

POPERY, A SPIRITUAL TYRANNY ;

SHOWED IN

A SERMON

PREACHED ON THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER, 1712.

ISAIAH li. 23.

—Which have said to thy soul, *Bow down, that we may go over.*

THE haughtiness and insolence of the proud oppressors of God's church and people, are here described, as the ground of the controversy God had with them, and of the kind designs he had concerning his oppressed people. Jerusalem was afflicted,^a her sons fainted;^b go, says God to the prophet, and encourage them, lay up cordials in store for them, against this time of need ; tell them the Lord Jehovah, the God of all power and grace, is their Lord and their God ; tell them he owns them for his people still, and will undoubtedly plead their cause ; tell them he will take, nay, he has taken, the cup of trembling, that bitter cup, out of their hands, which during their captivity they have been daily drinking of, and they shall no more drink it again,^c shall know no more of the hardships and terrors they have so long suffered ; nay, tell them withal, that though they must forgive their enemies and oppressors, and not meditate revenge, yet God will reckon with them ; tell them that the cup of trembling shall be put into the hands of them who have afflicted them,^d who have trampled upon them, and tyrannized over them, who said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over* : so the text comes in. The Babylonians, their cruel task-masters in their captivity, shall be called to an account for the violence done to Sion ;^e and Babylon's destruction by the Persians, shall be more terrible than Jerusalem's was by the Babylonians.^f

Now observe here for encouragement,

1. That there is a people in the world who are God's own people. Such there have been, are, and

will be to the end of time ; they are his by choice, his by covenant, called out of the world, and distinguished from it, such as approve themselves obedient subjects, and faithful friends and well-wishers to his kingdom among men. To them he still says, as here to Israel, (let them take the comfort of it,) *I am thy Lord, the LORD, and thy God.* They have taken the Lord for their Lord, to rule and govern them, and he will be their God, to make them happy. All that he is in himself, and in his promises, is made over to them, and settled on them. *God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* Let this people then be our people, and this God our God.

2. There is a cause depending between the people of God and their enemies, and has been so ever since the enmity was put between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent.^g The children of God, who are born after the spirit, have been hated, and envied, and persecuted by the children of this world, the children of the wicked one, who are born after the flesh.^h And we are not to think it strange ; the servant is not better than his Lord, nor can expect better treatment.

3. While this cause is depending, the people of God may have a cup of trembling put into their hands ; may be in great frights and confusions, and ready to give up all for gone ; fearing continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy ;ⁱ as it is described herebefore in this chapter. Providence gives them some cause to fear, and then their fears prevail more than there is cause for, so far as to bear down their faith and hope in God ; and it is " their infirmity," perhaps too much the infirmity of some at this day. When Zion said, *The Lord has forsaken me, my God has forgotten me ;^k My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God,^l she drank*

^a Isa. li. 21. ^b P. 20. ^c P. 22. ^d P. 23.
^e Jer. li. 35. ^f Jer. li. 49.

^g Gen. iii. 15. ^h Gal. iv. 29. ⁱ Isa. li. 13.
^k Isa. xlix. 14. ^l Isa. xl. 27.

deeper than she need of the cup of trembling. When the *Lord roars like a lion*, it becomes the children to tremble^m before him. But when the enemies roar in the sanctuary of God, we should take sanctuary in God, by a holy trust and triumph in him; and not conclude our case desperate, though it be very sad.ⁿ We some of us remember what a cup of trembling was in our hands before the Revolution; what black and dismal apprehensions we then had of things, how ready we were to say, *Our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts*;^o but cannot forget how much better God was to us than our fears, and are therefore very unworthy and ungrateful, if again we distrust him, and despair of relief from him.

4. God will plead his people's cause in due time, their just but injured cause, and take the cup of trembling out of their hands; and will put into their hands a cup of salvation, and with it a cup of blessing. God always espouses the cause of his church and people; and in the proper time he will plead it with jealousy. His cause is theirs, and they plead for his truths, ordinances, and laws, and reckon the reproaches cast on him to fall on them; and therefore their cause shall be his, and he will plead for their rights and liberties; those of the human nature, which they are entitled to as children of men, and much more those of the divine nature, which they are entitled to as God's children. The clouds they are under shall blow over; and they shall not always drink of the cup of trembling, though they cannot be sure they shall no more drink of it again, till they come to heaven.

5. Sometimes God is pleased when he takes the cup of trembling out of the hands of his oppressed people, to put it into the hands of their oppressors that afflicted them; that they may themselves know what it is to be terrified, who have taken a pride and pleasure in terrifying others. *When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled.*^p Thus *the wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous*,^q when *the righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.*^r And the Lord is righteous in it.—*Nec lex est justior ulla—nor is there any law more just*; he who leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity,^s and Babylon's doom is, *Reward her even as she rewarded you.*^t

This was fulfilled in the glorious deliverances which we this day celebrate the memorial of. What a cup of trembling was put into the hands of our popish adversaries, when the Gunpowder Treason was discovered, and those who made the pit, and digged it, fell into the ditch which they made,^u and it proved an occasion of putting an edge both upon the laws and upon the spirits of the nation against popery. And no less upon the Revolution, when the

enemies of our peace and holy religion, who sought our ruin, were seized with a panic fear, and melted before our great deliverer, as wax before the fire, both counsels and armies did so; *The speech of the trusty was removed, and the understanding of the aged, the strength of the mighty weakened, and the heart of the chief of the people of the earth*;^v then,—as it was foretold upon a much greater Revolution, the empire becoming Christian,—the great men, and the mighty men, hid themselves.^w Thus when God took off Pharaoh's chariot wheels, put his hook into Senacherib's nose, made Belshazzar's knees smite one against another by the hand-writing on the wall, and smote Herod by an angel's hand, he made them drink the cup of trembling, who had been the oppressors of his people, and made himself a terror to them who had made themselves the terror of the mighty, of the godly, in the land of the living.

6. The reason why God thus terrifies and brings down his church's enemies, and lays their power in the dust, is, because when they had power they abused it, and abused the people of God with it; who being conquered and taken captive, tamely yielded to them all their temporal interests, they *laid their body as the ground, and as the street to them that went over*; (as it follows here in the latter part of the verse;) whatever was theirs *jure belli*—by the right of war, let them take it. But this did not satisfy these proud tyrants; they grew upon their concessions, as Benhadad upon Ahab's,^x and they demand the submission of the soul too; they *have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over*; they have ridiculed their religion, and so have grieved their spirits; they have attempted to force them from their religion, and to bring them to worship the golden image which they have set up. Now this comes in here,

(1.) To justify God's quarrel with the oppressors of his people, for he will be justified in every thing he says and does. If God bring down the mighty men of Babylon, and put a cup of trembling into their hands, all the world shall be made to see, and say, that he is righteous in contending with them. For,

[1.] They have usurped his authority, and have assumed to themselves that power over his people which belongs to him only, as Pharaoh did, who would not let God's people go, that they might serve him. God is the Sovereign of the heart, it is his prerogative to command the conscience; he has said, *All souls are mine*; and he is jealous of all invasions made upon his sovereignty, by those who are vexatious to his people, in the matters of their God, as Darius's edict was to Daniel.^y

[2.] They have wronged his people's liberties, and have been injurious to them in their most sacred in-

^m Hos. xi. 10. ⁿ Ps. lxxiv. 3, 4. ^o Ezek. xxxvii. 11.
^p Isa. xxxiii. 1. ^q Prov. xxi. 18. ^r Prov. xi. 8. ^s Rev. xiii. 10.

