Paul himself declares to us, in his epistle to the Galatians; for this people, in his absence, having



been deluded by some false brethren to circumcise themselves, as a thing necessary for salvation, the apostle hearing this, writes his epistle to them, on purpose to undeceive them; and, after many other strong things said on the occasion, at last he concludes in the following manner: *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again into the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace, Gal. v. 1. &c.* See here the true and real reasons, in his own words, why St Paul condemned circumcision; far different indeed from what our author would have us believe; who therefore is guilty of a most gross misrepresentation of the apostle, a falsification of the holy scripture, and a perverting its true sense to that which the Holy Ghost never intended! Good God! what are not people capable of doing, when obstinately embarked in a bad cause!

I have now considered at large this most important subject of the nature and efficacy of the Christian sacraments; I have shown the solid grounds from the plain, obvious and repeated testimonies of the sacred scriptures, for what the Christian world believes, and has from the beginning believed, concerning them; and I have evidently detected the sophistry and futility of those arguments which our author displays with so much pomp and confidence in support of his antichristian system. I must now, then, ask every serious Christian, who has any zeal for the honour of Jesus Christ, and of his sacred institu-



tions, what opinion, what idea, can we form of the execrable attempt of our Reverend Author to rob these holy institutions of all their virtue, and of course to deprive our poor souls of all those graces intended by our blessed Saviour to be communicated to us by these means? Can we look upon the author of such an attempt as a Christian? Could a more mortal stab be aimed at the very vitals of Christianity by Turks and Heathens. Let us suppose our author's system should come to be universally adopted, and that baptism should every where be looked upon as a mere ceremonial sign, without any grace annexed to it, and no-wise necessary for salvation. There is no great danger indeed that this will ever happen, because Jesus Christ, who has instituted that holy ordinance, as an essential part of his religion, and a necessary means of our salvation, is engaged to preserve it, as well as all his other Divine appointments, to the end of the world: But, let us suppose this should happen, what would be the consequence? why, surely, such as we see daily happens among those that are of our author's opinion, where numbers of poor children who die before it be convenient for the *man of God* to baptize them, are suffered to die without receiving that holy sacrament at all, consequently, without the grace of justification, without being *regenerated by water and the spirit*; and who, of course, if we believe the words of Jesus Christ, can *never enter into the kingdom of God*. What a lamentable consequence is this! and what a deplorable affair would it be, should this become the universal practice! but, what other could be expected if our author's attempt should prevail? and can he be a friend to Chri-

tianity, to the honour of his God, or to his neighbour's salvation, who makes such an attempt? The attempt itself is doubtless most shocking; but the manner in which he makes it is beyond expression horrid! Call to mind for a moment those convincing proofs I have brought above to show, that Jesus Christ has in fact ordained certain outward forms, to the pious performance of which, he, in condescension to our weakness, and to be a solid ground of comfort and consolation to our poor hearts, has, infallibly as to his part, annexed the infusion of his grace into our souls; compare with these the futility of those sophisms which our author uses to the contrary. Upon the strength of these proofs I have brought, the Christian world has evermore believed, and looked upon the holy sacraments as one of the most essential parts of the religion of Jesus; but, according to our Reverend Author and his adherents, those who do so are guilty of the *very essence of superstition*; guilty of that ugly monster, which, *whatever be the outward appearance it assumes, has always more or less of demonism at the bottom*; guilty, in a word, of that damnable crime which takes its rise from *ignorance, or rather misapprehensions, of God, and a perversion of the sense of right and wrong*, whose effects are *frivolous at best, often flagitious, and whose tendency is plainly to lull the conscience, and give security in sin*; these are the glorious characters which our author gives of superstition; and these are the horrid crimes of which, according to him, every Christian is guilty, who dares to believe, that by *eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus Christ he has life everlasting, and will be raised up by Christ at the last day*; and that if he be not regenerated by water

*and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven!* Good God! what an age do we live in, when such blasphemies are published to the world among Christians, and find admirers! But our Reverend Author glories in these tenets, and, like those who, by killing the apostles, thought they did God a service, after destroying, as far as in him lies, the life and virtue of the holy sacrament of baptism; he has the assurance to insult the understanding, the piety, the Christianity of his readers, by pretending, that, in doing this, he is so far from derogating from a Christian institution of the greatest utility, if rightly understood and used, that he only clears it of misrepresentations, honours the ordinance, shows the reasonableness of the service, and vindicates the ways of God! What shall we here most admire? this insulting assurance of our author, or the delusion of his blinded admirers! What! he endeavours to deprive the sacraments of Jesus Christ of all those heavenly graces which he has annexed to the worthy receiving of them; he would have them of no more use or benefit to Christians than circumcision and the other exterior observances of Moses were to the Jews; he puts the substance upon an equality with the shadow; the good things that were to come with the weak and beggarly elements of the law; and he would have his readers upon his word believe, that, by so doing, he honours the ordinances of Jesus Christ, and shows the reasonableness of the service! For heaven's sake! Reverend Sir, do you imagine that all your readers are idiots? or, that none of them have the feelings of a Christian?

I observed above, that the examples of misre-



presentation of the Popish tenets, which I brought from this sermon, to show that its author was no friend to the Protestant religion, were not the only instances of the kind which he is guilty of; but that there were several other such, no less glaring than those I mentioned, which I promised occasionally to take notice of; this promise I must now make good; the subject before us in a particular manner requires it, and my doing so will further illustrate what I have said on this important subject of the sacraments.

The most inattentive observer will easily perceive, that the whole of what our author says, on what he calls the corruptions of ritual worship, and on the sacraments, from page 62 to page 75, is chiefly intended against the Roman-Catholicks; as also, some other passages, which, we shall see, by and by, that are, as it were, consequences of what he there lays down: and the ground upon which he condemns and ridicules them, is, *That they attach the pardon of sin and favour of God to all those external observances which they call sacraments; and that, without any disposition on the part of the receiver which can render them significant.* That is to say, as he explains himself, *That they believe these effects of their sacraments result purely from words and gestures, without any interior disposition in the receiver; that washing the body will do the business, without any care to purify the heart; that punctuality in certain rites will cancel guilt, without any study to reform the life: and this, he tells us, is what the Council of Trent calls opus operatum.* See our author, page 69.

It is something peculiar to the task you have laid upon me, Gentlemen, that, in order to do a



service to the Protestant religion, I am under a necessity of vindicating Popery from the false aspersions with which this writer has loaded it: But, as I know your aim is only to know the truth, and, I hope, there are numbers of my generous-hearted countrymen, whose minds are not so dead to honour and humanity, as to refuse to acknowledge what is true, even in Roman-Catholics; therefore, I hope, what I have already said, and am now to offer, in this way, will rather give pleasure than offence to all sincere lovers of truth, into whose hands this letter may fall.

The accusation which our author lodges against the Papists for what they teach concerning the *opus operatum* of the sacraments is not new. Both Luther and Calvin laid the same calumny to their charge; the former in his book *De captiv. Babyl. cap. de baptismo*, and the latter in his *Antid. sess. 7.* where they both say, that “to confer grace by the *opus operatum*, (or by the work wrought), according to the Catholics, is nothing else but to confer grace to a sinner without faith or repentance.” Were this charge true, doubtless the abettors of such a tenet would deserve all detestation; I have therefore made it my particular business to satisfy myself as to this point, and find their doctrine quite the reverse of what is here represented, and entirely conformable to the general explication I gave above, of the nature of the sacraments, from the common doctrine of all orthodox Christians. They tell us, then, That the efficacy of the sacraments depends entirely upon the institution of Jesus Christ, who has ordained these outward forms to be used, and has infallibly, upon his part, pro-

mised the infusion of his grace into the souls of those who worthily receive them; that, in adult persons, faith and repentance are absolutely required upon the part of the receiver, not as necessary to add any strength to the sacrament, which has all its efficacy independent of them; but as dispositions on the part of the receiver, without which the soul would be absolutely incapable of receiving the intended grace; that these dispositions are so essentially necessary for his partaking of that benefit, that if they be wanting, he becomes guilty of profaning the sacraments, and brings a curse upon himself instead of a blessing; that, however, in children, neither actual faith nor repentance are required, in order to reap all the benefit of baptism, both because they are incapable of them, and also because they have no need of repentance for any actual sin committed by themselves of which they were never guilty; and the obligations contracted both by their parents and sponsors, in whose faith they are baptized, give sufficient security that they will be educated in the Christian faith when they come to an age capable of it. In this case then, baptism actually produces its whole effect independent even of any positive disposition on the part of the receiver; and therefore merely by performing the work ordained by Jesus Christ for this purpose. Neither does the sanctity of the person who administers the sacrament any ways concur to produce the sacramental grace; all that is required is, that the sacramental action be performed in the manner in which Christ ordained it, by one authorized by him for that purpose, and that there be no impediment on the part of the receiver to render his soul incapable

of receiving the effect: And this is precisely what the Papists mean by that bugbear word of *opus operatum*; how contrary to what our author asserts!

