

SERMON XVI.*

THE

CHAMBER OF IMAGERY

IN THE

CHURCH OF ROME LAID OPEN :

OR,

AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST POPERY.

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.—1 Pet. ii. 3.

WHEN false worship had prevailed in the church of old, unto its ruin, God shewed and represented it unto his prophet, under the name and appearance of ‘a chamber of imagery ;’ Ezek. viii. 11, 12. For therein were pourtrayed all the abominations wherewith the worship of God was defiled, and religion corrupted. Things relating unto divine truth and worship, have had again the same event in the world, especially in the church of Rome. And my present design is to take a view of the chambers of their imagery, and to shew what was the occasion, and what were the means of their erection; and in them we shall see all the abomination wherewith the divine worship of the gospel hath been corrupted, and Christian religion ruined. Unto this end it will be necessary to lay down some such principles of sacred truths, as will demonstrate and evince the grounds and causes of that transformation of the substance and power of religion into a lifeless image, which shall be proved to have fallen out amongst them. And because I intend their benefit principally who resolve all their persuasion in religion into the word of God, I shall deduce these principles from that passage of it in 1 Pet. ii. 1—3.

* This sermon was preached at the Morning Exercise at Cripplegate, 1682. In answer to this question, How is the practical love of truth the best preservative against Popery?

Ver. 1. contains an exhortation unto, or an injunction of, universal holiness, by the laying aside, or casting out whatever is contrary thereunto; ‘Wherefore lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envy, and all evil speaking;’ the rule whereof extends unto all other vicious habits of mind whatever.

And in ver. 2. there is a profession of the means whereby this end may be attained, namely, how any one may be so strengthened in grace, as to cast out all such sinful inclinations and practices as are contrary unto the holiness required of us, which is the divine word; compared therefore unto food, which is the means of preserving natural life, and of increasing its strength; ‘As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.’

Hereon the apostle proceeds in ver. 3. to declare the condition whereon our profiting, growing, and thriving by the word doth depend; and this is an experience of its power, as it is the instrument of God, whereby he conveys his grace unto us; ‘If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.’ See 1 Thess. i. 5. Therein lies the first and chief principle of our ensuing demonstration, and it is this:

Principle I. All the benefit and advantage which any men do or may receive by the word, or the truths of the gospel, depend on an experience of its power and efficacy, in communicating the grace of God unto their souls.

This principle is evident in itself, and not to be questioned by any, but such as never had the least real sense of religion on their own minds. Besides, it is evidently contained in the testimony of the apostle before laid down.

Hereunto three other principles of equal evidence with itself are supposed and virtually contained in it.

Principle II. There is a power and efficacy in the word, and the preaching of it; Rom. i. 16. ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation.’

It hath a divine power; the power of God accompanying it, and put forth in it, unto its proper ends; ‘For the word of God is quick and powerful;’ Heb. iv. 12.

Principle III. The power that is in the word of God, consists in its efficacy to communicate the grace of God unto the souls of men.

In and by it they ‘taste that the Lord is gracious;’ that is, its efficacy unto its proper ends. These are salvation, with all things requisite thereunto; such as the illumination of our minds, and the renovation of our natures, the justification of our persons, the life of God in holy worship and obedience, all leading unto our eternal enjoyment of him. These are the ends whereunto the gospel is designed in the wisdom of God, whereunto its efficacy is confined.

Principle IV. There is an experience to be obtained of the power and efficacy of the word.

In that place of the apostle it is expressed by ‘tasting.’ But there is something antecedent unto their tasting, specially so called, and something consequent unto it, both inseparable from it, and therefore belonging unto the experience whereof we speak. Wherefore,

1. The first thing required hereunto is light; that is, a spiritual supernatural light, enabling us to discern the wisdom, will, and mind of God in the word, in a spiritual manner, without which we can have no experience of its power. Hence ‘the gospel is hid unto them that perish,’ though it be outwardly declared unto them; 2 Cor. iii. 4. This is the only means which lets into the mind and conscience a sense of this efficacy. This, in the increases of it, the apostle prays for on the behalf of believers, that they may have this experience, Eph. i. 16—19. iii. 16—19. and declares the nature of it, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

2. The taste intended follows hereon; wherein consists the life and substance of the experience pleaded for. And this taste is a spiritual sense of the goodness, power, and efficacy of the word, and the things contained in it, in the conveyance of the grace of God unto our souls, in the instances mentioned, and others of a like nature; for in a taste, there is a sweetness unto the palate, and a satisfaction unto the appetite. By the one, in this taste our minds are refreshed; and by the other our souls are nourished; of both believers have an experience. And this is let into the mind by spiritual light, without which nothing of it is attainable. ‘God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ;’ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

3. To complete the experience intended, there follows

hereon a conformity in the whole soul and conversation unto the truth of the word, or the mind of God in it, wrought in us by its power and efficacy. So the apostle expresses it, Ephes. iv. 21—24. ‘If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.’

Hereupon follows our last principle, which is the immediate foundation of the ensuing discourse, or that which is to be confirmed; and it is this:

Principle V. The loss of an experience of the power of religion hath been the cause of the loss of the truth of religion; or it hath been the cause of rejecting its substance, and setting up a shadow or image in the room of it.