^t Rev. xviii. 6. ^u Ps. vii. 15. ^v Job xii. 20, 21, 24.
^w Rev. vi. 15. ^x 1 Kings xx. 6. ^y Dan. vi. 5.

terests. God sends his people into captivity, for their good, and the temporal afflictions they are under are sanctified to them; but if the enemies say to their souls, *Bow down,—Now will I arise*, saith the Lord; this affects a tender part indeed. If the rod of the wicked on the lot of the righteous, force them to put forth their hands unto iniquity,^a it shall rest no longer there, but be returned on the oppressors. He who touches the souls of God's people, touches the apple of his eye,^b and it were better they were thrown into the sea with a millstone about their neck, than that they should thus offend one of these little ones.^b When the Philistines took the ark prisoner, and that glory fell into the enemies' hands, then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep,^c and put a cup of trembling into their hand.

(2.) It serves also to magnify the mercy of God's delivering his people from them. Let them see what kind of enemies they were, out of whose hands God had saved them, that they might welcome the salvation with so much the greater enlargements in joy and thankfulness, and improve it for so much the stronger engagements to duty and obedience. This is that which God expects from us upon such days as this, when we are celebrating the memorial of the great deliverances God has wrought for our land, both in our own age, and in the days of our fathers.

To be delivered from those who said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over*, must needs be valued as an inestimable mercy, by those who had any honour for their God, or love for their own souls.

[1.] Such as had a concern for God's glory, and a true desire to approve themselves faithful to him, and to his kingdom and interest, could not but magnify such a deliverance as this; for when these proud oppressors bore sway, and carried all before them, God's oppressed ones were more grieved for the dishonour done to God, than for any damage done to themselves; this was their great petition, *Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause*,^d whatever becomes of ours; and whatever disgrace we may lie under, *O do not disgrace the throne of thy glory*.^e And this was their great plea, *What wilt thou do unto thy great name*.^f As for our little names, it is no matter, though they be written in the dust, and buried there; but let not thy name suffer, which is, and ought to be, above every name. When, therefore, God humbles the proud invaders of his right, and asserts his own dominion, this is the burthen of their praising songs, *We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty*, not so much because thou hast given us our liberty, as because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned, though the nations were angry.^g

[2.] Such as had a concern for souls, their own and others, and were in care about them, and tender of

their interests, and would not have them wronged, would greatly rejoice in a deliverance which set them at liberty from serving the lusts of men, which is perfect slavery, to keep a feast to the Lord, and to receive his law, (as Israel, when they were brought out of Egypt,) which is perfect freedom. The more the soul is concerned in any redemption, the nearer related it is to the great redemption wrought out for us by the Lord Jesus, and consequently the more to be valued are the deliverances that we are this day called to give thanks for; and that is what I desire to make myself and you sensible of, and God by his grace make us so!

Doct. It is an unspeakable mercy, and must so be accounted, to be delivered from those who usurp a dominion, and exercise a tyranny, over the souls and consciences of men.

The adversary and enemy that the text speaks of is Babylon; Babylon in the New Testament is Rome; that is, it is the papacy, and the papal kingdom. There are many things said of Babylon in the Old Testament, which are plainly referred to in those predictions, which we have in the Revelations, of the rise, reign, and ruin of that usurped power; and this of Babylon's saying to the soul, *Bow down*, seems to be alluded to, in that article of the trading of the New-Testament Babylon, where her merchandise is said to be in slaves and souls of men; ^b it is put last, as that which all the other particulars had a tendency to. And that by the souls of men there, is not meant in general only the persons of men, as we trade in negroes, but the souls taken strictly, as the seats of reason and conscience, is plain,—because they are there distinguished from slaves, or as it is in the margin, bodies; nay, and that they may not be confounded, it is in the original put in a different case; *και σωματων και ψυχας ανθρωπων*—*it is the merchandise of bodies*, but it is *the soul* they aim at.

We are this day giving God thanks for the deliverance of our land from popery; its first deliverance at the Reformation, when popish errors and delusions were discovered, disowned, and protested against, popish powers shaken off and broken, and popish idolatries and superstitions rooted up and purged out; its many deliverances since, from the restless attempts of those inveterate hereditary enemies of our peace, to bring us back into Egypt again; particularly, its deliverance from that base and barbarous design of blowing up the parliament house with gunpowder this day, 107 years ago; a deliverance never to be forgotten by a people who to this day reap the blessed fruits of it, inasmuch as we should to this day have been groaning under the dismal fatal consequences of the plot, if it had taken effect. How deep the design was laid, and how

^a Ps. cxv. 3.

^b Zech. ii. 8.

^c Matt. xviii. 6.

^e Ps. lxxviii. 61, 65.

^d Ps. lxxiv. 22.

^f Jer. 14. 21.

^g Rev. xi. 17.

^h Josh. vii. 9.

ⁱ Rev. xviii. 13.

high the hopes of our enemies grounded upon it were raised, and how near to be put in execution, when the discovery of it was its effectual defeat, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us; and a more full account of some particulars, relative to that happy deliverance, was published but last week, by an unknown but very judicious pen, entitled, "A Memorial to Protestants on the Fifth of November," and dated Oct. 25, 1712.

We are likewise to call to mind that glorious deliverance of our land from another more dangerous attempt upon our religion, when that, with our civil liberties, lay ready to be sacrificed to a popish and arbitrary government; but God interposed, and our extremity was his opportunity to appear so much the more glorious for us: this was the Lord's doing, it was then, and ought still to be, marvellous in our eyes, for it was done, not by might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.¹ To that happy revolution we owe all that liberty and quietness we have enjoyed these twenty-four years past, all the blessings of the present reign, and the provision that is made for the preserving of that good thing which is committed to us, and the transmitting of it to posterity, by the entail of the crown upon the illustrious house of Hanover: besides all the advantages, which not only foreign churches, but foreign nations, gained by the check it gave to the growing, threatening greatness of the French king.

Now what is it that is the ground of our rejoicing in these great deliverances? It is the preservation of our religion, the protestant religion, owned and professed among us; it is the keeping out of popery, which at the Reformation was driven out, and which our popish enemies, both at home and abroad, have been very industrious to bring in, and to re-establish among us by force and violence.

It is proper, therefore, upon this occasion, to inquire what that thing called popery is; that mischievous, dangerous thing, from which we are delivered; what evil there is in it, and what harm it would do us, if it should get the mastery; that we may see what reason we have to be thankful, to be greatly thankful, to God for our deliverance from it; and still to dread all its assaults upon us, and to pray against it: and this among many other bad things we have to charge it with, that if the pope and Romish clergy might have their will, they would say to our souls, *Bow down, that we may go over.*

If popery had carried its point in these and other attempts, we have reason to hope that many in our land would have borne their testimony against it, even to the death, and by the grace of God would have overcome it² for themselves, and it would have been their honour (and the honour of our religion) to die martyrs, or live confessors, in so good a cause.

What multitudes of the most precious and valuable lives, besides liberties, families and estates, must inevitably have been sacrificed to that Moloch, if it had been set up, is easy to imagine; for the spirit of popery is a spirit of inhuman cruelty to all who oppose it, as appears not only by the martyrologies of former times, but by the late and present bloody and barbarous persecution of the poor French protestants, many of whom died martyrs, and many still live confessors in prisons, in the galleys, and in foreign countries; and there are, of them, ministers, aged ministers, in the extremes of poverty; monuments of the tender mercies of the wicked, which are cruelty, that we may see what we were saved from when we were saved from popery. Yet this effect of the prevalence of popery, though very dreadful, is capable of a more pleasing aspect—from the crown of glory and life, which they are as sure of who are faithful unto death in the service of Christ, as if it were already upon their heads.