Now, that this is their real doctrine, I appeal to the decrees of their Council of Trent; where, sess. vii. in the decree on the sacraments in general, the 6th canon runs thus: *If any one says, that the sacraments of the new law do not contain the grace which they signify, or do not confer that grace to those who put no impediment to it—let him be anathema.* Again, can. 7. *If any one says, that by these sacraments grace is not given always, and to every one who worthily receives them, as far as lies on the part of God—let him be anathema.* Where we see, that while this Council upholds the efficacy of the sacraments on the part of God, she expressly declares, that for the actual producing their effect, there must be no impediment on the part of the receiver, and that he must receive them worthily; and the belief of this the Council makes an express term of communion, pronouncing anathema upon all who teach otherwise.

But to put this matter past all doubt, let us see what this same Council more explicitly teaches in the catechism, published by its authority, for the use of all those of the Roman religion who have the charge of souls, as the standard out of which they are commanded to instruct their people. This catechism, on the sacrament of baptism, speaking of the baptism of adults, lays down these dispositions as absolutely required on their part for receiving the grace of the sacrament. “First, “it is necessary that they be willing themselves to “receive baptism—but besides this, faith also is “absolutely required for receiving the grace of



“ this sacrament ; because our Lord and Saviour  
 “ has taught us, *He who believes and is baptized*  
 “ *shall be saved.* Again, it is necessary, that the  
 “ person be truly penitent for all his past sins,  
 “ and ill spent life, and be firmly resolved to ab-  
 “ stain from all sins for the time to come ; other-  
 “ wise let him be absolutely rejected.” Can the  
 necessity of these previous dispositions be express-  
 ed in stronger terms ? Again, with regard to  
 the Lord’s supper, the same catechism, part II.  
*De Euch.* lays down at large no less than five dif-  
 ferent conditions required in the receiver, in or-  
 der to make a worthy and profitable communion ;  
*viz.* faith, charity with our neighbour, repent-  
 ance, humility, and the love of God. With what  
 face then can our author assert, (p. 69.) or so  
 much as insinuate, that these people *ascribe a vir-  
 tue to the outward form, unaccompanied by any dispo-  
 sition that can render it significant ? and that this is*  
*what the Council of Trent hath called the opus ope-  
 ratum ?* Shall we say our author knew no better,  
 but took it upon trust that this was their real te-  
 nets ? Alas ! what a disgrace is it, *for a master in*  
*Israel not to know these things ?* How unworthy a  
 man of honour to blaspheme and condemn with-  
 out knowing what ? But if he knew, that all his  
 charge against them was slander and calumny,  
 Good God ! what a heart must he have ! How-  
 ever, in this I shall judge nothing ; but only ob-  
 serve, what is to my present purpose, to wit, the  
 immense advantage he has here again given to  
 the Papists, and the powerful arms he has put in-  
 to their hands against the Reformation. Let us  
 suppose a sincere Protestant, fraught with the i-  
 deas he has imbibed from this sermon, should at-  
 tack his Papist acquaintance upon the subject of



the sacraments, how will he look confounded when his friend shows him the decrees and catechism of the Council of Trent, and desires him to read there the true doctrine of his church upon these matters, so widely the reverse of these calumnies with which they are charged? I leave to yourselves to consider what impression this must make upon a sincere and honest mind.

Again, the Roman-Catholicks, as you well know, admit several other sacraments besides baptism and the Lord's supper; but which are rejected by Protestants. Constant, however, in their doctrine concerning them, they expressly teach the absolute necessity of a proper disposition in the person who receives any of them, in order to partake the fruits which they believe are produced by them. Thus they believe, that Christ has left to the pastors of his church the power of passing sentence of absolution upon sinners who are truly penitent for sins committed after baptism; and that the very instant this sentence is passed upon such penitents by them, he (Jesus Christ) pours down his grace to the souls of these penitents, which effectually cleanses them from all their sins, thereby ratifying and confirming the sentence passed upon them by his priests. This they look upon as a sacrament, and call it the *sacrament of penance*, "in which (say they) we have all the essentials of a true sacrament; namely, the sentence of absolution pronounced upon a truly repentant sinner, which is the outward visible form; the inward grace which is thereby poured down to the soul, and cleanses it from sin; the institution of Jesus Christ, in John xx. 23.; where he says to the apostles, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are re-*

“ mitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain,  
 “ they are retained : lastly, the absolute connection  
 “ on God’s part between the outward sign and the  
 “ inward grace, contained in the sacred promise  
 “ he makes for that purpose in the words I have  
 “ cited.” Now, in order to partake of the grace  
 of this sacrament, and to be restored to the  
 friendship and favour of God by its means, they  
 expressly teach, that the penitent must have these  
 four dispositions, *First*, That he must be heartily  
 sorry for offending Almighty God by his past sins :  
*Secondly*, That he must be sincerely determined to  
 amend his life, and leave off his sins for the time  
 to come ; and these two they commonly express  
 in one word, calling them *contrition* : *Thirdly*,  
 That to these he must also join a sincere, humble,  
 and entire confession of all his sins to a priest :  
 And, *fourthly*, That he must be willing to accept  
 of, and faithfully to perform, whatever peniten-  
 tial works his pastor shall lay upon him for his  
 sins. And these conditions they hold are so ne-  
 cessarily required, that, if any one of them be  
 wanting, especially the two first, the penitent is  
 thereby rendered incapable of receiving the  
 grace of absolution ; and, consequently, that  
 though the outward rite be performed, though  
 the priest pronounce the sentence of absolution  
 upon him, yet this will be of no manner of ser-  
 vice to him ; not indeed from any defect on the  
 part of the sacrament, but upon account of his  
 own indisposition, by which he profanes the sa-  
 crament, and, instead of a blessing, draws down  
 a new guilt upon his soul. Now, that this is  
 their real doctrine, I refer to the decrees of the  
 Council of Trent, sess. xiv. and to the catechism  
 published by order of that Council, part II. chap.

*De pœnit. sacram.*; where all this is explained at large as the true and real doctrine of the Roman-Catholick church, the belief of it is expressly required as a term of her communion, and an anathema pronounced against all those who deny it.

According to this doctrine, the absolution of the priest is, in their sacrament of penance, what the rite of baptism is in the baptizing of adults, *viz.* the ultimate condition required by Almighty God, to which he has annexed the infusion of justifying grace into the soul, which has been prepared for receiving it by the other previous dispositions above mentioned. I do not inquire here, whether or not this doctrine be really the doctrine of Jesus Christ; the Church of England, in her order for the visitation of the sick, strongly countenances it; that Jesus Christ, if he had thought fit, might have ordered this as the means of getting pardon for sins committed after baptism, cannot be called in question; whether he actually did so or not, is a fact of which the Papists hold the affirmative, while the generality of Protestants deny it. Be that as it will, according to the above doctrine of the Roman-Catholicks concerning it, it is evidently true, that they do not ascribe the grace of absolution to the *outward form, unaccompanied with any inward disposition*; nay, they require more dispositions, and more difficult conditions of getting pardon for sin, even along with the outward form, than Protestants do without any form at all: it is also evident, that it is quite the reverse of their doctrine to suppose, that *washing the body will do, without purity of heart; or that punctuality in certain rites will cancel guilt,*



*without serious study to reform the life ; and, consequently, that our Reverend Author is guilty of the most unpardonable calumny in laying these horrid tenets to their charge ; and has, by so doing, given them an immense advantage over the Protestant religion.*

Calumny and misrepresentation of the tenets of an adversary never fails to give the injured party a great advantage, even though expressed in the most moderate manner ; but this advantage is exceedingly increased when the slander is clothed in poignant terms, and accompanied with the two-edged sword of contempt and ridicule. Our author, it must be acknowledged, is exceedingly expert at these weapons, and has used them to great purpose in the present case ; though, alas ! by so doing he has only the more effectually promoted the interest of Popery, and hurt the Reformation. P. 77. he says, “ How much was  
 “ Peter shocked at the impiety of Simon Magus,  
 “ who offered him money for the power of con-  
 “ ferring the Holy Ghost by the imposition of his  
 “ hands ? What would have been the apostle’s in-  
 “ dignation to have seen his pretended successors  
 “ set a price on the pardon of sin ? a gift of hea-  
 “ ven of infinitely more consequence than mira-  
 “ culous powers.” Again, p. 117. after relating from Montesquieu an idle story of the Indians, who superstitiously imagine, that by causing throw the ashes of their bodies after death into the Ganges, they secure an admission into Elysium ; in order to throw the utmost contempt upon the Church of England, as well as the Church of Rome, for giving the communion to the sick as a means to enable them to die well ; which the Roman-Catholicks call the *viaticum*, he says, “ are



“ absurdities of this kind, (*viz.* such as he men-  
 “ tioned of the Indians), peculiar to Paganism?  
 “ Are there not some European countries in  
 “ which men may say, with equal reason, *What*  
 “ *matters it how one lives? he can, on his death-*  
 “ *bed, obtain the viaticum*; and, by their doctrine  
 “ of sacraments, it is even of no consequence,  
 “ whether the dying man be sensible of what is  
 “ done, or insensible. It is manifest, that these  
 “ two dogmas are materially the same; they dif-  
 “ fer only in the form.” And in the following  
 page 118, he adds, “ But if any person is absurd  
 “ enough to consider the prayer of a minister,  
 “ at the bed-side of one in the agonies of death,  
 “ as a passport to heaven, his sentiments do not  
 “ differ essentially from theirs, who rely on ex-  
 “ treme unction, or the priest’s absolution, as the  
 “ grand security.”