This transformation of all things in religion, began and proceeded on these grounds. Those who had the conduct of it, were always possessed of the general notions of truth, which they could not forego without a total renunciation of the gospel itself. But having lost all experience of this power in themselves, they wrested them unto things quite of another nature, destructive to the truth, as well as devoid of its power; hereon it came to pass that there was a dead image made and set up of religion in all the parts of it, called by the name of that which was true and living, but utterly lost. All experience, I say, of the power and efficacy of the mystery of the gospel, and the truth of it, in communicating the grace of God unto the souls of men being lost, retaining the general notion of it, they contrived and framed an outward image or representation of them, suited unto their ignorance and superstition. Thus was the truth of religion once almost totally lost in the world, as we shall see; neither will it ever be lost any other way, or by any other means. When churches or nations are possessed of the truth and the profession of it, it is not laws, nor fines, nor imprisonments, nor gibbets, nor fires, that shall ever dispossess them, or deprive them of it. Whilst an experience of the power of religion continued in the primitive times, all the bloody rage and cruelty of the world, all the craft of Satan, and the sub-

tlety of seducers, who abounded, did utterly fail in attempting to deprive Christians of the truth, and the profession of it. But when this began to decay, and be lost amongst them, they were quickly deceived, and drawn off from the simplicity of the gospel. Upon the reformation of religion in these parts of the world, when the truth was received in the love and power of it, and multitudes had experience of the spiritual benefit and advantage which they received thereby, in liberty, holiness, and peace; all the prisons, tortures, swords, and fires, that were applied unto its extirpation, did nothing but diffuse the profession of it, and root it more firmly in the minds of men. It cannot be lost but by another way, and other means. The Jesuits and their associates, have been for a hundred years, contriving methods and arts for the dispossessing nations and churches of the truth which they have received, and the introducing the Romish superstition. They have written books about it, and practised according to their principles in every kingdom and state of Europe, who own the Protestant religion. But the folly of most of their pretended arts and devices unto this end, hath been ridiculous and unsuccessful; and what they have added hereunto of force, hath been divinely defeated. There is but one way, one effectual engine to deprive any people of the profession of the truth which they have once received; and that is, by leading them into such profaneness and ignorance, as whereby they may lose all experience of its power and efficacy in communicating the grace of God unto their souls, and therein of all sense of the advantage which they might have had by it. When this is done, men will as easy lay aside the profession of religion, as burdensome clothes in summer.

There is much talk of a plot and conspiracy to destroy the Protestant religion, and introduce popery again amongst us; they may do well to take care thereof, who are concerned in public affairs: but as unto the event, there is but one conspiracy that is greatly to be feared in this matter, and that is between Satan and the lusts of men; if they can prevail to deprive the generality of men of an experience in their own minds of the power and efficacy of the truth, with the spiritual advantage which they may have thereby, they will give them up to be an easy prey unto the other designers. And

there are two engines that are applied unto this purpose; the one is ignorance, the other is profaneness, or sensuality of life. Whenever either of these prevails, the experience intended must necessarily be lost and excluded: and the means of their prevailing, are want of due instruction by those who are the leaders of the people, and the encouragement of sensuality, by impunity and great examples. This is the only formidable conspiracy against the profession of the truth in this nation, without whose aid, all power and force will be frustrate in the issue. And as there is a great appearance in divine permission of such a state of things at present amongst us, so if they be managed by counsel also, and that those ways of ignorance and sensuality, are countenanced and promoted for this very end, that the power of truth being lost, the profession of it may be given up on easy terms, there is nothing but sovereign grace that can prevent the design. For the principle which we have laid down, is uncontrollable in reason and experience; namely, that the loss of an experience of the power of religion, will issue one way or other, in the loss of the truth of religion, and the profession of it. Whence is it that so many corrupt opinions have made such an inroad on the Protestant religion, and the profession of it? Is it not from hence, that many have lost an experience of the power and efficacy of the truth, and so have parted with it? Whence is it that profaneness and sensuality of life, with all manner of corrupt lusts of the flesh, have grown up, unto the shame of profession? Is it not from the cause, as the apostle expressly declares it comes by? 2 Tim. iv. 2—5. One way or other the loss of experience of the power of truth, will end in the loss of the profession of it.

But I proceed unto the instance which I do design in the church of Rome. For the religion of it at this day is nothing but a dead image of the gospel, erected in the loss of an experience of its spiritual power, overthrowing its use, with all its ends, being suited to the taste of men, carnal, ignorant, and superstitious. This I shall make evident by all sorts of instances in things relating to the person and offices of Christ; the state, order, and worship of the church; with the graces and duties of obedience required in the gospel. And in all, my principal design is to demonstrate what

is the only way and means of securing our own souls, any church or nation, from being ensnared with, or prevailed against by popery.

1. It is a general notion of truth, that the Lord Christ in his person and grace, is to be proposed and represented unto men as the principal object of their faith and love.