But we have reason to fear, that in case of the prevalence of popery, far the greater part of the nation would have yielded to it, and have gone down the stream; those who are under the power of infidelity and impiety, and are indeed of no religion, will readily be of any religion, especially of that which will indulge them in their lusts. And the tyranny of popery over the souls of sinners, is a much greater mischief, and of more fatal consequence, than its tyranny over the bodies of saints, and will appear so, if we look forward to the future state. And that is it which I would at this time open to you.

The Romish clergy show themselves not to be the followers of Christ, by their affecting a worldly dominion, and the pomp and grandeur that attend it. Christ has said, *My kingdom is not of this world;*³ and gave that as a reason why his servants did not draw the sword in his defence. The kings of the earth, and those commissioned by them, exercise Lordship, but the disciples of Christ "shall not be so,"⁴ the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, it is the sword of the Spirit that is put into their hands, which is the word of God, and with that they are to fight his battles. Those, therefore, who propagate the faith, and suppress heresy, by croisades, and inquisitions, and massacres, and assassinations, and writ *de haretico comburendo*—of burning a heretic, are certainly destitute of the Spirit of Christ and his gospel. *Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are these?*

Yet this is not all; they show themselves to be enemies of Christ, and rebels against him, by affecting a spiritual dominion over the souls and consciences of men; and that is the dominion, which (whatever they pretend) they thus violently contend

¹ Zech. iv. 6.

² Rev. xii. 11.

³ John xviii. 36.

⁴ Luke xxii. 26.

for, and are so zealous for the maintenance and support of. It is not the faith of Christ, or the power of godliness, that they thus lay out themselves for the propagation of, but the advancement of their own wealth and power.

It has been commonly said, that popery and tyranny go together, and mutually befriend each other. I remember it was said by a great man at the time of the popish plot in King Charles the II.'s time, that he apprehended the project to be thus laid, "That in England popery was to bring in slavery, and in Scotland slavery was to bring in popery."* But with this I meddle not. As to our civil rights and liberties, we have great reason to thank God for our present enjoyment of them under a good government, and to pray to God for the continuance of them; but as to the claiming and adjusting of them, and contending for them, it must be left to the proper persons, to lawyers, parliaments, and diets; the original contracts and *pacta conventa*—*agreed covenants* of the nations—to states and statesmen, *Tractent fabrilia fabri*—*The engineers manage the machines*. But that which I have now to say against popery is, that it is itself the worst of tyrannies; it is a spiritual tyranny, and usurpation; it is a traitorous confederacy against the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ—and that is the kingdom of God, which we are in the first place to seek, and to value ourselves upon our relation to.

Now I shall endeavour to make out, I. That popery is an invasion upon the prerogatives of Christ, the Prince; and, II. Upon the rights and liberties of Christians, the subjects of this kingdom; and so it is a direct and daring violation of the everlasting gospel, the magna charta by which this kingdom is incorporated, and an impudent oppression of the souls of men, saying to them, *Bow down, that we may go over*.

I. The papal power usurps the prerogatives of our Lord Jesus, plucks the flowers of his crown, plunders the jewels of it, nay, it profanes his crown, by casting it to the ground, and, which is worse, putting it upon the head of a man of sin; and therefore, when our Lord appears against this bold but base usurpation, for the bringing of it to ruin, his manifesto, by which he justifies his declaration of war, is included in the name written on his vesture, and on his thigh, *King of kings, and lord of Lords*.^a

Christ is the Sovereign of the heart, the rightful Sovereign; for him the throne is to be reserved. Conscience is his deputy; by him it is to be commanded, and to him it is accountable; it is the "word of Christ" that is to dwell in the soul, and to rule there, and to him only every thought is to be brought into obedience, into a blessed captivity; *The kingdom of God is within you*.

Christ is the King of the church, the political head of that body; to him all judgment is committed, both the legislative and the judicial power, for he has all power given him both in heaven and in earth; in the treaty of peace between God and man, he is the sole plenipotentiary, for *the Father loveth the Son, and has given all things into his hand*.^b It is proclaimed before him, as it was before Joseph, *Bow the knee; bow the soul; every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*.^c Now this indisputable right which Christ alone has to say to souls, *Bow down*, is usurped in the church of Rome.

For, 1. The pope is made to be the sovereign of the heart, and the head of the church, and to him they ascribe such a supremacy as is no way consistent with the honour of our Lord Jesus, and his just demands. Jesus Christ is our Lord and our God, but it is frequent with them to call the pope, *Domini Deus noster Papa*,—*Our Lord God the Pope*.^d This was not a hasty word slipped from them, but some of their writers undertake to make out that he ought to be called so.

Christ is the great Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy; but they lodge in the pope a power to make laws immediately to bind conscience, though there be neither Scripture nor reason for them; nay, though they be directly contrary both to Scripture and reason; and it is a principle of their canon law, *that the pope has all rights and all laws in his breast, and papa judicatur a nemine—is accountable to none*.^e

It is one of the new articles of Pope Pius the 4th's Creed, that the bishop of Rome, as successor of St. Peter there, *is the supreme and universal pastor of Christ's church by divine appointment*,^f and that all churches, all Christians, all souls, are bound to yield an implicit obedience to his commands. The papists will not allow the Scriptures to have any authority but what is derived from the pope, and *their church*; and whereas it is Christ's prerogative to have the keys of hell and death, they put these into the hands of the bishop of Rome. Christ is the chief Shepherd, but they make the pope to be *pastor pastorum—the chief shepherd*; and though they pretend to make him only Christ's vicar, they really make him a rival with Christ for the throne. It is by Christ that kings reign, and princes decree justice,^g and it is his law that every soul should be subject to the higher powers; but the church of Rome not only exempts its clergy from the jurisdiction of princes and civil powers, but subjects kings and emperors to the pope, and gives him a power to dispose of their kingdoms.

Thus is the kingly office of our Lord Jesus invaded by that *man of sin*, who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;^h and if

* See the Bishop of Clogher's Sermon, Oct. 23, 1712.
^a Rev. xix. 16. ^b 2 Cor. x. 5 ^c Phil. ii. 9, 10. ^d V. II.

^e Gloss. Extravag. ^f Gratian, Decr. ^g Decret. i. 2. tit. 23.
^h Prov. viii. 15. ⁱ 2 Thess. ii. 4.

he have such a power as he pretends to, it will follow of course, that he may say to men's souls at his pleasure, *Bow down, that we may go over.*

2. They make the pope an infallible director and judge, in matters of faith; and as one lie must be called in to maintain another, so this of the pope's infallibility must be advanced to support his supremacy. They maintain that their church never erred, nor can err, that the pope, when he is in *cathedrâ—the pontifical chair*, is an oracle. One of their most celebrated doctors has plainly said, *If the pope should err in commanding vices, and forbidding virtues, yet the church is bound to believe vices to be good, and virtues to be evil, or else she sins against conscience.** It is a great slavery to be bound to an implicit obedience, but it is worse, and a greater reproach, to be bound to an implicit faith.

Our Lord Jesus has forbidden his disciples to be themselves called "Rabbi," because "One is our master, even Christ," and his dictates alone are to be subscribed to as infallible; he has forbidden us to call any man Father upon earth, because *one is our Father in heaven,*† on whom we depend for our education and direction; yet the pope will have all to call him Father, *most holy Father*, and to follow him blindfold as their guide. The apostles pretended not to have dominion over the faith † of Christians; but the church of Rome undertakes to frame new creeds; witness that of Trent. Blessed Paul anathematized himself if he should preach any other gospel to Christians than what they had received;‡ but the church of Rome anathematizes all who adhere to the gospel they had received, and will not embrace that which they add to it, and sentences them to the pit of hell. We are directed to take heed to the Scriptures, as to a *light shining in a dark place,*§ and to have recourse to *the law and the testimony,*¶ and try by that touchstone; and to that we must bow our understanding: no, say they, you must refer yourselves to the pope's infallibility, and to him your understandings must be captivated.