Nothing, sure, can be more poignant or cut-  
 ting; nothing more fit to stir up in the mind of  
 the reader the utmost indignation and contempt,  
 than what our author says in these passages; but,  
 alas! what effect must it produce in the mind of  
 a serious Protestant when he comes to be unde-  
 ceived! Nothing more feelingly touches the  
 pride of our heart, than to be imposed upon by  
 those in whom we confide, and the greater  
 lengths our passions carry us when hurried away  
 by the deception, the more we are confounded  
 when our eyes come to be opened, and our pas-  
 sion cools; then we bitterly condemn the folly of  
 our past conduct, are moved with compassion to-  
 wards those we injured, are powerfully determi-  
 ned to go as great lengths in favouring them as  
 we had done in injuring them; and, in our hearts,

we detest the wretch, who, by deceiving us, led us on to such extravagancies. Allow me then once more to introduce a Roman-Catholick undeceiving his Protestant friend in the above particulars; and see what effect this must naturally produce in the hearer. “ Great must the force of truth be, “ (will he say) and inconceivable the aversion “ which your guides have against it! since we “ see they are at so much pains to hide it from “ your eyes, and to raise all the mist of your “ passions to hinder you from beholding it. Can “ you imagine, my friend, can you allow your- “ self to think, that that church, to whom you “ certainly owe the very scriptures themselves, “ and all the Christianity you have, and in “ which there are such numbers of the most “ learned and holy souls, should ever be capable “ of teaching, that the grace of God may be “ bought with money, or of setting a price up- “ on the pardon of sins? She utterly denies the “ charge with horror, and challenges your Doc- “ tor himself to bring, if he can, the smallest “ proof of her being guilty. She appeals to the “ decrees of her Councils, the rescripts of her “ Popes, the writings of all her divines without “ exception; who all, with one voice, and in “ the strongest terms, condemn, as a most dete- “ stable crime, every attempt to buy the gifts of “ God with money; and that even in things of “ vastly less value than the grace of the sacraments. “ To what then, but the blackest malice, can “ I attribute the odious manner in which your “ Doctor lays this crime to her charge? and what “ idea must I have of your religion, which so great “ and learned a man as Dr C——I does not so “ much as pretend to defend, but by a continued

“ series of the most shocking calumnies? Can  
 “ Christian truth be found in that party which is  
 “ forced to defend itself by such antichristian  
 “ weapons? Can you trust your darling soul,  
 “ my friend, with guides who are capable of  
 “ such crimes? But what shall we say of the pa-  
 “ rallel he draws between the Indian supersti-  
 “ tions and the sacraments of Jesus Christ?  
 “ Strange! that it should ever enter into a Chri-  
 “ stian’s head to make a comparison between  
 “ them! But to put them upon the same footing;  
 “ to say, that the holy communion of the Lord’s  
 “ supper given to a sick person in danger of  
 “ death, should be of no more benefit to him,  
 “ than an Indian receives from throwing the  
 “ ashes of his burnt body into the river Ganges;  
 “ positively to affirm, that the former is as black  
 “ superstition as the latter: Is the man a Chri-  
 “ stian that can assert this? What! Is the holy  
 “ communion of the Lord’s supper the *suggestion*  
 “ *of knavery or folly*? Is it an idle useless ceremony,  
 “ *always tending to what is insignificant or pernicious*?  
 “ Is it no-wise connected or conducive to the life  
 “ of our soul, though Jesus Christ himself ex-  
 “ pressly declares the contrary? These are the  
 “ characters which your Doctor himself gives of  
 “ superstition; every one of which evidently be-  
 “ longs to what he relates of the Indians; but will  
 “ any man who is a Christian say, they no less be-  
 “ long to the holy communion? and would you  
 “ advise me, my friend, to leave the holy Catho-  
 “ lick church, the spouse of Jesus Christ, whose  
 “ doctrine is so pure and holy, that her most inve-  
 “ terate enemies can find no handle in it to con-  
 “ demn her, but are forced to have recourse to  
 “ lies and calumnies, in order to blacken her in



“ the eyes of their deluded people, and, by this  
 “ means, invincibly prejudice them, to their ir-  
 “ reparable loss, against her; would you have  
 “ me, I say, forsake this sacred guide, which  
 “ Christ himself has commanded all to hear, un-  
 “ der pain of being looked upon as Heathens  
 “ and publicans, and with whom he himself has  
 “ promised to continue always even to the end  
 “ of the world, and to trust my salvation with  
 “ such upstart guides as your ministers are, who  
 “ do not even attempt to defend their own te-  
 “ nets but by misrepresenting those of the chaste  
 “ spouse of Jesus, and who willingly give up  
 “ the most sacred institutions of our Saviour as  
 “ so many heathenish superstitions, rather than  
 “ want dirt to throw at her, in order to render  
 “ her odious? Rather allow me, my dear  
 “ friend, to conjure you, for the love of God,  
 “ and as you tender the salvation of your im-  
 “ mortal soul,” &c.

You easily see, Gentlemen, how far this theme  
 might be carried on, with the greatest appearance  
 of reason, and that without needing any other  
 foundation than what our author has advanced  
 in the passages above quoted from him. Now,  
 who can answer for the impression such a discourse  
 may make in the heart of a serious Protestant?  
 how many have been carried over to the Roman-  
 Catholick side from this very source? and what  
 idea must we form of our Reverend Author, who  
 so perfidiously betrays his own cause, and gives  
 such advantage to its adversaries?

But, after all, has he not good reason to say, that  
 according to the very explication we have given of  
 the sacraments, and of the grace of God being an-  
 nexed to the performance of the outward rite, that



even this is to represent the ordinances of Jesus as no better than magical spells? p. 69. Strange infatuation! But what shall we say? A man that is sinking grasps at every twig. However, as the picture he here draws is apt enough to strike weak minds, I must not leave it unnoticed. Let us then put the argument in its proper point of view, divested of the oratorical dress in which our Author clothes it, in order to deceive, and it will run thus: *The Son of God condescending to our weakness, has often been pleased to use exterior corporal means, in order thereby to bestow his heavenly benefits upon us; and the Christian world has always believed, that he has particularly appointed such in his holy sacraments, as the never-failing means on his part to infuse his grace into our souls; but the devil, who always strives to imitate the works of God, thereby the more securely to delude poor souls, has also made compacts with his votaries, that when they use certain words and gestures, and such other spells as he appoints, he will let them know things to come, or discover things secret, or torment their enemies, or cure their diseases, or the like; therefore the sacraments of Jesus Christ, according to what the Christian world believes concerning them, are no better than the magical spells of Satan; alike superstitious, and of course to be alike disregarded.* Will any Christian approve this conclusion? and yet this is plainly the full force and scope of our author's cynical argument; according to which, an infidel may, with equal reason, say, "It was superstition in St. Peter and the other apostles, to pretend to confer the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands, Acts viii.; it was no better than a magical spell in the woman with the issue of blood, to expect a cure by touching the hem of our

“ Saviour’s garment; it was superstition in  
 “ Christ himself, to cure the blind man by spit-  
 “ ting on the ground, making clay, anointing  
 “ his eyes with it, and then ordering him to  
 “ wash them in the pool Siloam; it was super-  
 “ stition and art-magic in the apostles, to lay  
 “ their hands upon the sick in order to cure  
 “ them,” &c. &c. For we find throughout the  
 whole scripture numberless examples, which  
 show beyond reply, that it has always been the  
 conduct of the Divine wisdom, in condescension  
 to human weakness, to make use of external  
 sensible objects, as the means to bestow the great-  
 est favours upon man, both as to soul and body;  
 but, according to our author’s logic, because the  
 devil has endeavoured to imitate this, in some  
 degree, with his votaries; therefore, we are to  
 condemn the wise conduct of God, as no less  
 superstitious than the magical spells of Satan!  
 I really blush for the weakness of human nature,  
 while I am obliged, for the sake of truth, to ex-  
 pose such extravagant follies †!

But it is not by misrepresentation alone of the  
 tenets of his adversaries, that our author has hurt  
 the interests of religion; the lamentable picture  
 he gives us of the unhappy divisions into which  
 Christianity is split, and the manner in which he  
 accounts for this great evil, will afford no less

† What follows here, in Staurophilus’s letter, is a detection of the  
 misrepresentations which the Doctor is guilty of, in what he says con-  
 cerning persecution. But though what Staurophilus advances upon  
 this head is but too true, yet it is, at the same time, too humiliating  
 for the Reformation to be published in a Protestant country. The  
 Club, therefore, has thought proper to suppress that part, and refer  
 the reader to *the free examination of the methods used to prevent the  
 growth of Popery*; where he will find sufficient information of the  
 real Popish doctrine concerning superstition.

plausible arguments to the Deists against Christianity, and to the Romanists against the Reformation, than his calumnies and misrepresentations.