He himself in his divine person, is absolutely invisible unto us, and as unto his human nature absent from us. For the heavens must receive him until the time of the restitution of all things. There must therefore an image or representation of him be made unto our minds, or he cannot be the proper object of our faith, trust, love, and delight. This is done in the gospel, and the preaching of it; for therein he is 'evidently set forth before our eyes, as crucified amongst us;' Gal. iii. 1. So also are all the other concerns of his person and offices therein, clearly proposed unto us; yea, this is the principal end of the gospel, namely, to make a due representation of the person, offices, grace, and glory of Christ, unto the souls of men, that they may believe in him, and 'believing, have eternal life;' John xx. 31. Upon this representation made of Christ and his glory in the gospel, and the preaching of it, believers have an experience of the power and efficacy of the divine truth contained therein, in the way before mentioned, as the apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'For we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Having a spiritual light to discern and behold the glory of Christ, as represented in the glass of the gospel, they have experience of its transforming power and efficacy, changing them into the likeness of the image represented unto them, that is, of Christ himself; which is the saving effect of gospel power. But this spiritual light was lost among men, through the efficacy of their darkness and unbelief; they were not able to discover the glory of Christ, as revealed and proposed in the gospel, so as to make him the present object of their faith and love. And this light being lost, they could have no experience of the power of divine truth concerning him, changing them into his image. They could make no affecting discovery of him in the Scripture. All things therein were dark and confused, or at least

seemed an inaccessible mystery, which they could not reduce to practice. Hence those who had got the public conduct of religion, drove the people from reading the Scripture, as that which was of no use, but rather dangerous unto them. What shall these men then betake themselves unto? Shall they reject the notion in general, that there ought to be such a representation made of Christ unto the minds of men, as to inflame their devotion, to excite their faith, and stir up their affection to him? This cannot be done without an open renunciation of him, and of the gospel as a fable. Wherefore they will find out another way for it, another means, unto the same end. And this is, by making images of him of wood and stone, or gold and silver, or painting on them. Hereby they supposed he would be made present unto his worshippers. That he would be so represented unto them, as that they should be immediately stirred up unto the embraces of faith and love. And herein they found sensible effects unto their great satisfaction: for their minds being dark, carnal, and prone to superstition, as are the minds of all men by nature, they could see nothing in the spiritual representation of him in the gospel, that had any power on them, or did in any measure affect them. In these images, by the means of sight and imagination, they found that which did really work upon their affections, and as they thought, did excite them unto the love of Christ.

And this was the true original of all the imagery in the church of Romè, as something of the same nature in general was of all the image worship in the world. So the Israelites in the wilderness when they made the golden calf, did it to have a representation of a deity near unto them, in such a visible manner, as that their souls might be affected with it; so they expressed themselves, *Exod. xxxii. 1.* Wherefore in this state, under a loss of spiritual light and experience, men of superstitious minds, found themselves entangled. They knew it necessary that there should be such a representation made of Christ, as might render him a present object of faith and love, wherewith they might be immediately affected. How this was done in the gospel, they could not understand, nor obtain any experience of the power and efficacy of it unto this end. Yet the principle

itself must be retained, as that without which there could be no religion; wherefore to extricate themselves out of this difficulty, they brake through all God's commands to the contrary, and betook themselves to the making images of Christ, and their adoration. And from small beginnings, according as darkness and superstition increased in the minds of men, there was a progress in this practice, until these images took the whole work of representing Christ and his glory, out of the hands, as it were, of the gospel, and appropriated it unto themselves. For I do not speak of them now so much as they are images of Christ, or objects of adoration; as of their being dead images of the gospel; that is, somewhat set up in the room of the gospel, and for the ends of it, as means of teaching and instruction. They shall do the work which the gospel was designed of God to do: for as unto this end of the representation of Christ, as the present object of the faith and love of man, with an efficacy to work upon their affections, there is in the church of Rome a thousand times more ascribed unto them, than unto the gospel itself. The whole matter is stated by the apostle, Rom. x. 6—8. 'The righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend unto heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.' The inquiry is, How we may be made partakers of Christ, and righteousness by him; or how we may have an interest in him, or have him present with us. This, saith the apostle, is done by the word of the gospel which is preached, which is nigh unto us in our mouths, and in our hearts; no, say these men, we cannot understand how it should be so; we do not find that it is so, that Christ is made nigh unto us, present with us by this word. Wherefore we will ascend into heaven to bring down Christ from above; for we will make images of him in his glorious state in heaven, and thereby he will be present with us, or nigh unto us. And we will descend into the deep, to bring up Christ again from the dead; and we will do it, by making first crucifixes, and then images of his glorious resurrection, bringing him again unto us from the dead. This shall be

in the place and room of that word of the gospel which you pretend to be alone useful and effectual unto these ends.

This therefore is evident, that the introduction of this abomination in principle and practice, destructive unto the souls of men, took its rise from the loss of an experience of the representation of Christ in the gospel, and the transforming power in the minds of men, which it is accompanied with, in them that believe. 'Make us gods,' say the Israelites, 'to go before us; for as for this man Moses' (who represented God unto us) 'we know not what is become of him.' What would you have men do? would you have them live without all sense of the presence of Christ with them, or being nigh unto them? Shall they have no representation of him? No, no, make us gods that may go before us; let us have images unto this end; for how else may it be done, we cannot understand. And this is the reason of their obstinacy in this practice against all means of conviction: yea, they live hereon in a perpetual contradiction unto themselves: their temples are full of graven images like the house of Micah, houses of God; and yet in them are the Scriptures (though in a tongue unknown to the people) wherein that practice is utterly condemned, that a man would think them distracted to hear what their book says, and to see what they do in the same place. But nothing will reach unto their conviction until the veil of blindness and ignorance be taken from their minds; until they have spiritual light enabling them to discern the glory of Christ as represented in the gospel, and to let in an experience of the transforming power and efficacy of that revelation in their own souls, they will never part with that means for the same end, which they are sensible of, to be useful unto it; and which is suited unto their inclination. Whatever be the issue, though it cost them their souls, they will not part with what they find, as they suppose, so useful unto their great end of making Christ nigh unto them; for that, wherein they can see nothing of it, and of whose power they can have no experience.