And what sort of men do you think these bishops of Rome have been, who have been intrusted with this pretended infallibility? Were they holy men, such as they were who were moved by the Holy Ghost to write the Scriptures? No; one of themselves, even an historian of their own, confesses that many of them were *hominum portenta—monsters of men*; and that there were eighteen popes successively, one after another, who were magicians, and in league with the devil.† And another eminent writer among them owns, *There were scarce any sins, except that of heresy, which the bishops of Rome were not guilty of.*

And what use have they made of their infallibility? Have they with the help of it expounded the

dark places of Scripture, or accommodated differences among Christians? No, but only have supported with it their own secular pomp and power, and the dominion they claim over the consciences of men in competition with, and therefore in opposition to, the prophetic office of Jesus Christ, in whom alone we are to believe.

3. They give the pope a power to forgive sin, and to absolve from the punishment of it; and this is another invasion upon the prerogatives of Christ, who has *the power on earth to forgive sin*; and herein they are worse than the Scribes and Pharisees, whose principle it was, *none can forgive sins but God only.*‡

They have a groundless notion that the spare merits of good men, by their works of supererogation, or superfluous satisfactions, which they had no occasion to make use of themselves, are laid up in the treasures of the church, which the pope has the key of, and grants the benefit of, for a sum of money, to such as he thinks qualified for it, by the fulness of his apostolical power. This is as daring a usurpation upon the royalties of the Lord Jesus, as it would be upon the prerogative of the sovereign for any subject, and especially one who is himself a criminal, to undertake to pardon crimes committed against the majesty of the prince, or to remit any part of the punishment; which would be so far from being pleadable in any court of justice, that to pretend to it would be a heinous crime.

The selling of the pope's indulgences was the first thing that Luther witnessed against, of all the delusions of the church of Rome, in the year 1517, and it broke the ice of the reformation; for his sister having a mind to purchase a pardon, he dissuaded her from it, which displeased the priest who had the selling of them, who complained that Luther marred his markets; which gave him occasion to study the point, and that led him to a further discovery of that great and complicated mystery of iniquity.

But their doctrine of indulgences is so miserably patched up by themselves, that it plainly appears to be a mere artifice for the magnifying of the power of the pope, and the amusing of people into a blind veneration for him, and subjection to him; and the filling of his coffers with vast sums of money, which have enabled him to support his tyranny.

4. They make all this power to extend to the universal church; nay, and to all the world, declaring it by their canon law absolutely necessary to salvation, for every human creature to be subject to the bishop of Rome; and not only all the reformed churches, but all the Greek churches, are cut off from the catholic church by their sentence, because they own not the pope for their supreme head.

It is Christ's prerogative to have power over all

* Bellarm. Lib. 4. De sum. Pontif. Cap. 5.
† Matt. xxiii. 8, 9. † Cor. ii. 5. † Gal. 1. 8.

‡ Platina in Pool.
w 2 Pet. i. 19. † Isa. viii. 20. † Mark ii. 7.

flesh;^a his the kingdom is, and he is the governor among the nations;^b he is the only universal monarch, to whom every tongue must swear;^c he is the centre of the church's unity, to whom are gathered together all the children of God who were scattered abroad.^c This honour the pope usurps, though he knows not a great part of the world, nor can have any correspondence with it, or be any way of use to it; yet he will have all power derived from him, and depend upon him; and all churches to meet in him. And herein he is a genuine king of Babylon, a son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, that son of pride, who affected to have all people, nations, and languages, to tremble and fear before him.^d

Thus is popery an impious usurpation of the powers and prerogatives of the Lord Jesus, and therefore ought to be looked upon with a jealous eye, by all who know themselves obliged—to honour the Son as they honour the Father;^e and therefore to be as far from other Christs, as from other Gods; and to call them Anti-gods, and Anti-christs, however they pretend to be Vice-christs and Vice-gods.

II. The papal power invades the rights and liberties of the subjects of Christ's kingdom, enslaves them, oppresses them, and tyrannizes over them, and says to their souls, *Bow down*, and worship the image of the beast, that golden image of paganism, the first beast, which they have set up; *Bow down, that we may go over*. As one of the popes made the emperor bow down, and then set his foot upon his neck, impiously applying that promise to it, *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder*. And thus have the Romish priests gloried in their triumphs over the souls of men: one of them said, "If Luther had not appeared when he did, they should have brought the people to eat grass like oxen."

Let us observe some of the many instances that might be given of the tyranny of the church of Rome over the souls of men.

1. They oblige people to believe as true, whatever their church requires them to believe, though never so contrary to sense and reason; and not only so, but to curse and condemn as heretical, whatever the council of Trent has adjudged to be so. They do in effect require men to give up their understandings, and to pin their faith upon the pope's sleeve, though they know not whither he will carry it, and suffer him to put out their eyes, and lead them whithersoever he pleases. All freedom of thought, and with it all the dignities and privileges of the human soul, as rational and intelligent, are surrendered and betrayed; no liberty left for the use of reason when a man is tied *jurare in verba magistri*—to swear every thing that their church says, though it should be that black is white, and white black. The Collier's faith, "I believe as the church believes,

and the church believes as I believe," which all wise men make a jest of, they make the foundation of their faith, and a sovereign antidote against infidelity.

A grosser instance of this cannot be given, than the belief of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was introduced for no other end but to magnify the priests, and make poor people admire them, and give up themselves to their conduct, though they were ever so ignorant and scandalous. Was ever such a tyranny over the souls of men, as making them believe that that which they see and feel, and smell and taste, to be bread, is not bread, but the body of a man; and that which they see, and smell, and taste to be wine, is not wine, but the blood of a man; and this prodigious imaginary change to be wrought by the priest's pronouncing five words over it, *Hoc est enim corpus meum*—for this is my body. Our Saviour appealed to men's senses: for the proof of his miracles, *Go tell John what ye hear and see*; and of his resurrection, *Handle me, and see me*. This is dealing with men as men, and putting an honour upon their nature; but the church of Rome demands the belief of that which bids defiance to four of our five senses at once, and is directly contradicted by them. So that, as the excellent Archbishop Tillotson speaks, "The business of transubstantiation is not a controversy of Scripture against Scripture, or of reason against reason, but of downright impudence against the plain meaning of Scripture, and all the sense and reason of mankind. It is a most self-evident falsehood, and there is no doctrine or proposition in the world that is of itself more evidently true, than transubstantiation is evidently false." And yet the papists as firmly believe it as that there is a God; nor do they leave it to be a matter of doubtful disputation in the schools, but have reduced it to practice: for if they do not believe it, they must own themselves to be the most gross idolaters, in worshipping the bread they suppose to be thus metamorphosed; and the most barbarous murderers, in putting those to death with inhuman cruelty who will not believe it too. For (as Fuller observes) this was in Queen Mary's time "The *burning doctrine*, the test by which the martyrs were tried; and the popish persecutors then were so perfectly lost to all sense of reason and honour, as to condemn the most valuable lives to so great a death as being burnt at a stake, only because they could not believe this monstrous absurdity. Were ever the powers and faculties of the human soul so trampled upon, and trodden into the dirt? Yet those who receive popery must receive this.

And when the soul is brought to *bow down* to this, they are ready to *go over it* with troops of strong delusions, and make it believe a thousand lies, when

^a John xvii. 2. ^b Ps. xxii. 28. ^c Isa. xlv. 23. ^d John xi. 52.

^e Dan. v. 18.

^f John v. 23.