He begins his account of these divisions, p. 40. as follows: “ It is not to be dissembled, that  
 “ the absurd glosses and incoherent comments,  
 “ which have been sometimes made on the sa-  
 “ cred text, have given too great scope to the  
 “ enemies of the faith for the charge of incon-  
 “ stancy and nonsense—Superstition and en-  
 “ thusiasm have gone to work and conspired in  
 “ disfiguring the beauty and destroying the sim-  
 “ plicity of the truth as it is in Jesus. Whether  
 “ men have derived their opinions from the re-  
 “ veries of their own fancy, or imbibed them im-  
 “ plicitly from those in whom they confided,  
 “ they have commonly had recourse to the Bible,  
 “ not to inquire, without prepossession, into the  
 “ doctrine contained there; but to seek for argu-  
 “ ments in support of the tenets they had previ-  
 “ ously adopted. Hence the many curious ex-  
 “ pedients by which the gospel, if I may so ex-  
 “ press myself, hath been put to the torture; to  
 “ make it speak the various and discordant senti-  
 “ ments of the multifarious and jarring sects in-  
 “ to which the Christian world hath been unfor-  
 “ tunately split. Every party, one would think,  
 “ fancies itself possessed of the only key to the  
 “ heavenly treasure contained in the Bible. Cer-  
 “ tain it is, that every party finds things there,  
 “ which none but themselves can discover. Ne-  
 “ vertheless, in the general modes of expound-  
 “ ing, all seem to be pretty well agreed. The  
 “ true partisan, of whatever party he be, ne-



“ neglecting the plain declarations of scripture  
 “ (which are by far most numerous) as of no  
 “ moment, recurs chiefly, for the support of  
 “ his system, to those passages wherein there is  
 “ some difficulty †. Again, when it suits his pur-  
 “ pose, renouncing the use of common sense,  
 “ what the ordinary idioms of language, and  
 “ rules of interpretation require to be under-  
 “ stood figuratively, he explains literally; what,  
 “ on the contrary, the scope of the context re-  
 “ quires to be understood as literal, he explains  
 “ as figurative: by such ingenious methods,  
 “ which give so large a field for imagination to  
 “ range in, he never fails to attain his end.  
 “ Persons of the most repugnant sentiments  
 “ make the experiment with equal success. The  
 “ scripture is neither ambiguous nor obscure;  
 “ but mens judgments are pre-engaged ere they  
 “ examine it. They admit it only in the sense  
 “ it pleases them. Hence it is made the founda-  
 “ tion of various systems ‡.”

Such is the picture drawn by our author of the divisions of Protestant Christianity, and of the melancholy perversion of the sacred writings

† Does not the author here graphically describe his own conduct in defence of his antiscritural system of baptism?

‡ It is necessary to observe to our readers, that what the Doctor here says of these divisions is solely applicable to the Reformation; Popery follows a quite different plan. In the Church of Rome, no private person is allowed to explain the scripture according to his own fancy; but all are obliged to receive the explication of it according to the unanimous doctrine of the pastors of that church: and these pastors make it an invariable rule never to admit any other sense of scripture but what they themselves were taught by their predecessors, and what they find has been handed down from the beginning, which they call *tradition*. This doubtless is the reason which keeps them so perfectly united in every thing that pertains to faith; but it deprives all particulars of that liberty of judging, of which the Reformation glories.



by its professors : and as the facts are incontestable, confirmed by daily experience, the truth of what he says cannot be called in question. But for heaven's sake, Reverend Sir, why thus expose the weak side of the common cause? Protestantism has its foibles as well as Popery ; and can you be ignorant, that these very divisions, which you have painted in such striking colours, as the necessary consequences of the perverse use made of the holy scriptures, by the children of the Reformation, are the great, the essential foible of the Reformation, and the source of the most powerful arguments used both by the Deists and Papists against it? and can the man be a friend to religion, who propals these to the world, and thus exposes his cause to the strongest batteries of its enemies?

“ You pretend, says the Deist, that Christianity  
 “ is revealed by God; the author of it being no  
 “ other than God himself, who, in condescension  
 “ to our infirmities, made himself a man that he  
 “ might be our teacher and instructor in those  
 “ heavenly truths which it was necessary for us  
 “ to know in order to attain salvation. I pass  
 “ over all these seeming inconsistencies and ab-  
 “ surdities in the doctrine you pretend was re-  
 “ vealed by him; I attack you upon the very founda-  
 “ tion you lay down. The light of reason as-  
 “ sures me, that if Jesus Christ be God, whatever  
 “ he has revealed must be absolute truth, and  
 “ every man is bound in the strictest manner to  
 “ believe it; your Bible concurs in this, and de-  
 “ clares, that Christ absolutely demands this belief  
 “ of what he has revealed from all mankind,  
 “ under pain of eternal damnation. Thus when

“ he gave the apostles commission to preach his  
 “ gospel to the world, he ordered them to teach  
 “ all nations, *to observe all things whatever he had*  
 “ *commanded them*, Matth. xxviii.; and requires  
 “ all mankind to receive and believe those things  
 “ they were thus taught by the apostles, as a con-  
 “ dition absolutely necessary for attaining eternal  
 “ happiness: *He that believes and is baptized shall be*  
 “ *saved; but he that believes not shall be damned*, Mark.  
 “ xvi. Here we see the obligation of believing  
 “ those very points which Christ revealed to his  
 “ apostles, and commanded them to preach to the  
 “ world, laid upon all mankind in the strictest  
 “ and severest manner, To this however the  
 “ light of reason justly subscribes, since, to refuse  
 “ to believe a point revealed by God, is giving  
 “ God the lie, and an insult of the highest degree  
 “ offered to his infinite veracity: the same thing  
 “ is taught by one of the chief promoters of Chri-  
 “ stianity, and an apostle too, miraculously called  
 “ to this office; who, in his epistle to the Gala-  
 “ tians, pronounces a curse, and repeats it a se-  
 “ cond time, upon any one, though an angel  
 “ from heaven, who should dare to teach any  
 “ other gospel different from what he had preach-  
 “ ed to that people, Gal. i. 8. Now, I appre-  
 “ hend this obligation of believing with Divine  
 “ faith all revealed truths, was not intended for  
 “ the apostolick age only, but designed to conti-  
 “ nue to the end of the world; and that we who  
 “ live at this day are as much obliged to believe  
 “ all revealed truths, and to believe them under  
 “ pain of damnation, as those were to whom the  
 “ apostles first preached them. I ask you then,  
 “ by what rule, by what standard, can I at this  
 “ day know, what those truths are which were re-

“ vealed by Christ to mankind above seventeen  
 “ hundred years ago ; and which I am bound to be-  
 “ lieve, under pain of damnation? For it is clear as  
 “ noon-day, that if Almighty God commands me,  
 “ under pain of damnation, to believe these  
 “ truths, he must have left me some sure and  
 “ certain rule by which to know them. Now you  
 “ reject the authority of the church ; you tell  
 “ me tradition has been corrupted from the very  
 “ earliest ages ; you put the Bible into my hand,  
 “ and pretend, that that book was written by  
 “ inspiration of God, to be the rule I want ; and  
 “ that by reading it attentively I will there find  
 “ all revealed truths necessary to be believed.  
 “ How ridiculous is it to talk to me in such a  
 “ manner, after the description your Doctor has  
 “ given us of the fatal consequences of follow-  
 “ ing such a rule! What! Would ever Almight-  
 “ ty God give me a rule absolutely incapable of  
 “ doing what was intended? Has ever this rule  
 “ been able to reconcile two contending parties?  
 “ Has ever any heathen nation been converted  
 “ to Christianity by this rule? Is not the follow-  
 “ ing this rule the source and origin of all the  
 “ divisions that have ever infested Christianity?  
 “ Have not the dissensions described by the Doctor  
 “ multiplied beyond measure among Protestants,  
 “ since the moment this rule was adopted by the  
 “ ring-leaders of the Reformation? Is it possible  
 “ to know, among the many contending parties,  
 “ which are true believers, by this rule alone?  
 “ Is it possible, when I do embrace any party as  
 “ the true church, to have any security from  
 “ this rule, that I am not believing *the doctrines of*  
 “ *devils* ; which all errors in faith certainly are,  
 “ and are expressly called so by the Bible itself,



“ 1 Tim. iv. 1. instead of believing the truths of  
 “ God? I may indeed think I am right; but what  
 “ security can I have of being so, when thou-  
 “ sands and thousands, who follow the same rule,  
 “ absolutely condemn me? Now, is it consistent  
 “ with common sense, or the idea we have of the  
 “ Supreme Being, to suppose him capable of ob-  
 “ liging all mankind to believe those very truths  
 “ which he revealed, and that under pain of  
 “ eternal misery; and yet give them no other  
 “ rule to come to the knowledge of these truths,  
 “ but such an one as is absolutely incapable of  
 “ leading them to it? Nay, which is evidently  
 “ (and by your Doctor’s own confession) a source  
 “ of dissensions and divisions, and which opens a  
 “ door, and gives a sanction to all the most con-  
 “ tradictory, yea, the most impious opinions,  
 “ that have ever appeared among Christians? A  
 “ rule, in a word, which never yet has been able  
 “ to reconcile any two who differed about reli-  
 “ gion, and which cannot possibly give any rea-  
 “ sonable security to those who follow it? I  
 “ must therefore conclude, that the rule you  
 “ give me is no rule at all, and your religion,  
 “ which has no other foundation but that rule,  
 “ is not from God. You will tell me, perhaps,  
 “ with your Doctor, that the fault is not in the  
 “ rule, but in the abuse of it, that *the scripture is*  
 “ *neither ambiguous nor obscure, but mens judgments*  
 “ *are pre-engaged ere they examine it, p. 42.* Or, as  
 “ he had expressed it before, p. 39. *This we may*  
 “ *warrantably affirm, that the great truths which re-*  
 “ *quire our faith, and the precepts which demand our*  
 “ *obedience, are put in such a variety of lights, and*  
 “ *so frequently inculcated, as to leave no reasonable*  
 “ *doubt concerning their meaning.* But this answer,