But the principal design of this discourse, is to warn others of these abominations, and to direct unto their avoidance: for if they should be outwardly pressed unto the practice of this idolatry, whatever is of carnal affection, of blind devotion, or superstition in them, will quickly be won over

unto a conspiracy against their convictions. Nothing will then secure them but an experience of the efficacy of that representation which is made of Christ in the gospel. It is therefore the wisdom and duty of all those who desire a stability in the profession of the truth, continually to endeavour after this experience, and an increase in it. He who lives in the exercise of faith and love in the Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the gospel, as evidently crucified, and evidently exalted therein, and finds the fruit of his so doing in his own soul, will be preserved in the time of trial. Without this, men will at last begin to think that it is better to have a false Christ than none at all; they will suppose that something is to be found in images, when they can find nothing in the gospel.

2. It is a prevalent notion of truth, that the worship of God ought to be beautiful and glorious.

The very light of nature seems to direct unto conceptions hereof. What is not so, may be justly rejected, as unbecoming the divine majesty; and therefore the more holy and heavenly any religion pretends to be, the more glorious is the worship prescribed in it, or ought so to be: yea, the true worship of God is the height and excellency of all glory in this world; it is inferior unto nothing, but that which is in heaven, which it is the beginning of, the way unto, and the best preparation for. Accordingly even that worship is declared to be glorious, and that in an eminent manner, above all the outward worship of the Old Testament in the tabernacle and temple, whose glory was great; and as unto external pomp, inimitable. To this purpose the apostle disputes at large, 2 Cor. iii. 6—10. This therefore is agreed, that there ought to be beauty and glory in divine worship, and that they are most eminently in that which is directed and required in the gospel. But withal the apostle declares in the same place, that this glory is spiritual, and not carnal; so did our Lord Jesus Christ foretel that it should be; and that unto that end all distinction of places, with all outward advantages and ornaments belonging unto them, should be taken away; John iv. 20—24.

It belongs therefore unto our present design to give a brief account of its glory, and wherein it excels all other ways of divine worship that ever were in the world; even that

under the Old Testament, which was of divine institution, wherein all things were ordered for beauty and glory. And it may be given in the instances that ensue.

(1.) The express object of it is God, not as absolutely considered, but as existing in three persons, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the principal glory of Christian religion and its worship. Under the Old Testament the conceptions of the church about the existence of the divine nature in distinct persons, were very dark and obscure; for the full revelation of it was not to be made, but in the distinct actings of each person in the works of redemption and salvation of the church; that is, in the incarnation of the Son, and mission of the Spirit, after he was glorified; John vii. 39. And in all the ways of natural worship, there was never the least shadow of any respect hereunto. But this is the foundation of all the glory of evangelical worship. The object of it in the faith of the worshipper, is the holy Trinity, and it consists in an ascription of divine glory unto each person in the same individual nature by the same act of the mind; where this is not, there is no glory in religious worship.

(2.) Its glory consists in that constant respect which it hath unto each divine person, as unto their peculiar work and actings for the salvation of the church; so it is described, Eph. ii. 18. 'Through him,' that is, the Son as mediator, 'we have our access by one Spirit unto the Father.' This is the immediate glory of evangelical worship, comprehensive of all the graces and privileges of the gospel. And to suppose that the glory of it doth consist in any thing but the light, graces, and privileges, which it doth itself exhibit, is a vain imagination: it will not borrow glory from the invention of men. We shall therefore a little consider it as it is here represented by the apostle.

[1.] The ultimate object of it, under this consideration, is God as the Father: 'We have an access therein unto the Father.' And this consideration in our worship of God as a Father, relating unto the whole dispensation of his love and grace, by Jesus Christ, as he is his God and our God, his Father and our Father, is peculiar unto gospel-worship, and contains a signal part of its glory. We do not only worship God as a Father, so the very heathens had a notion that he

was the Father of all things ; but we worship him, who is the Father, and as he is so, both in relation to the eternal generation of the Son, and the communication of grace by him unto us, as our Father ; ‘ So no man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him ;’ John i. 18. This access in our worship unto the person of the Father, as in heaven, the holy place above, as on a throne of grace, is the glory of the gospel. See Matt. vi. 9. Heb. iv. 16. x. 19—21.

[2.] The Son is here considered as a mediator ; through him we have this access unto the Father. This is the glory that was hidden from former ages, but brought to light, and displayed by the gospel. So speaks our blessed Saviour himself unto his disciples ; ‘ Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you : hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name ; ask, and ye shall receive ;’ John xvi. 23, 24. To ask God expressly in the name of the Son, as mediator, belongs unto the glory of the gospel-worship.