^g Rev. xlii. 15.

once it is persuaded to believe this. For as conscience, so faith, when it is thoroughly debauched in one instance, lies exposed in any other. Those who have once swallowed transubstantiation, will never be choked with any of the forgeries of their lying legends, or the impostures of their miracles and relics, which some of themselves have the honesty to own to be frauds, but the wickedness to call pious frauds. And to say, "If people will be deceived, let them be deceived," though it may serve them to laugh in their sleeves with now, will prove but a miserable excuse for their impiety and villany in the great day.

2. They oblige people to obey all the commands of their church, though ever so contrary to the divine commands. I remember, in a little catechism published here by the Romish emissaries in King James the II.'s time, the answer to that question, "What is sin?" was, "Sin is the transgression of the law of God, or of the church;" so making the laws of their church equally binding with the laws of God: nay, they make them to be of a superior obligation; and if men make conscience of observing the law of God, they say to such consciences, *Bow down, that we may go over*; you are to obey the church, and not God.

A plain proof of this is their worship of images. God has expressly forbidden it, and frequently, in his word, has given many reasons for that prohibition; there is no sin which has been more severely punished by the righteous God, nor more courageously witnessed against by righteous men; and yet the church of Rome commands and compels all its members to fall down and worship images of God, Christ, and the saints; to pray before them, and burn incense to them; to adore the consecrated host with the same worship that they would give to Christ himself. And to show that they command this in contempt and defiance of the law of God, and in pursuance of their own authority over the souls of men, they leave the second commandment out of the ten, in all their catechisms and books of devotion, and have done so for many ages, and so they call the third commandment the second, the fourth the third, and so on; but because people had heard that there were ten, lest they should miss that precious jewel which they have stolen, they divide the tenth into two; and the ninth commandment with them is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house*, and the tenth, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*. You will scarce believe that men could be guilty of such impudence and impiety, and imposition upon souls, but I assure you it is true.

It is the express command of God, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*; but contrary to this command, they require people

to pray to saints and angels, which is expressly forbidden to St. John by an angel himself, *See thou do it not; but worship God.*^h They require I know not what higher degree of worship to be paid to the Virgin Mary, than to other saints, and desire her to command her Son to help them; and give no reason for this and many other such impositions, but *in volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas—thus I will, thus I command, my will stands for reason*. Now how miserably must the souls of men be racked and torn by this usurped power, when their own reason and conscience tell them, they must worship God and Christ only, but their priests tell them, in obedience to the church they must pray to this and the other saint. *No man indeed can serve two masters*, when their commands thus contradict one another; and therefore, they must certainly disown God for their master, who take their church for their mistress; and a miserable choice they make, for God says to the soul, *Lift it up*, that he may receive and embrace it; they say to the soul, *Bow down*, that they may go over it, and trample upon it.

3. They forbid the use of the Scriptures to the common people, and oblige them (as the heathen persecutors of old forced the Christians) to surrender their Bibles; because they could not enslave them, if they did not first put out their eyes, and disarm them of the sword of the Spirit.

It is the privilege of reasonable creatures to judge for themselves, and therefore, in all matters of concern, to be furnished with the proper rule they are to judge by; but papists resign this privilege to their priests, who bid them leave it to them to choose for them. It is the privilege of Christians, as formerly of the Jews, that to them are committed the oracles of God,ⁱ the sure word of prophecy; they saw Moses and the prophets,^k and are commanded to hear them. The Bereans are commended, because they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so which the apostles themselves preached to them. But the church of Rome will not allow Christians to consult this oracle, forbids what Christ has commanded, not only as in other things to show her authority, but because she cannot otherwise support her authority; for if people might but have liberty to look with an unprejudiced eye into the word of God, they would not suffer themselves to be thus enslaved by the craft of men. But they who impose on their customers with counterfeit goods, find it their interest to keep their shops dark. The Philistines could never have made Samson blind in their prison-house, if they had not first blinded him.

This is not only an imperious piece of tyranny, but a barbarous piece of cruelty to the souls of men; for they who take away the key of knowledge from

g Rev. xix. 10.

h Rev. xxii. 9.

i John v. 39.

k Luke xvi. ult.

men, shut up the kingdom of heaven against them. And "it is a very hard case" (says Archbishop Tillotson) "to which the church of Rome has reduced men, that it will neither allow them salvation out of their church, nor the best and most effectual means of salvation when they are in it."¹

4. They take away the cup in the Lord's supper from the laity, and will allow them to communicate but in one kind. This is a great affront to our Lord Jesus, who, in the institution of this ordinance, appointed his disciples, all of them to drink of the cup, as well as to eat of the bread; and that decree of the Romish Church, which forbids the people the use of the cup, did it with an express *non obstante— notwithstanding* opposed to the divine institution. So said the council of Constance, "Though Christ did administer this sacrament under both kinds, yet *notwithstanding this*, the custom of communicating under one kind only, is now to be taken for a law;" that is, you who make conscience of conforming to the will of Christ, must quit that principle, and must *bow down, that we may go over.*

But this is not all: as it is an affront to Christ, so it is a great wrong and injury to Christians, and deprives them of part of the legacy which their Redeemer left them; in denying them the cup of blessings, they do, as far as they can, deny them the blessings themselves. And as those are reckoned to tyrannize over the bodies of men, who take away their goods which they are legally entitled to; so they certainly tyrannize over men's souls, who deprive them of a privilege they are evangelically entitled to: for, as an excellent pen well expresses it, "Look what benefit a man would be robbed of, in being deprived of Christ's blood; that comfort he is robbed of, who is deprived of this cup."

5. They make the validity and virtue of the sacraments, to depend upon the intention of the priest or minister.* So the council of Trent has decreed; and hence it will follow, that if the priest either be carelessly thinking of something else, or wilfully and wickedly design something else, when he baptizes, or consecrates the bread and wine, it is no sacrament at all, nor has any virtue in it to the receiver; the person so baptized is no member of the church; the host so consecrated is not the body of Christ, and therefore it is idolatry to worship it.

Now can any thing tyrannize more over the souls of men than this? or put it more into the power of every profane, ignorant, drunken priest, to tyrannize over them,—when they lie at his mercy, and in a thing too which they can never be sure of, whether they shall have any benefit by the sacraments? "So that when a man has done all he can to work out his own salvation, he shall be never the nearer, only

for want of that which is wholly out of his power; † the right intention of the priest."

6. They offer up their public prayers and praises in a language, which the generality of the people do not understand. The mass is all in Latin, which is not at this day the vulgar tongue in any nation; so are their psalms, and other devotions. And this is designed to support the reputation of their priests, that they may be thought to have more learning than their neighbours; and to train people up in that blind devotion of their church, which they boast that ignorance is the mother of.

This is a great dishonour to God, it is taking his name in vain, and bringing the blind for sacrifice; it is directly contrary to the law of Christ, who has commanded us to pray and praise with understanding; and so full and plain is the apostle's discourse against it, (1 Cor. xiv.) that a papist happening to read that chapter, which he had been kept in ignorance of before, professed he thought St. Paul was a Lutheran.

But that which I now condemn it for is, its tyranny over the souls of men; it deprives them of the comfort and benefit of prayer; utterly disables them to pray in faith, and in the Spirit; and puts it in the power of the priest (and that is it which by all means possible must be supported) to make the people say Amen to the most direful imprecations, or execrations, which a wicked priest, by the change of a word or two, unobserved, and undiscovered, may turn the prayers into. Thus as in believing and obeying, so in praying, the souls of men, considered as rational, are tyrannized over, and are put under the priests' girdles.