“ instead of bettering your cause, entirely con-  
 “ demns it, because it is an absolute contradic-  
 “ tion to the plainest and most express declara-  
 “ tion of the very rule itself which you want to  
 “ establish; for, does not the Bible expressly af-  
 “ firm, that, in the epistles of St Paul, *there are*  
 “ *some things hard to be understood, which they that*  
 “ *are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also*  
 “ *the other scriptures, to their own destruction?*  
 “ 2 Pet. iii. 16. Can any thing then be more  
 “ ridiculous, than for a Doctor of Divinity,  
 “ who looks upon the Bible as the only rule, to  
 “ affirm the *scripture is neither ambiguous nor ob-*  
 “ *scure*; when that very scripture expressly de-  
 “ clares, that *there are things in it hard to be un-*  
 “ *derstood*, and things of such importance, that  
 “ the misunderstanding of them brings perdi-  
 “ tion along with it? Can there be a greater  
 “ proof of the futility of that rule, than to see,  
 “ that even so great a man as Dr C——I cannot  
 “ sustain it, but by asserting the very reverse of  
 “ what it contains, and thus plainly giving it  
 “ the lie in a point of such main importance?  
 “ And do not tell me here, that the scripture,  
 “ though obscure in many things of less mo-  
 “ ment, yet is clear in all fundamentals; that it  
 “ is a distinction, which, whatever use may be  
 “ made of it in other cases, yet certainly can have  
 “ no place at all in what regards Divine faith:  
 “ for, what is faith? Is it not the belief of those  
 “ truths which God has revealed? Is it not precise-  
 “ ly in these that the very essence of religion prin-  
 “ cipally consists? and does not the obligation of  
 “ believing them arise precisely from this, *because*  
 “ *God has revealed them*? Now, am I not obliged  
 “ to believe God in small things as well as in

“ great? in things which, considered in them-  
 “ selves, are of little importance, as well as in  
 “ those which are of the greatest? in non-funda-  
 “ mentals, as well as in fundamentals? and is it  
 “ not equally giving the lie to God to refuse be-  
 “ lieving what he says in the one as well as in the  
 “ other? It is quite childish then, to pretend  
 “ to answer the difficulty by saying, the scrip-  
 “ ture is clear in things necessary, but not in  
 “ things unnecessary; every thing is necessary  
 “ to be believed when God reveals it. Besides,  
 “ we have seen above, from the very words of  
 “ the scripture, that there are in it *things hard*  
 “ *to be understood*, even in points necessary to sal-  
 “ vation, and consequently in things fundamen-  
 “ tal; since the wresting them is there decla-  
 “ red to be the cause of destruction. Again, as  
 “ to his other assertion, I ask you, Is not the doc-  
 “ trine of the Trinity, and the incarnation and  
 “ original sin, the very essence of Christianity?  
 “ and will any one say, that these are *put in such*  
 “ *a variety of lights, and so frequently inculcated in*  
 “ *the Bible, as to leave no reasonable doubt about*  
 “ *them?* On the contrary, is there any one point  
 “ put in a greater variety of lights, and more  
 “ frequently inculcated, than the necessity and  
 “ efficacy of baptism? and yet your Reverend  
 “ Doctor absolutely denies both! But to show  
 “ you still further how insufficient your founda-  
 “ tion is, I shall allow, for once, the scripture to  
 “ be clear in itself, and that the divisions among  
 “ Christians arise from the abuse of it; yet it  
 “ must be owned, that there are numbers of peo-  
 “ ple on all sides that act sincerely, and really in  
 “ their heart think they are doing well; yet both  
 “ scripture and reason convince us, that as they

“ contradict one another, they cannot all be in  
 “ the right, and that those who are wrong must  
 “ be in the road to perdition ; for, as scripture af-  
 “ fures us, *there is a way which seemeth right unto a*  
 “ *man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*, Prov.  
 “ xiv. 12. : hence, therefore, even a sincere person  
 “ who thinks himself right, may be mistaken ; and  
 “ whilst he thinks himself in a good way, may be  
 “ running on to death. Again, the same scripture  
 “ assures us, that *the unlearned and the unstable,*  
 “ *who wrest the scripture, do so to their own destruc-*  
 “ *tion* : now the unlearned are by far the most  
 “ numerous ; and among the learned themselves,  
 “ who of them can answer for their own stabi-  
 “ lity, especially when they see numbers equally  
 “ learned, and no less stable than themselves,  
 “ condemn their conduct, and walk in a road  
 “ quite opposite ? from whence it is evident, that  
 “ neither learned nor unlearned, who follow  
 “ their own judgment in explaining the scrip-  
 “ tures, can have any solid security. Lastly, the  
 “ same scripture assures us, that as there is but  
 “ one *Lord and one God*, so there is but *one faith*,  
 “ Ephes. v. 4. and *without faith it is impossible to*  
 “ *please God*, Heb. xi. From all which it evident-  
 “ ly follows, that among the vast variety of Chri-  
 “ stian sects, there is but one true religion, *viz.*  
 “ those who have this one true faith revealed by  
 “ Christ, and taught by his apostles ; and all the  
 “ rest, being contrary to this, are by consequence  
 “ teachers of errors and falsehood, instead of the  
 “ truths of God ; and, for that reason, are un-  
 “ doubtedly out of the way of salvation, even  
 “ though they vainly imagine themselves right ;  
 “ it being *impossible*, as we have seen, *without the*



“ one true *faith, to please God.* To all this, rea-  
 “ son still cheerfully subscribes, since it is clear  
 “ as noon-day, that Almighty God cannot be the  
 “ author of contradictions; and consequently,  
 “ that, among the different sects of Christians,  
 “ there can be but one true faith, and all the rest  
 “ who differ from that one true faith must be  
 “ falsehood and error; and as they teach a differ-  
 “ ent gospel from what St Paul taught, they must  
 “ of course fall under the curse pronounced up-  
 “ on all such by that apostle. Now, this being  
 “ the case, I ask you, How is it possible to reme-  
 “ dy this evil? Serious well-meaning people, sin-  
 “ cerely following this rule, are yet led on in the  
 “ ways of death, without any possibility of unde-  
 “ ceiving them; for who can convince them of  
 “ their mistake, since whoever should attempt it  
 “ must own, that, for ought he knows, he may  
 “ be mistaken himself? Even then allowing that  
 “ the scripture is clear in itself, yet since we  
 “ see by experience, and it is candidly acknow-  
 “ ledged by the Doctor, that, considering the  
 “ weaknesses, passions and prejudices of man,  
 “ the following this as a rule does, in fact, lead  
 “ men to dissensions; that is, to errors in faith,  
 “ and consequently to destruction, without any  
 “ possibility of rectifying the mistake, even in  
 “ the sincere, it follows, beyond all contradic-  
 “ tion, that this rule you give me is an inade-  
 “ quate rule, by no means adapted to the neces-  
 “ sities of mankind, and therefore absolutely in-  
 “ sufficient for the end proposed; which is, as  
 “ scripture itself declares, *to bring all to the unity*  
 “ *of the faith,* Ephes. iv. 13. and *to unite all in*  
 “ *one fold under one shepherd,* John x. 16. Now,  
 “ is it consistent with the goodness and wisdom



“ of the Supreme Being to oblige all men, un-  
 “ der pain of damnation, to believe the truths  
 “ he has revealed, and to be all united in one  
 “ faith, and at the same time to leave us no other  
 “ rule to bring us to this union but one; which,  
 “ as experience shows, never yet did produce  
 “ this effect, and which, considering human na-  
 “ ture, is absolutely incapable of doing it? What  
 “ then must necessarily be the conclusion of all  
 “ this? I shall give it you in the words of Lord  
 “ Bolingbroke, who perfectly well felt the force  
 “ and strength of this reasoning. *Writers of the*  
 “ *Roman religion (says this author) have attempted*  
 “ *to show, that the text of holy writ is, on many*  
 “ *accounts, insufficient to be the sole criterion of ortho-*  
 “ *doxy. I apprehend too that they have shown it. Sure*  
 “ *I am, that experience, from the first promulgation*  
 “ *of Christianity to this hour, shows abundantly with*  
 “ *how much ease and success the most opposite, the*  
 “ *most extravagant, nay, the most impious opinions,*  
 “ *and the most contradictory faiths, may be founded*  
 “ *in the same text, and plausibly defended by the same*  
 “ *authority. Writers of the Reformed religion have*  
 “ *erected their batteries against tradition—Each side*  
 “ *has been employed to weaken the cause, and explode*  
 “ *the system of his adversary; and they have jointly*  
 “ *laid the axe to the root of Christianity: for thus men*  
 “ *will be apt to reason upon what they have advan-*  
 “ *ced. If the text has not that authenticity, clear-*  
 “ *ness and precision, which are necessary to establish*  
 “ *it as a Divine and certain rule of faith and prac-*  
 “ *tice; and if the tradition of the church, from the*  
 “ *first ages of it, to the days of Luther and Calvin,*  
 “ *has been corrupted itself, and has served to corrupt*  
 “ *the faith and practice of Christians; THERE RE-*

“ MAINS, AT THIS TIME, NO STANDARD AT  
 “ ALL OF CHRISTIANITY. And a little after,  
 “ arguing from the same principles, he says, *The*  
 “ *consequence then must be evident, viz. that either*  
 “ *this religion was not originally from God, or else*  
 “ *God has not effectually provided for preserving the*  
 “ *genuine purity of it, and the gates of hell have ac-*  
 “ *tually prevailed, in contradiction to his promise, a-*  
 “ *gainst the Church. The best effect of this reasoning*  
 “ *that can be hoped for, is, that men should fall into The-*  
 “ *ism, and subscribe to the first proposition. He must*  
 “ *be worse than an Atheist that can affirm the last.*  
 “ On the study and use of history, letter V.”