The especial instances of this glory are more than can be numerated. The chief of them may be reduced to these three heads :

1st. It is he who makes both the persons of the worshippers, and their duties accepted of God. See Heb. ii. 17, 18. iv. 16. x. 19.

2dly. He is the administrator of all the worship of the church in the holy place above, as its great high-priest over the house of God ; Heb. viii. 2. Rev. viii. 3.

3dly. His presence with and among gospel-worshippers in their worship, gives it glory. This he declares and promises, Matt. xviii. 19, 20. ‘ If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven ; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’ All success of the prayers of the church dependeth on, and ariseth from, the presence of Christ amongst them : he is so present for their assistance, and for their consolation. This presence of a living Christ, and not a dead crucifix, gives glory to divine worship. He who sees not the glory of this worship, from its relation unto Christ, is a stranger unto the gospel, with all the light, graces, and privileges of it.

[3.] It is in one spirit that we have access unto God in his worship ; and in his administration doth the apostle place the glory of it, in opposition unto all the glory of the Old Testament, as doth our Lord Jesus Christ also in the place before referred unto ; for,

1st. The whole ability for the observance and performance of it, according to the mind of God, is from him alone. His communication of grace and gifts unto the church, is that alone which makes it to give glory to God in his divine service. If this should cease, all acceptable worship would cease in the world. To think to observe the worship of the gospel, without the aid and assistance of the Spirit of the gospel, is a lewd imagination. But where he is, there is liberty and glory ; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

2dly. By him the sanctified minds of believers are made temples of God, and so the principal seal of evangelical worship ; 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19. This temple being of God's own framing, and of his own adorning by his Spirit, is a much more glorious fabric than any that the hands of men can erect.

3dly. By him is the church led into internal communion and converse with God in Christ, in light, love, and delight, with holy boldness ; the glory whereof is expressed by the apostle, Heb. x. 19, 21, 22.

In these things, I say, doth the true glory of evangelical worship consist ; and if it doth not, it hath no glory in comparison of that which did excel in the old legal worship. For the wit of man was never yet able to set it off with half the outward beauty and glory that was in the worship of the temple. But herein it is that it not only leaves no glory thereunto in comparison, but doth unspeakably excel whatever the wit and wealth of men can extend unto.

But there is a spiritual light required that we may discern the glory of this worship, and have thereby an experience of its power and efficacy in reference unto the ends of its appointment. This the church of believers hath. They see it, as it is a blessed means of giving glory unto God, and of receiving gracious communications from him, which are the ends of all the divine institutions of worship ; and they have therein such an experience of its efficacy, as gives rest, and peace, and satisfaction, unto their souls. For they find,

that as their worship directs them unto a blessed view by faith, of God in his ineffable existence, with the glorious actings of each person in the dispensation of grace, which fills their hearts with joy unspeakable; so also that all graces are exercised, increased, and strengthened in the observance of it, with love and delight.

But all light into, all perceptions of this glory, all experience of its power, was amongst the most lost in the world. I intend in all these instances, the time of the papal apostacy. Those who had the conduct of religion could discern no glory in these things, nor obtain any experience of their power: be the worship what it will, they can see no glory in it, nor did it give any satisfaction to their minds; for having no light to discern its glory, they could have no experience of its power and efficacy. What then shall they do? The notion must be retained, that divine worship is to be beautiful and glorious. But in the spiritual worship of the gospel, they could see nothing thereof; wherefore they thought necessary to make a glory for it, or to dismiss it out of the world, and set up such an image of it, as might appear beautiful unto their fleshly minds, and give them satisfaction. To this end they set their inventions on work, to find out ceremonies, vestments, gestures, ornaments, music, altars, images, paintings, with prescriptions of great bodily veneration. This pageantry they call the beauty, the order, the glory, of divine worship. This is that which they see and feel, and which, as they judge, doth dispose their minds unto devotion; without it they know not how to pay any reverence unto God himself; and when it is wanting, whatever be the life, the power, the spirituality of the worship in the worshippers, whatever be its efficacy unto all the proper ends of it, however it be ordered according unto the prescription of the word, it is unto them empty, indecent, they can neither see beauty nor glory in it. This light and experience being lost, the introduction of beggarly elements and carnal ceremonies in the worship of the church, with attempts to render it decorous and beautiful, by superstitious rites and observances, wherewith it hath been defiled and corrupted, as it was and is in the church of Rome, was nothing but the setting up a deformed image in the room of it: and this they are pleased withal. The beauty and glory

which carving, and painting, and embroidered vestures, and musical incantations, and postures of veneration, do give unto divine service, they can see and feel, and in their own imagination are sensibly excited unto devotion by them. But hereby, instead of representing the true glory of the worship of the gospel, wherein it excels that under the Old Testament, they have rendered it altogether inglorious in comparison of it; for all the ceremonies and ornaments which they have invented for that end, come unspeakably short for beauty, order, and glory, of what was appointed by God himself in the temple, scarce equalling what was among the pagans.

It will be said, that the things whereunto we assign the glory of this worship are spiritual and invisible. Now this is not that which is inquired after; but that whose beauty we may behold, and be affected with. And this may consist in the things which we decry, at least in some of them: though I must say, if there be glory in any of them, the more they are multiplied, the better it must needs be; but this is that which we plead, men being not able by the light of faith, to discern the glory of things spiritual and invisible, do make images of them unto themselves, as gods that may go before them, and these they are affected withal: but the worship of the church is spiritual, and the glory of it is invisible unto eyes of flesh. So both our Saviour and the apostles do testify in the celebration of it: 'We come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel;' Heb. xii. 22—24. The glory of this assembly, though certainly above that of organs, and pipes, and crucifixes, and vestments, yet doth not appear unto the sense or imaginations of men.