7. They oblige all people at some certain times to confess all their sins privately to a priest, in order to their receiving absolution from him. This is as mischievous an engine of papal tyranny as any other, and is as perfect a rack to the consciences of men. Thus men are made to stand in awe of, and are brought into subjection to, their priests, as the fathers of their spirits, as having it in their power to admit them into, or shut them out of the kingdom of heaven. By this artifice they let themselves into the secrets of men's lives and affairs, which makes it every man's interest to please them, and upon any terms to keep in with them.

Scire volunt secreta domus atque inde timeri. †—

They wish to know the secrets of the house, that thus they may be feared.

This province therefore, of receiving confessions, of all the orders of the Romish clergy, the Jesuits have most applied themselves to, who are most slaves to the pope, enemies to the protestants, and lords over the souls of men; and with the help of this

¹ Compare Matt. xxiii. 13. with Luke xi. 52. * Can. 11.

† See Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. † Juv. Sat.

carry on their great design to aggrandize and enrich themselves, and enslave and impoverish those about them.

8. They impose what penances they please upon those who come to them to receive absolution, and force them to submit to them, by denying them absolution unless they do. Never did any prince pretend to such an authority over a subject, any parent over a child, or master over his servant, as the confessor claims over his penitent, which he is told he is bound in conscience to submit to, though the services enjoined be never so absurd, and the injunction never so arbitrary. Judges must give sentence according to law, but confessors according to humour, whether a gay humour, which makes the penance like children's play, or an imperious malicious one, which makes it worse than bridewell. These things are industriously kept private; but I have been told of some, who, by pilgrimages to, and penances in, St. Winifred's well, in my country, imposed upon them by their priests, have ruined their health, and lost their lives, and it is easy to say at whose hands their blood will be required, for God never required these things at their hands.

And that which in this matter is the greatest imposition of all is, that they are made to believe, that these corporal austerities (or barbarities rather) make satisfaction to God's justice for their sins; which is a great indignity done to Christ, as if his satisfaction were deficient, and needed to be thus helped out, and a great cheat put upon the souls of men. But thus do they triumph over conscience, and take a pride in making that a duty and debt to God, which is done in pure obedience to them.

Even crowned heads, by bringing conscience into the case, have been made to submit to this tyranny; witness our king Henry II. who, because he complained, and very justly, of the insolent and traitorous carriage of Thomas a Becket, then bishop of Canterbury, whence some ruffians who heard him, took occasion, utterly unknown to him, to go and kill the bishop, was obliged to go to Canterbury, and when he came within sight of Becket's church, he alighted from his horse, put off his shoes and stockings, and walked bare-foot to Becket's tomb, and there suffered himself to be whipped on the naked back, by the monks of Canterbury.* This is popery, this is tyranny, this is saying to men's souls, *Bow down that we may go over.*

9. They undertake to absolve men from their lawful oaths, and to dissolve and dispense with the most solemn and sacred obligations; and thus triumph over conscience as much by the looses they give it, contrary to the law of God, as by the bonds they lay upon it, contrary to that law.

There is nothing which the light of nature, and

consent of nations, teach men to have more a veneration for, and a deeper sense of the obligation of, than the ordinances of marriage, and an oath, which men who have any thing of conscience left, will make conscience of being true to; and yet the church of Rome has ways of breaking these bonds in sunder.

As in the case of marriage, they exercise their tyranny in forbidding marriage to ministers at all times, and forbidding it to all people at some certain seasons of the year; so they do in dissolving marriages, when the parties enter into religion, (as they call it,) and are professed.

And if a prince disoblige the pope so far, that he adjudged him a heretic, his subjects are absolved from their oath of allegiance to him; though he be ever so able and willing to protect them, and govern them according to law, they ought not to defend him, or stand by him; and if any think themselves bound by their oath, they shall be told, that the pope has dispensed with that; and thus does he say to men's souls, *Bow down.*

10. By the fear of purgatory, and the hope of advantage which men's souls may have by masses said for them after they are dead, they amass to themselves vast riches, to the ruin of families, and the civil interests of the nations; and this is another instance of the tyranny of popery.

When men have thoughts of death, and see it at the door, then, if ever, conscience is awake, and then it is seasonable to take hold of it, that in consideration of it, the soul may be effectually brought to repentance and faith, and resignation to God, and a holy heavenly temper; and they who are so influenced by it, may go comfortably under the conduct of our Lord Jesus into another world: but here the Romish clergy put in for a dominion over men's consciences; they possess even good men with a dreadful apprehension of the pains of purgatory, which they must endure for a great while before they can go to heaven, in order to their cleansing, that they may enter pure into eternal life; it is fire, it is a prison; and after all, it is a fancy, a mere chimera, an invention of their own, that has no foundation in the word of God. But they have a way to lighten and shorten these pains; leave the church, the priest, or the convent, a good legacy, leave them a part of your estates, and by masses you shall soon have a discharge procured for you. Thus they frighten people with an imaginary evil, which Christ never threatened, to seek for an imaginary deliverance, which Christ never promised; by endowing monasteries, and maintaining priests in superstition and idolatry, a service which Christ never required.

"Purgatory pick-purse," so it has been called for

* Fuller's Ch. Hist. Lib. 3.

this reason; the locusts of the Romish clergy have been wont to swarm about the beds of dying men, to gain from them—or about their graves, to gain from their surviving friends—grants of lands, or sums of money, to pray them out of purgatory; and thus, by tyrannizing over men's souls, they vastly enrich themselves and their church, and so become capable of tyrannizing over men in every thing else.

In the dark times of popery, grants to the religious, as they called them, and the religious houses, were become so many, and so rich, that the wisdom of the state saw fit to restrain them by the statute of Mortmain, in the third year of Edward I. which made it necessary to have the royal licence for such endowments; otherwise, says our historian, all England would in a short time have become one entire continued monastery.* The like laws for limiting men's liberality to the church, had been made a little before in France and Spain; which could never have been done at that time, if the fatal consequences of it had not been most apparently clear; and if the guardians of the public peace and welfare had not plainly seen what they were aiming at, who said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over*; nothing less than enslaving the kingdom too.

11. The greatest instance of the tyranny of the church of Rome over the souls of men, is their making princes and magistrates, and others, the conscientious tools of their persecuting rage, against those who will not receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads or their right hands.

When princes make bloody laws against their own subjects, who willingly pay them tribute, are ready to serve them, pray for them, and live quiet and peaceable lives under them, and contribute their share to the nations' wealth and strength, rendering in every thing to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, only desiring to reserve their consciences for God, because they are his; when edicts made for their protection, and solemnly ratified, are most perfidiously and ungratefully repealed after a thousand direct violations of them, and troops of dragoons, those booted apostles, are commissioned (by the most barbarous and inhuman outrages and tortures that ever the malice of hell invented) to force men's consciences, or destroy their lives and families; when those who might be the profitable members of a state, are thrown into bonds or banishment, against all the true politics of a nation; when courts of inquisition are kept up, their proceedings countenanced against all the established rules of justice and equity, and their most unrighteous sentences executed blindfold by the secular arm; when all the bowels of humanity are put off, and all the bonds of relation, friendship, and neighbourhood, are broken through, and those who are both harm-

less and resistless are massacred in their beds and houses in cold blood, as many thousands of protestants were in Paris, and other parts of France, in 1672, and in Ireland in 1641;—and lastly, when princes, whose persons are taken under the particular protection of the laws of God and man, are barbarously assassinated by their own subjects, as Henry IV. of France was by Ravillac;—it is natural to inquire, how it is possible that men should act so contrary to the dictates of nature and reason, and interest, how one man could be such a bear, such a beast, to another; and it will be found upon inquiry, that the power of the church of Rome over misguided consciences is at the bottom of all this; the bigoted clergy said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over*, and then they are at their service, not only to do the greatest drudgery, and think it no dishonour to themselves, but to perpetrate the greatest villany, and to think it no dishonour to God, as long as they are made to believe it is for the advantage of the church, the propagating of the faith, and the extirpation of heresy. A zeal for that which they call the catholic cause is thought sufficient, not only to justify, but even to sanctify, murder, treason, perjury, and all manner of wickedness.