See here the use which the subtile Deist will readily make of the description our author has so graphically painted of the divisions among Christians, and of the abuse they make of the scriptures; see here the manifest advantages he puts into the hands of the open enemies of Christianity by this imprudence. But the evil does not rest here; it is not the Deist alone whom our author favours; the Roman-Catholick also will find, in the above concession he makes, the most plausible arguments to display the foibles of the Reformation, and to set off, in the most striking colours, the certainty of the rule he follows, the security it affords, the tranquillity and peace of conscience that flows from it, the perfect union in all matters of revelation that subsists among the members of his Church who follow that rule, and the like; all which, when contrasted with the miserable divisions, doubts and uncertainties, among Protestants, as described by our author, cannot fail to make the deepest impression upon every serious soul that considers it. And the Papist will doubtless observe further, how impossible it is to

refute the above arguments of Deists upon Protestant principles; and will probably in this find the melancholy cause of that deluge of infidelity which at present so universally gains ground in these kingdoms †.

But leaving what more might be said on this subject to your own reflections, let us proceed to consider the account our author gives us of the causes of the dissensions among Christians. He begins it, p 44. thus: “ One great spring of this  
 “ evil was, that rage of dogmatizing which so  
 “ early showed itself in a variety of shapes.  
 “ When the doctrine of Jesus began to spread  
 “ through all the states of Greece, and to make  
 “ many profelytes among that ingenious, inquisi-  
 “ tive and disputatious people, who were then  
 “ divided into philosophical sects, it might na-  
 “ turally be expected that converts from differ-  
 “ ent sects, who had not thoroughly imbibed  
 “ the spirit of the religion they had so recently  
 “ been taught, still retaining a tincture of their  
 “ former sentiments, in regard to Theology and  
 “ morals, and so warped from the truth in differ-  
 “ ent ways, would soon disagree among them-  
 “ selves, concerning the doctrine of that gospel  
 “ which they had received.—Even in the apo-  
 “ stolick age these seeds of dissension were begin-  
 “ ning to spring up—Now, what would be the  
 “ consequences of this presumption on the doc-  
 “ trinal part of our religion? It cannot be

† The learned authors of the *Christian Magazine*, in their *Vindication of the Christian Religion against Rousseau*, are so sensible of this, that they expressly maintain and uphold the infallibility of the Church, without which Rousseau defies all the strongest reasonings against him; and they take the very same way to explain and illustrate it, and to clear it of the objections made against it, that the Roman-Catholicks do themselves. See their *Dissertation upon the Scripture*.



“ doubted, but that some of the truths of re-  
 “ velation would be explained away to make  
 “ room for the dreams of visionaries—Another,  
 “ and more common consequence, was, to in-  
 “ corporate into the body of the Christian doc-  
 “ trine a number of adventitious tenets, to which  
 “ it had no affinity, and with which it was very  
 “ ill suited to coalesce—A third consequence  
 “ would be, that men getting beyond the sphere  
 “ of human knowledge, would come at last, in  
 “ their airy flights, to mistake shadows for reali-  
 “ ties, &c.—On all these points men have dared  
 “ to pronounce most dogmatically. Other dog-  
 “ matists have arisen, no less confident of their  
 “ own abilities, who have entered into the que-  
 “ stion, and given a contrary decision. Then  
 “ was kindled the Theologic war. The people  
 “ were divided; some listed themselves under  
 “ one captain, others under another. Each par-  
 “ ty had recourse to scripture as a common ma-  
 “ gazine for arms wherewith to encounter the ad-  
 “ verse party. Each imagined he succeeded in  
 “ the application, and, confident of his own  
 “ prowess and ability, each boasted of the victory.  
 “ In process of time, Councils were called to end  
 “ the strife. Councils thought that it suited  
 “ their dignity on every question to be decisive;  
 “ and out of their decision of one question se-  
 “ veral others have arisen. Now the radical er-  
 “ ror was a notion, that religion was concerned  
 “ *on* a particular side, OR THAT SCRIPTURE HAD  
 “ SAID ANY THING WHICH COULD SERVE TO  
 “ DECIDE THE POINT DEBATED.”

I thought it necessary to give an extract of this  
 passage in our author's own words, that the ob-  
 servations I have to make upon it may be the



more clearly perceived. In the first place then, I observe, that what he says here of the causes from whence divisions have sprung among Christians, is a mere hypothesis of his own, and serves to give us a very unjust idea of the Christian religion, which it represents as a matter of uncertainty, even at its first promulgation, and as embracing in its communion those who explained away the truths of revelation, to make room for the dreams of visionaries; those who embraced adventitious tenets, though quite discordant with revealed truths; and those who took shadows for realities, as well as the orthodox believers themselves. And this representation he carries on so far towards the end of his sermon, that, p. 91. he tells us, that even St Paul allows, that “there are in religion matters of doubtful disputation, which ought never to disturb the harmony of Christians, much less make a rent in their communion;” for which he cites Rom. xiv. Again, the attention of the apostles in frequenting the synagogues and the temples, in order to have an occasion of preaching the gospel to their countrymen, he brings in, p. 93. 94. as a proof, that, according to modern ideas, the apostles were Latitudinarians, and admitted into their communion any sect that believed in one God: and, lastly the dispute, *whether the converted Gentiles were obliged to circumcision?* he alleges as a proof, that “even the Christians themselves were not wholly without diversity of opinions in the apostolick age,” p. 94. Our author no doubt has his reasons for representing things in this light; but nothing can be more contrary to the light in which they are represented by the holy scripture than what he has advanced. The apostles were not only most assiduous in instruct-

ing their converts in all revealed truths, but they used the utmost attention in exhorting their people to preserve the same inviolated, and to be all of one mind, allowing no dissensions on these points; and they laid their commands upon them in the strongest terms for this purpose. St Jude declares to us, that *it was needful for him to write his epistle, to exhort us, that we should EARNESTLY CONTEND for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, Jude v. 3.* St Paul fervently prays to God, that the faithful among the Romans may be all of the same mind: *Now, says he, the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, Rom. xv. 5. 6.* He exhorts the Corinthians *to be of one mind, and to live in peace, 2 Cor. xiii. 11.*; and after he had severely reprimanded the Galatians for admitting but one single point of false doctrine, viz. *that circumcision was necessary under the gospel,* he concludes, by expressing the confidence he had in the Lord, that they would be no more *otherwise minded* than what he had taught them; and he threatens judgment to any one, whoever he be, who should trouble them again. And in this the apostles only follow the example of their Master, who, John xvii. prayed with so much ardour to his heavenly Father, that all his followers might be one, without schism, rent or division, even as He and his Father were united together in the most perfect union; and that this was actually the case with the Christians in the apostolick age, only consider the character the scripture gives of them: *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, Acts ii. 42.* *And the multitude of them that*

*believed were of one heart and of one soul, Acts iv. 32.* How different a description is this of the first Christians from what our author gives us of them! Now, in order to preserve the faithful steadfast in the profession and unity of the true faith, we find four powerful means used by the Holy Ghost, besides the warm exhortations to unity, which, as we have seen above, the apostles made use of for this purpose. The first was to pronounce a curse upon all those who should dare to teach any one thing contrary or different from what the apostles had taught, and to declare, that all who did so were out of the way of salvation; thus St Paul, *Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed, Gal. i. 8. 9.* What stronger terms could be used to persuade the world to adhere to the faith once delivered to the saints, and to avoid all novelties in doctrine, than what is here used? Again, speaking of those that cause divisions, contrary to the doctrine taught by the apostles, he says, *They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, Rom. xvi. 18.* And St John declares, that *all such as abide not in the doctrine of Christ have not God, 2 John v. 9.*; where we see, that all innovators, all who do not remain in the doctrine of Christ, but who bring in novelties and cause divisions, contrary to the old doctrine, are by that means separated from Christ and from God, and have no more connection with them? Hence St John calls them antichrists, *Even now, says he, there*