That which I design here, is to obviate the meretricious allurements of the Roman worship, and the pretences of its efficacy to excite devotion and veneration by its beauty and decency. . The whole of it is but a deformed image of that glory which they cannot behold. To obtain and preserve in

our hearts an experience of the power and efficacy of that worship of God which is in spirit and truth, as unto all the real ends of divine worship, is that alone which will secure us. Whilst we do retain right notions of the proper object of gospel-worship, and of our immediate approach by it thereunto, of the way and manner of that approach through the mediation of Christ, and assistance of the Spirit; whilst we keep up faith and love unto their due exercise in it, wherein on our part the life of it doth consist, preserving an experience of the spiritual benefit and advantage which we receive thereby, we shall not easily be inveigled to relinquish them all, and give up ourselves unto the embraces of this lifeless image.

3. It is a universal unimpeachable persuasion among all Christians, that there is a near intimate communion with Christ, and participation of him in the supper of the Lord.

He is no Christian who is otherwise minded. Hence from the beginning, this was always esteemed the principal mystery in the 'agenda' of the church, and that deservedly; for this persuasion is built on infallible divine testimonies. The communication of Christ herein, and our participation of him, are expressed in such a manner as to demonstrate them to be peculiar; such as are not to be obtained in any other way, or divine ordinance whatever; not in praying, not in preaching, not in any other exercise of faith on the word or promises. There is in it an eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ, with a spiritual incorporation thence ensuing, which are peculiar unto this ordinance. But, this especial and peculiar communion with Christ, and participation of him, is spiritual and mystical, by faith, not carnal or fleshly. To imagine any other participation of Christ in this life but by faith, is to overthrow the gospel. To signify the real communication of himself and benefits of his mediation unto them that believe, whereby they should become the food of their souls, nourishing them unto eternal life, in the very beginning of his ministry, he himself expresses it by eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood; John vi. 53. 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.' But hereon many were offended, as supposing that he had intended an oral, carnal eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood,

and so would have taught them to be cannibals. Wherefore to instruct his disciples aright in this mystery, he gives an eternal rule of the interpretation of such expressions, ver. 63. 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' To look for any other communication of Christ or of his flesh and blood, but what is spiritual, is to contradict him in the interpretation which he gives of his own words. Wherefore this especial communion with Christ, and participation of him is by faith. If it were not, unbelievers ought all to partake of Christ as well as those that believe, which is a contradiction: for to believe in Christ, and to be made partakers of him, are one and the same. We must therefore find this peculiar participating of Christ in the special actings of faith, with respect unto the especial and peculiar exhibition of Christ unto us in this ordinance.

And these actings of faith are divers and many, but may be referred unto four heads.

(1.) It acts itself by obedience unto the authority of Christ in this institution. This is the foundation of all communion with Christ, or participation of him in any ordinance of divine worship whatever, that is peculiarly of his own sovereign appointment, and that in, and with such circumstances as unto the time, or season, and manner of it, as requires especial actings of faith with respect thereunto; for the institution of this ordinance was in the close of his ministry or prophetic office on the earth, and in the entrance of the exercise of his priestly office in offering himself a sacrifice unto God for the sins of the church; between them both, and to render them both effectual unto us, he interposed an act of his kingly office in the institution of this ordinance. And it was in the same night wherein he was betrayed, when his holy heart was in the highest exercise of zeal for the glory of God, and compassion for the souls of sinners; faith hath herein an especial regard unto all these things. It doth not only act itself by a subjection of soul and conscience unto the authority of Christ in the institution, but respects also the exerting of his authority in the close of his prophetic, and entrance of the exercise of his sacerdotal office, on the earth; with all those other circumstances of it, which recommend it unto the souls and con-

sciences of believers. This is peculiar unto this ordinance, and unto this way of the participation of Christ. And herein faith in its due exercise gives the soul an intimate converse with Christ.

(2.) There is in this divine ordinance, a peculiar representation of the love and grace of Christ in his death and sufferings, with the way and manner of our reconciliation unto God thereby. The principal design of the gospel is to declare unto us the love and grace of Christ, and our reconciliation unto God by his blood. Howbeit herein there is such an eminent representation of them, as cannot be made by words alone. It is a spiritual image of Christ proposed unto us, intimately affecting our whole souls. These things, namely, the ineffable love and grace of Christ, the bitterness of his sufferings and death in our stead, the sacrifice that he offered by his blood unto God, with the effect of it in atonement and reconciliation, being herein contracted into one entire proposal unto our souls, faith is exercised thereon in a peculiar manner, and so as it is not in any divine ordinance or way of the proposal of the same things unto us. All these things are indeed distinctly, and in parts, set before us in the Scripture for our instruction and edification. But as the light which was first made and diffused unto the whole creation, did suffice to enlighten it in a general way, yet was far more useful, glorious and conspicuous, when it was reduced and contracted into the body of the sun: so the truths concerning Christ, as they are diffused through the Scripture, are sufficient for the illumination and instruction of the church; but when by divine wisdom and institution they are contracted into this ordinance, their taste and efficacy is more eminent and communicative unto the eyes of our understandings, that is, our faith, than as merely proposed by parts and parcels in the word. Hereby faith leads the soul unto a peculiar communion with Christ, which is thereon made partaker of him in an especial manner.