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.—

To so much evil could their religion persuade them.

In them is fulfilled what Christ said to his disciples, that those who killed them would think they did God service;† and what God of old said by the prophet concerning his people, that those who hated them, and cast them out, would say, *Let the Lord be glorified.*‡ But what an insult is this upon conscience! what a tyranny over it! what a force put upon it! Such a dominion could never have been gained over it, but by the power of strong delusions. Surely never were kings and kingdoms so ridden, never were princes so intoxicated,§ as those are who have given their power and honour to the beast.

Many more instances might be given for the proof of this charge, that popery is a spiritual tyranny, but these shall suffice.

THE APPLICATION.

1. Let this confirm and increase our pious zeal against popery, and a holy indignation at the pride and tyranny of the church and court of Rome. We may now be tempted to cry out, “O Jesus, are these thy Christians?” Are these the followers of the meek and lowly Saviour, who did not strive or cry; who came into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister;¶ not to destroy men's lives, but to save them?‡ Are these professors of that gospel, which makes these two of its first precepts, humility

* Fuller's Ch. Hist. Lib. 3. 1274

† John xvi. 2.

‡ Isa. lxvi. 5. § Rev. xvii. 2. ¶ Matt. xx. 28. ¶ Luke x. 36.

and charity? Can those be ever owned as friends of Christ, who ride over the heads,⁷ and set their feet upon the necks, and, which is worst of all, trample upon the consciences, of the free-born subjects of God's kingdom in the world?

Is it possible that under the umbrage of Christ's name—and that particularly by such, as from his saving, healing name Jesus call themselves Jesuits—so much opposition should be given, and so much mischief done, to pure Christianity? But therefore popery is called a mystery of iniquity,⁸ because it has a show of piety and devotion. It is that beast that has horns like a lamb, and yet speaks as a dragon;⁹ that enemy that sits in the temple of God, and yet there tramples on all that is sacred.

Far be it from me to possess you with hatred against the persons of any; no, we ought to love our enemies, and do them good; but it is the way of popery, as it is contrary to the way of Christianity, that I think we all ought to conceive and retain a dislike of, and an antipathy to.

Our Lord Jesus, in his preaching, was never so severe upon any sort of sinners as he was upon the Scribes and Pharisees, who buoying themselves up with the traditions of the elders, bound heavy burthens upon men's consciences, and grievous to be borne;¹⁰ nor is there any thing more contrary to the temper and constitution of the gospel, than ministers' lording it over God's heritage,¹¹ for it is by the power of truth, and reason, and holiness, and love, that they are to rule; nor than Christians making themselves the servants of men¹² in things pertaining unto God, for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*¹³

It may justly be wondered at, that such a spiritual tyranny as this has continued so long in the church, that God has so long suffered it, and men have so long submitted to it; but God has wise and holy ends in permitting it, *It must needs be that such offences come, that they which are perfect may be made manifest*; and it ought not to be a stumbling-block to us, for we are told before that the holy city must be trodden under foot forty and two months;¹⁴ and as for those who submit to it, we have reason to fear that God has herein given them up to a judicial infatuation, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.¹⁵ They who shake off the easy gentle yoke of God's government, it is just with him to leave them to submit to the iron yoke of the king of Babylon. *They shall be his servants, (says God,) that they may know the difference between my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.*¹⁶ Because Israel had despised God's statutes, therefore he gave them statutes that were not good,¹⁷ he left them to be subject to the imposition of their proud oppressors. But though this

usurped, abused dominion has continued long, we may hope it will not continue always; its day shall come to fall, for the Lord whose name is jealous, is a jealous God, and will fulfil every word that he has spoken.

2. Let us pity and pray for those nations of the earth who are under the yoke of this tyranny and oppression, and I wish I could say were groaning under it. It is sad to think how many there are who have a zeal for God, but it is not according to knowledge,¹⁸ for they are kept in ignorance of the Scripture, and so are easily led into idolatry and false worship, and their devotion is misplaced. We ought to look upon them with compassion, and to pray that God would send the light of the gospel among them, and open their eyes to receive it; that those who mean honestly, may be brought to the knowledge of the truth. O that God would effectually call his people out of that captivity; and that Zion, who dwells with the daughter of Babylon,¹⁹ would deliver herself, and that God would deliver her; that God would by his Spirit stir up the captives to arise and shake themselves from their dust, and loose themselves from the bands of their neck.²⁰ O that the same spirit of life that entered into the dry bones at the Reformation, might put life into the bones that are yet dead, for they are very many, and lo, they are very dry. We should pray earnestly for the conversion of the papists who are of our own nation, and live among us, that their mistakes may be rectified, and their prejudices removed, and I heartily wish that more were done toward it by the rational, gentle methods of the gospel, than is; and particularly for the instruction of the papists in Ireland, by the carrying on of that which seems to be a very excellent design, of preaching the gospel to them in their own language.

We have reason to fear there are many who are convinced of the errors of popery, but are carried down the stream in them, (*Eamus ad communem errorem—Let us join in the popular error,*) and are held by force and fear in practices contrary to their convictions, and know not how to help themselves. Did we, as we ought, put our souls into their souls' stead, we should pity their case; and, O that God would hear the sorrowful sighings of those prisoners, and find out a way to deliver them from the insults of those who say to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over.* It is the case of those they call the new converts in France; O that by some means or other, Pharaoh and his task-masters may be compelled to let God's people go, that they may serve him.

And by the prophecies in the Revelation, it is intimated to us, that we should pray particularly for the kings of the earth, that God would put it into their

⁷ Pa. lxxvi. 12. ⁸ 2 Thess. ii. 7. ⁹ Rev. xiii. 11. ¹⁰ Matt. xxiii. 4.
¹¹ 1 Pet. v. 3. ¹² 1 Cor. vii. 23. ¹³ 2 Cor. iii. 17.

¹⁴ Rev. xi. 2. ¹⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 10. ¹⁶ 2 Chron. xii. 8.
¹⁷ Ezek. xx. 25. ¹⁸ Rom. x. 2. ¹⁹ Zech. ii. 7. ²⁰ Isa. lii. 2.

hearts to assert the rights of their crowns against the bold invasions of the man of sin; and to give their power and honour to the Lord Jesus; that he would inspire them with hatred of this mother of harlots, that, as it is prophesied, they may make her desolate and naked;^f that the righteous men may judge her after the manner of adulteresses,^g and free themselves and their kingdoms from the papal yoke. But who shall live when God does this?

3. Let us bless God that we of this nation are by the providence and grace of God delivered out of this house of bondage; that we are a protestant nation, were made so above 150 years ago, and continue so to this day, notwithstanding the restless designs of our popish enemies to bring us back into Egypt again, like Pharaoh's to re-enslave Israel. Many a weapon has been formed against us and our holy religion, which has not prospered. Here we may set up our Eben-ezer, for hitherto the Lord has helped us. *No enchantment has hitherto prevailed against our Jacob, nor any divination against our Israel,*^h but according to this time it has been said, and shall be said, of Jacob and of Israel, *What has God wrought!*

We can never be enough thankful to God for the abolishing of the papal power in these islands, and the preventing of its return. *Happy art thou, O Great Britain; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord?* Think what a mercy it is to us that we have the Scriptures in a language we understand, our Father's will in our mother tongue; that the pure word of God is read in our synagogues every sabbath day; that we have plenty of Bibles; that care is taken to teach even the children of the poor to read, and that we have so many helps in searching the Scriptures, that we may understand them; that we may see with our own eyes, and may find our religion there, where alone we are to seek it, in the word of God; that our public prayers and praises are offered up so that we may join in them with understanding; that we have the Lord's supper in both kinds, and not maimed; that we worship God only, and are not compelled to pay the homage to saints and angels which is his due, and to say more Ave-Marys than Pater-Nosters. That we are not imposed upon by the frauds and forgeries of popish priests, as the poor deluded members of the church of Rome are; but have the bread of life broken to us by the stewards of the mysteries of God, and are nourished up with the words of truth and good doctrine;ⁱ and what is the chaff to that wheat? We can never be enough thankful to God for these privileges, and ought to take care, lest by our unthankfulness for them, we provoke God to deprive us of them.