*Are many antichrists; they went out from us, but they were not of us,* 1 John ii. 18. 19. Now, is it likely, that the apostles who taught these things, or that those good souls who learned them from the apostles, would ever dare to alter the faith, or admit into their communion those who did so? Let reason here judge and determine. Again, another means used by the Divine Wisdom to preserve the purity of the faith, was, by forewarning the faithful of false teachers, describing their manners and foretelling their reprobation and damnation. Thus St Paul assures Timothy, *That, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron,* 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2. What an impression must this description of false teachers have made upon the minds of the Christians! What a horror must it have raised in them against all innovators! Again, *This know,* says the same great apostle, *that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, &c.—Men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, &c.* See the whole passage, 2 Tim. iii. St Peter also is very earnest upon this head, when he says, *Even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies—and many shall follow their pernicious ways—whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not,* 2 Pet. ii. 1. 2. 3. See also the whole epistle of St Jude, which is particularly written on this very subject. Now, let only common sense judge what effect these things must have had in the minds of the faithful; and what an aversion



must have been thereby excited in their hearts against all new doctrines contrary to what they had been taught by their pastors; and, will any man say, that, after all this, they would admit to their communion those who should reject the *revealed truths of God, to make room for the dreams of visionaries?* But, this is not all, we find, in the third place, the warmest exhortations used to avoid and fly all communication with such as should broach or teach new doctrines contrary to what had been first delivered to the saints. Thus St Paul speaks to the Romans, *Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have received, and avoid them,* Rom. xvi. 17. Again, describing these novelists, as above, to Timothy, he commands him, *From such turn away,* 2 Tim. iii. 5. And writing to Titus, he says, *A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself,* Tit. iii. 10. 11. St John also is so strict upon this head, that he forbids even the common salutations to such people: *Whosoever transgresseth, says he, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God— If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house; neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds,* 2 John 9. 10. 11. And, lastly, as the apostles so warmly exhorted the faithful to avoid all novelties, and fly from all those that broached them; so they no less warmly commanded them to stick close to the doctrine they had delivered to them, and to teach the same to those after them; *O Timothy!* says St

Paul, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and opposition of science falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith, 1 Tim. vi. 20. Again, Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us, 2 Tim. i. 13. 14. Also, The things which thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also, 2 Tim. ii. 2. And again, writing to the Thessalonians, and foretelling them all the delusions of antichrist in the latter days, he gives them, as a defence against all these delusions, this command, Wherefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle, 2 Thess. ii. 15.

Now, let any one consider these four means used by Almighty God himself to preserve the unity and purity of the faith, and the constant belief of all revealed truths, and then say, whether our author has not basely misrepresented the real state of the case, and endeavoured to impose the fictions of his own fancy upon his credulous and unwary readers! The truth is, that from the very beginning of Christianity the gates of hell have not ceased, by open force and secret fraud, to undermine the gospel, and destroy the belief of revealed truths, if possible, from the face of the earth; for this purpose they have at all times stirred up men of corrupt minds, proud, haughty, self-conceited people, as St Paul describes them, who, preferring the reveries of their own proud judgments, be ore the sacred truths which had been delivered to the

saints, have started new tenets, and published their own fancies to the world as the truths of God; and this from the very times of the apostles themselves; but whoever did so, and continued obstinate in their errors, were immediately condemned by the orthodox Christians, who adhered to the old doctrine, and were cut off from their communion, according to the rules which we have seen were laid down by the Holy Ghost for this purpose, and which was also practised by the apostles themselves with such innovators as arose in their days. Hence, it is most unjust and ungenerous in our author, to represent the primitive church as a medley of jarring opinions, since it cannot be called in question, by any one who is versed in church-history, that, at least, for the three first centuries, the orthodox Christians, by adhering to the above rules laid down by the Holy Ghost, preserved the faith in its primitive purity; and all those innovators described by our author were cut off from the church as corrupters of the faith, and hereticks, and had no more communion with the orthodox Christians than the Jews or Heathens. We may judge then of the author's dispositions towards Christianity, by the unjust picture he has given of it, by which he has exposed it to the most pointed darts of infidels, and given double force to all the arguments the Deist uses against it. But this will still more fully appear in my second observation upon the above citation from his sermon; wherein we shall see that he gives up the cause entirely, and fairly acknowledges, that the Christian religion has neither ground nor foundation.



Speaking of the errors which crept in among Christians from *that rage of dogmatizing, which, he says, so early shewed itself in a variety of shapes*; he represents them, as we have seen above, to be of three sorts; viz. *The explaining away revealed truths, to make room for the dreams of visionaries; the adopting as Divine truths, tenets which were not so, but, on the contrary, were inconsistent with the doctrine of Christ; and the mistaking shadows for realities.* Now, let me ask you, Gentlemen, were not errors of this kind of the utmost consequence? Could any thing be more pernicious to mankind? Do they not strike at the very vitals of Christianity? This surely cannot be doubted; for to destroy revealed truths, to adopt errors in their stead, and to adhere to shadows instead of realities, is, without all manner of doubt, to destroy the Christian religion entirely. Such then were the errors which our author acknowledges were introduced into Christianity in its very earliest ages: Neither were these pernicious opinions merely proposed as matters of dispute, but they were adopted as real dogmas of religion; for, whilst man presumptuously inquired into *the manner in which every promise is fulfilled, every effect produced, and every operation conducted,* which was the source from whence these errors rose; on all these points, they dared to pronounce most dogmatically. Other dogmatists have arisen, no less confident in their own abilities, who have entered into the question, and given a contrary decision: Then was kindled the Theologic war; the people was divided, p. 47. What was to be done in this case to remedy so great an evil and preserve unity? Why! according to the rule acknowledged, and received by all Protestants, the only remedy was



to have recourse to the sacred scriptures, in order to find out the truth, and defend it against such innovators. Well, says our author, this was actually done; but, alas! to no purpose: the innovators had recourse to scripture as well as the orthodox, and each side boasted of victory. Strange, indeed! that the only rule acknowledged by Protestants, as given us by God, whereby to know the truth, should be incapable of defending it. But, whence could this arise? Why? says our Reverend Author, "The radical error" "was a notion, that religion was concerned" "on a particular side, or that scripture had said" "any thing that could serve to decide the point" "debated." Boldly said indeed, Reverend Sir! now at last you have spoken out, and clearly discovered your true sentiments: What! errors that explained away revealed truths; errors that, from mens inquiring into the *Why* and the *How*, incorporated adventitious tenets into the Christian doctrine, which were quite inconsistent with it; errors that destroyed the reality of the Christian religion, and substituted shadows in its place: Are these points in which religion has no concern! points of which the scripture has said nothing that can decide the question! Nay, is it even a radical error to suppose, that these weighty and most essential matters can be decided by the scripture! Rejoice then, O Deism! and be exceeding glad, O Infidelity! It is now a gained cause for you. Here is a plain acknowledgment, by a Doctor of the Protestant Church, that the sacred word of God, the only Protestant rule of faith, is incapable of deciding where the truth lies, even in those very points where the vitals of Christianity are attacked, where revealed truths

are at stake ; and consequently, that Christianity is without a rule, without ground, without foundation ; and therefore not from God ! *O tempora ! O mores !*

I must here, however, do this justice to our author to observe, that he seems ashamed of what he had said, and wants to mollify it by what follows : “ Methinks, says he, I hear it asked with surprise, Is there any question relative to religion on which the scripture is neutral ? I must beg leave to ask in return, Was it the intention of the scripture to render men omniscient ? — Are there not many things on every subject which we cannot apprehend ? ” &c. Here you see he would have us believe, that all dissensions in religion were only about points in which religion has no concern ; points not revealed by God ; points of mere curiosity, the knowledge of which God had reserved to himself ; and therefore no wonder the scripture should not be able to decide them. But alas ! this evasion is directly contrary to what he had said above ; as well as to experience. He tells us, p. 46. that the errors that introduced the divisions among Christians were such as *explained away revealed truths* ; that is, truths which God had discovered to mankind, and of which he absolutely requires our belief : again, that they were such as embraced falsehoods inconsistent with Christianity, instead of God’s truths ; and, lastly, such as mistook shadows for realities ; and that these two last especially arose from mens inquiring into the manner in which the Divine operations are conducted, and gave rise to that Theologic war in which he expressly declares, that the scripture is incapable of deciding. Now, were these all points in which

religion had no concern? besides, does not experience itself condemn his evasion? Did ever the Christian church blame any opinion that did not injure some revealed truth? Even the Papists themselves, to this day, allow their divines to hold what opinion they please in explaining the manner in which the Divine operations are conducted, and other such points; provided their opinions do not encroach upon any revealed truth. And does not every sect of Protestants pretend, that their respective tenets are the truths of God, clearly revealed in holy writ? Is it not in this view, and under this notion alone, that they embrace and adhere to them? Now, if the scripture be not capable of deciding what are, and what are not, revealed truths, what must become of Christianity? Lastly, let us only consider the nature of these points upon which Christianity is divided, and we shall, at first view, see clearly the importance of them. The Trinity of the Godhead, the consubstantiality of the Son, the incarnation, original sin, the necessity and efficacy of the sacraments, the real or figurative presence in the supper, the necessity and sufficiency of faith alone; and the like: these are some of the grand points of controversy which at present divide Christians; and some of which have done so since the earliest ages. Now, are these *questions of mere curiosity*? Is not the one side or the other of these revealed by Almighty God? Does not each party embrace the side they are on, merely from the conviction that revelation lies there? How ridiculous is it then in our author to impose upon his reader, by pretending, that the debated points were *questions of mere curiosity*,



*things above our sphere, the knowledge of which God had reserved for himself; by which he contradicts experience, and plainly gives the lie to what he himself had before advanced?*

I have now considered this Reverend Author in the characters of a friend to the Protestant religion, of a man of humanity, and of a Christian; and I have given pretty convincing proofs to show, how extremely deficient he is in all these respects. I have also occasionally taken notice of some very unphilosophical steps he has taken in managing his argument; and shall now only add an observation or two more upon this head.