(3.) Faith herein respects the peculiar way of the communication and exhibition of Christ unto us, by symbols, or sensible outward signs of bread and wine. It finds the divine wisdom and sovereignty of Christ in the choice of them, having no other foundation in reason or the light of nature; and the representation that is made herein of him, with the

benefits of his death and oblation, is suited unto faith only, without any aid of sense or imagination : for although the symbols are visible, yet their relation unto the things signified, is not discernible unto any sense or reason. Had he chosen for this end an image or a crucifix, or any such actions as did by a kind of natural and sensible resemblance, shew forth his passion, and what he did and suffered, there had been no need of faith in this matter. And therefore as we shall see, such things are found out unto this end, by such as lost the use and exercise of faith herein. Besides, it is faith alone that apprehends the sacramental union that is between the outward signs and the things signified by virtue of divine institution : and hereby the one, that is, the body and blood of Christ, are really exhibited and communicated unto the souls of believers, as the outward signs are unto their bodily senses, the signs becoming thereby sacramentally unto us, what the things signified are in themselves, and are therefore called by their names. Herein there is a peculiar exercise of faith, and a peculiar participation of Christ, such as are in no other ordinance whatever. Yea, the actings of faith with respect unto the sacramental union and relation between the signs and things signified, by virtue of divine institution and promise, is the principal use and exercise of it herein.

(4.) There is a peculiar exercise of faith in the reception of Christ, as his body and blood are rendered and exhibited unto us in the outward signs of them ; for though they do not contain carnally the flesh and blood of Christ in them, nor are turned into them, yet they really exhibit Christ unto them that believe in the participation of them ; faith is the grace that makes the soul to receive Christ, and whereby it doth actually receive him. ‘ To as many as received him, even unto them that believe in his name ;’ John i. 12. And it receives him according as he is proposed and exhibited unto us in the declaration and promise of the gospel, wherein he is proposed ; it receives him by the gracious assent of the mind unto this truth, the choice of him, cleaving and trusting unto him with the will, heart, and affection, for all the ends of his person and offices, as the mediator between God and man ; and in the sacramental mysterious proposal of him, his body and blood ; that is, in the efficacy of his

death and sacrifice, in this ordinance of worship, faith acts the whole soul in the reception of him unto all the especial ends for which he is exhibited unto us, in this way and manner. What these ends are which give force and efficacy unto the actings of faith herein, this is not a proper place to declare.

I have mentioned these things, because it is the great plea of the Papists at this day, in behalf of their transubstantiation, that if we reject their oral or carnal manducation of the flesh of Christ, and drinking of his blood, there cannot be assigned a way of participation of Christ in the receiving of him in this sacrament, distinct from that which is done in the preaching of the word. But hereby, as we shall see, they only declare their ignorance of this heavenly mystery. But of this blessed intimate communion with Christ, and participation of him in the divine institution of worship, believers have experience unto their satisfaction and ineffable joy. They find him to be the spiritual food of their souls, by which they are nourished unto eternal life by a spiritual incorporation with him. They discern the truth of this mystery, and have experience of its power. Howbeit men growing carnal, and being destitute of spiritual light, with the wisdom of faith, utterly lost all experience of any communion with Christ, and participation of him in this sacrament; on the principles of gospel truth they could find nothing in it; no power, no efficacy, nothing that should answer the great and glorious things spoken of it, nor was it possible they should. For, indeed, there is nothing in it, but unto faith; as the light of the sun is nothing to them that have no eyes: a dog and a staff are of more use to a blind man than the sun, nor is the most melodious music any thing to them that are deaf; yet, notwithstanding this loss of spiritual experience, they retained the notion of truth, that there must be a peculiar participation of Christ in this sacrament, distinct from all other ways and means of the same grace.

Here the wits of men were hard put to it to find out an image of this spiritual communion, whereof in their minds they could have no experience; yet they fashioned one by degrees, and after they had greatened the mystery in words and expressions (whereof they knew nothing in its

power) to answer unto what was to be set up in the room of it, until they brought forth the horrid monster of transubstantiation, and the sacrifice of the mass; for hereby they provided that all those things which are spiritual in this communion, should be turned into, and acted in, things carnal: bread shall be the body of Christ carnally, the mouth shall be faith, the teeth shall be the exercise, the belly shall be the heart, and the priest shall offer Christ unto God. A viler image never was invented; and there is nothing of faith required herein; it is all but a fortifying of imagination against all sense and reason. Because there is a singular mystery in the sacramental union that is between the external signs and the things signified, whence the one is called by the name of the other, as the bread is called the body of Christ, which faith discerns in the exhibition and receiving of it, they have invented for a representation hereof, such a prodigious imagination of the real conversion or transubstantiation of the substance of the bread and wine, into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, as overthrows all faith, reason, and sense also. And in the room of that holy reverence of Christ himself in his institution of this ordinance in the mystical exhibition of himself unto the souls of believers, in the demonstration of his love, grace, and sufferings for them, they have set up a wretched image of an idolatrous adoration and worship of the host, as they call it, to the ruin of the souls of men. And whereas the Lord Jesus Christ, by once offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified, appointing this ordinance for the remembrance of it, having lost that spiritual light whereby they might discern the efficacy of that one offering so long since accomplished, in the application of it by this ordinance unto the actual perfecting of the church; they have erected a new image of it, in a pretended daily repetition of the same sacrifice, wherein they profess to offer Christ again for the sins of the living and the dead, unto the overthrow of the principal foundation of faith and religion. All these abominations arose from the loss of an experience of that spiritual communion with Christ, and the participation of him by faith, which there is in this ordinance by divine institution. This cast the thoughts of men on invention of these images, to suit the general notion of truth unto the superstition of