4. Being delivered from this spiritual oppression,

let us serve God the more cheerfully in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.^k What will it avail us to be protestants in profession, if we be not Christians in sincerity? to be of a reformed church, if we be not reformed in our own conversations, and transformed through the grace of God by the renewing of our minds? This is that which, with all earnestness, I would now in the close press upon you all.

Brethren, we are delivered from the power of the man of sin at Rome, but what the better shall we be for that, if we continue under the power of the man of sin in our own hearts, the anti-christ in our own bosoms, which will be to us the more dangerous enemy. You can glory in it that you are not priest-ridden, but your glory may well be turned into shame if you be pride-ridden, and passion-ridden, and lust-ridden. You thank God that you are not drudges to the pope, and slaves to the French, and you have reason to do so; but your thanks are thankless, if by covetousness you continue drudges to the world, and by sensuality, slaves to the flesh, and a base lust, that saith to your souls, *Bow down, that we may go over.* We live in an age of liberty, but withal it is an age of libertinism, an age of licentiousness, the stream of which is so strong, that there is need of great resolution, and that in the strength of God's grace, to swim against it. Be persuaded, therefore, whatever snare of the devil any of you are taken in, give diligence to recover yourselves out of it, that you may not any longer be led captive by him at his will.^l The service of sin is perfect slavery, let it not then reign in your mortal bodies,—because they are mortal, and must shortly return to the dust whence they came; nor in your immortal souls,—because they are immortal, and must shortly return to God who gave them. Suffer not appetite and passion to get dominion over conscience and right reason, but since sin is a tyrant, dethrone it, depose it, and shake off its yoke.

But this is not all, being delivered from this tyranny, submit yourselves to the government of the Lord Jesus. He saith to your souls, *Bow down, not that he may go over them, but that he may raise them up.* He has authority over your souls: yield to his authority. *Kiss the Son.* Come and take his yoke upon you, and draw in it; it is an easy yoke; the yoke of his institution is very easy in comparison with the yoke of the ceremonial law, much more in comparison with that of the canon law. He has right to rule us, and rules by love; his service is perfect freedom. Come, therefore, and bow your souls to him; your understandings to his truths, your wills to his laws, and let every thought within you be brought into obedience to him. It is foretold, that *they that go down to the dust shall bow before him, since none can*

^f Rev. xvii. 16. ^g Ezek. xxiii. 45. ^h Numb. xxiii. 23.

ⁱ 1 Tim. iv. 6.

^k Luke i. 74, 75.

^l 2 Tim. ii. 26.

of himself *keep alive his own soul*; we are all going down to the dust,^m nay, if infinite mercy prevent not, we are going down to the pit, and cannot save ourselves from death or hell. Come, therefore, and let us bow before the Lord Jesus, make him our head, and be willing in the day of his power.

5. Being delivered out of the snare of popish tyranny, let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free,ⁿ and dread the thoughts of being again entangled in that snare. However it may change its disguises, popery is the same evil thing that ever it was; and its patrons and factors as restless as ever to re-establish it in our land, and to bring us back again to the Egyptian brick-kilns; and I wish there be not those among ourselves,—who make light of our deliverance, as even the captive Israelites did of Moses, because, when he saw the Hebrews strive together, he said to him that did the wrong, *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?*^o—who, because we are not in Canaan immediately, are for *making a captain* to return into Egypt.^p

We have therefore no reason to be secure, but to take heed lest by our sins we provoke God to suffer these oppressors of conscience again to have dominion over us. O let us be earnest with God in prayer, to keep popery out of our nation, and to fortify our bulwarks against it, that if that enemy should come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord may again lift up a standard against him.

We know not how we should be able to bear up and keep our ground, if trying times should come, and therefore have reason to pray that there may be a lengthening of our tranquillity, and we may not be put to the trial. Dread the departure of our glory, in the captivity of our ark; and the removal of our candlestick, in the loss of our Bibles; and let us in our places do what it becomes us to do in defence of the present protestant government and settlement we are under, that the blessings thereof may be safely transmitted to those who shall come after us, that the children who shall be created may praise the Lord for them.

6. Let us all carefully watch against that in ourselves, which we witness against in the church of Rome, lest we be found condemning ourselves in that thing which we allow.

We condemn the papists for their idolatry, and formality in worship; let us take heed of spiritual idolatry, of making images of God in our fancy, and worshipping them; of resting in the outside of duties, and suffering our hearts to depart from God, when we draw nigh to him with our mouths, and honour him with our lips; let us take heed lest we grow customary in our accustomed services, and lest our devotion degenerate into a formality, and by losing its life become a carcass.

We condemn them for putting contempt upon the

Scriptures, keeping people in ignorance of them, and setting up other rules in competition with them; let us take heed, lest we, through carelessness and neglect of our duty, keep our families, our children and servants, ignorant of the Scriptures; and lest we be ourselves strangers to them, and govern ourselves by the will of the flesh, and the way of the world, in those things wherein the word of God ought to be our commanding rule.

We have been now condemning them for imposing upon men's consciences, and tyrannizing over them; let us take heed to ourselves, lest there be in us any thing of that spirit; lest we grow magisterial in prescribing to others, and censuring them; and lest we expect every sheaf to bow to ours, and every one to believe just as we believe, and speak just as we speak, and do just as we do; or else condemn him as none of God's people, and no follower of Christ because he follows not with us. Our conscience ought to be a rule to ourselves, and by it let every man prove his own work; but we ought not to make it a standard to every one else, by it to judge and set at nought our brother; as if all were blind who do not see with our eyes, and all out of the way to heaven, who do not walk in our particular path; but let all our works be done with charity. As we may remember for our comfort, that others are not to be our judges, or our lords, so we must remember for caution, that we are not to be their judges or their lords; both they and we must stand or fall to our own master,^q to whom therefore we are concerned to approve ourselves, and refer one another.

There are many things, about which good Christians may, both in judgment and practice, differ from one another, and yet both sides be accepted of God; and therefore they ought to make the best use of another, since there are faults on both sides, and neither without something good. And for private persons to hate and despise, to censure and condemn, to expose and reproach, those who are not in every thing of their mind, is in effect the same thing, as it is in popes and councils to excommunicate, heresitate, and anathematize, all who subscribe not to their sentiments and injunctions; it is saying to men's souls, *Bow down, that we may go over*. But let us make it appear, that we have not so learned Christ: that we are governed by a spirit of love, and not of bigotry. In those things which concern the power of godliness, let us be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and zealous of good works; but in those things which only concern the form of it, let us take heed of being too hot, lest we be found serving ourselves; but let us conscientiously walk according to the light that God has given us, and charitably believe that others do so too; which is but doing as we would be done by.

^m Ps. xxii. 29.

ⁿ Gal. v. 1.

^o Exod. ii. 13.

^p Neh. ix. 17.

^q Rom. xiv. 3, 4.