A judicious philosopher, who acts upon solid principles, will never be guilty of glaring self-contradictions, advancing one thing upon one occasion, and the very contrary upon another, as he finds necessary to serve a present turn. A conduct of this kind evidently shows a man to be without principles, influenced by passion, and that he writes at random. I have hinted above at some pretty inconsistent propositions which our author advances, when speaking against religious ceremonies, and elsewhere; but, in what I am here to observe, his self-contradiction is very conspicuous. In order to bring in the Roman-Catholics as guilty of gross superstition, among other things, he makes a great handle of their religious men and women, who make vows of poverty, by which they deprive themselves of all property in this world, that they may the more perfectly follow their Lord and Master; and he tells us, p. 54. that, by this means, *they think they consecrate themselves to God.* From this one should naturally imagine, that Papists had a vast esteem for poverty, and that they looked upon it as a



great means to find favour with God, and procure a more certain admiffion into heaven ; which indeed is their real fentiments. But, a few pages after, our author forgets what he has here advanced ; and being refolved to condemn them of felling pardons for fins, which they deny to the poor who have not money to buy, he affures us, that, among them, the rich alone have any chance for heaven, and *the only difficulty is for a poor man to get hither ;* and that, according to their tenets, *the woes denounced againft the rich, and the blessings pronounced upon the poor, ought all to be reversed.* Pray, Reverend Sir, how are thefe contradictory assertions to be reconciled ? or which of them fhall we believe ? Is this acting in the character of a philofopher ? Would ever the judicious author of the Differtation on Miracles have been capable of publishing to the world assertions fo unworthy of himfelf ?

Again, to act in direct oppofition to one's own principles, is no lefs unworthy of a philofopher, than to assert contradictory propofitions ; yet I find our author is not free of the one more than of the other. P. 43. he fays, “ Where do we  
 “ now find any attention paid to thefe important  
 “ leffons of our Lord, *Be not ye called Rabbi,*  
 “ *for one is your Master, even Chrift, and all ye are*  
 “ *brethren ; and call no man your father upon earth,*  
 “ *for one is your Father which is in heaven ?*” After fo warm a lamentation of the tranfgreffion of thefe orders of our Saviour, who would ever imagine, that our author would himfelf be guilty of the very fault which he here condemns ; and yet, p. 5. he addreffes his audience by the name of *Fathers* : “ *I have too high a refpect* (fays he)

“ for my fathers and brethren present, not to be persuaded,” &c.; and, in his Conclusion, p. 121. he even dignifies them with the title of *Honoured Fathers*: “ To conclude, (says he), let us, my honoured fathers and brethren in the ministry, think of the particular obligations,” &c. Allow me now, Reverend Sir, to ask you this question; Is it condemned and forbidden by Jesus Christ, in every sense, to call our spiritual superiours by the name of Father? or, is it forbidden to give them that appellation only in some vicious sense of the word, but lawful and laudable to use it in a proper sense? If it be absolutely forbidden in every sense, then you evidently stand condemned as guilty of what you blame in others. If that appellation may lawfully be used in a good sense, and is forbidden only in a vicious one; how unphilosophical is it in you so severely to condemn the thing in general, and yet twice to fall into it yourself, without distinguishing, as a philosopher ought to do, the good and bad sense of which the expression is capable, and shewing, that while you blame it in the bad sense, the sense you use it in is the good one? You will perhaps reply, that you have explained the bad sense in which it is condemned, p. 108. where you say, “ Whosoever says—*Be guided by me only, and such as concur with me in their opinions; but, on the peril of damnation, hear no other*—It is he that assumes the title of Rabbi, that chooseth to be called *Master and Father* upon earth, and thus usurps the office of his Lord.” Is this then the vicious, the condemnable sense of the expression? Poor St Paul! how must he stand condemned at our author’s tribunal! Did ever any man more severely claim an absolute submission to his doc-

trine than St Paul? Did ever any man threaten damnation in more express terms, to those who taught differently from him? *Though an angel from heaven, says he, should preach any other gospel to you than that which WE HAVE preached unto you, let him be accursed;* and he repeats it again for the greater energy, *As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed,* Gal. i. 8. 9. Must we then condemn this great apostle for presuming to force people to believe his doctrine, by threatening them with a curse if they refused it? See to what a pass the poor Doctor is reduced!

In matters of religion, nothing is of more importance than to know the truth amidst the many jarring and contradictory faiths which are spread abroad in the world. A Christian philosopher, who would wish to lend a helping hand to his fellow-creatures in investigating a question of such eminent consequence, would, doubtless, endeavour to lay down the most satisfactory signs by which the truth can be known and distinguished: Our author occasionally gives several different rules for this purpose, much indeed of the same kind; but, of these, two are particularly to be noticed; p. 64. with a great air of gravity and importance, he tells us, "The only sure chart  
" by which the Christian course can be directed,  
" is THE TRUTH; we can never safely turn a-  
" side from it, either to the right hand or to the  
" left." An important discovery indeed! a most admirable lesson! and worthy a philosopher! Amidst the many jarring sects of Christians we are in search of the truth, and the only sure chart, by which our course can be directed in that search, is

the truth; the very thing we are in quest of! Is not this pretty? Another rule he gives us to distinguish the truth by, p. 120. in the following words: “ That doctrine is the soundest which  
 “ has the happiest influence on the temper and  
 “ lives of those who receive it, which operates  
 “ most powerfully by love to God and love to  
 “ man.” The only remark I shall make on this rule, as coming from the mouth of our author, is this—Let any person consider the bitterness, uncharitable judgments, detraction and malevolence, which appears in so glaring colours almost in every page of his sermon, and then judge, by this his own rule, what his doctrine must be.

I dare say, Gentlemen, you are by this time fully convinced of the propriety of my sentiments concerning the sermon *on the spirit of the gospel*; and of the solid grounds I have for being of opinion, that it is by no means the work of Dr C——. I have not indeed the honour to be personally acquainted with that gentleman, but it is enough to have perused his admirable Dissertation on Miracles, to be thoroughly convinced of his abilities as a master of reasoning, and a profound philosopher; the polite and respectful manner in which he every where there treats his antagonist, though an open enemy of Christianity, shows, that his heart is no less generous and humane, than his understanding is just and solid; and that, in matters of controversy, he is altogether above the low dirty arts of slander and misrepresentation: Seeing therefore that the author of this sermon shows himself so much the reverse of this character, especially as to the latter and more amiable part of it; and though he does not want talents, yet has used them to such purposes as Dr C——



would be ashamed to be thought capable of; I must therefore do that justice to the Doctor, as to look upon this sermon to be none of his, but, as I observed at the beginning, to be the production of some malevolent heart of Latitudinarian principles, no less an enemy to Christianity in general than to Protestancy in particular.

I have only one thing more to add, which is this: In case you think proper to publish this Detection, it is not impossible that some zealous brother may take it into his head to write against it. If this should happen, I beg leave to point out to him what is precisely incumbent upon him to do, in order to confute what I have said, in a solid and philosophical manner. He will be pleased then to observe, that, in all those reasonings which I have put in the mouths of the Deists or Romanists, I have no further concern than as an historian, relating what they would say, and do say upon the subject; whether these their reasonings be just or false, solid or empty, conclusive or sophistical, it matters me nothing; I leave my readers to judge of that as they think proper. What I have advanced as my own, and have endeavoured to keep in view throughout the whole of this Detection, are the following propositions. *1mo*, The author of this sermon has grossly slandered the Roman-Catholicks, and misrepresented their doctrine in these several points I have taken notice of. *2do*, By so doing, he has given them a vast advantage over the Protestant cause, both as to the confirming themselves in their own opinions, and the influencing our Protestant brethren to become their profelytes. *3tio*, He has also condemned, as gross superstition, several articles of the Christian religion, which are clearly contain-

ed in the holy scripture, and has greatly misrepresented the real state of the Christian world in its apostolical and primitive ages. 4<sup>to</sup>. By so doing, he has given an immense advantage to the Deists and Infidels, and put arms in their hands whereby to undermine the very foundation of Christianity entirely. These are the points I have all along had in view, and have endeavoured to prove them in the most satisfactory manner; and having established these, I draw this conclusion from them, That the author of this sermon is neither a friend to Christianity nor Protestantism. Whoever therefore may choose to write against this Detection, it is incumbent on him to show precisely the reverse of these four propositions. For my own part, as my great desire is to know and defend the truth, I shall always have my mind open to conviction, and be glad to be put right where I may have gone astray. In the meantime, I remain, &c.

VERITY-HALL,  
Aug. 1. 1771.



STAUROPHILUS.

E R R A T A.

Page 14 l. 11, for following example, read following *the* example. Page 27 l. 28, for *passfort* read *passport*. Page 42 l. 5, for *Ecclesiastial* read *Ecclesiastical*. Page 45 l. 3 of the foot-note, read *blanditias*. Page 70 l. 7, for *steps* read *step*. Page 103 l. 16, for *for their sins* read *from their sins*. Page 112 l. 26, &c. for *from this, of example* read *from this example*. Page 144 l. 9 of the note, for *superstition* read *persecution*. Page 162 l. 6 read *Now is it likely*.