their carnal minds. Nor is it ordinarily possible to retrieve them from these infatuations, unless God be pleased to communicate unto them that spiritual light, whereby they may discern the glory of this heavenly mystery, and have an experience of the exhibition of Christ unto the souls of believers therein, without these ; from innumerable prejudices, and inflamed affections towards their idols, they will not only abide in their darkness against all means of conviction, but endeavour the temporal and eternal destruction of all that are otherwise minded.

This image, like that of Nebuchadnezzar, was once set up in this nation, with a law, that ‘ whoever would not bow down to it, and worship it, should be cast into the fiery furnace.’ God grant it be so no more ! but if it should, there is no preservation against the influence of force and fires, but a real experience of an efficacious communication of Christ unto our souls in this holy ordinance, administered according to his appointment. This, therefore, is that we ought with all diligence to endeavour ; and this not only as the only way and means of our edification in this ordinance, by an exercise in grace, the strengthening of our faith, and present consolation, but as the effectual means of our preservation in the profession of the truth, and our deliverance from the snares of our adversaries. For whereas it is undeniable, that this peculiar institution, distinct from all other, doth intend and design a distinct communication and exhibition of Christ ; if it be pressed on us, that these must be done by transubstantiation and oral manducation thereon, and can be no otherwise ; nothing but an experience of the power and efficacy of the mystical communion with Christ in this ordinance, before described, will preserve us from being insnared by their pretences. There is not, therefore, on all accounts of grace and truth, any one thing of more concernment unto believers, than the due exercise of spiritual light and faith, unto a satisfactory experience of a peculiar participation of Christ in this holy institution.

The same is fallen out amongst them with reference unto the church, and all the principal concerns of it ; having lost or renounced the things which belong unto its primitive constitution, they have erected a deformed image in their stead, as I shall manifest in some instances.

4. It is an unquestionable principle of truth, that the church of Christ is in itself a body, such a body as hath a head, whereon it depends, and without which it would immediately be dissolved.

A body without a head is but a carcase, or part of a carcase, and this head must be always present with it. A head distant from the body, separated from it, not united unto it by such ways and means as are proper unto their nature, is of no use. See Eph. iv. 15, 16. Col. ii. 19.

But there is a double notion of a head, as there is of a body also; for they both of them are either natural or political. There is a natural body, and there is a political body; and in each sense it must have a head of the same kind. A natural body must have a head of vital influence, and a political body must have a head of rule and government. The church is called a body, compared to it, is a body in both senses, or in both parts of the comparison, and in both must have a head. As it is a spiritual living body, compared to the natural, it must have a head of vital influence, without which it cannot subsist; and as it is an orderly society for the common ends of its institution, compared unto a political body, it must have a head of rule and government, without which neither its being, nor its use can be preserved. But these are only distinct considerations of the church, which is every way one and the same. It is not two bodies, for then it must have two heads; but it is one body under two distinct considerations, which divide not its essence, but declare its different respects unto its head.

And in general, all who are called Christians, are thus far agreed; nothing is of the church, nothing belongs unto it, which is not dependant on, which is not united to, the head. That which holds the head is the true church; that which doth not so, is no church at all. Herein we agree with our adversaries, namely, that all the privileges of the church, all the right and title of men thereunto, depend wholly on their due relation to the head of it, according to the distinct considerations of it; be that head who or what it will, that which is not united unto the head, which depends not on it, which is separated from it, belongs not to the church. This head of the church is Christ Jesus alone; for the church is but one, although on various considerations it be likened

unto two sorts of bodies. The catholic church is considered either as believing, or as professing; but the believing church is not one, and the professing another. If you suppose another catholic church, besides this one, whoso will may be the head of it, we are not concerned therein; but unto this church Christ is the only head: he only answers all the properties and ends of such a head to the church. This the Scripture doth so positively and frequently affirm, without the least intimation, either directly, or by consequence of any other head, that it is wonderful how the imagination of it should befall the minds of any, who thought it not meet at the same time to cast away their bibles.

But whereas a head is to be present with the body, or it cannot subsist, the inquiry is, How the Lord Christ is so present with his church? And the Scripture hath left no pretence for any hesitation herein; for he is so by his Spirit and his word, by which he communiceth all the powers and virtues of a head unto it continually. His promises of this way and manner of his presence unto the church are multiplied, and thereon doth the being, life, use, and continuance of the church depend; where Christ is not present by his Spirit and word, there is no church; and those who pretend so to be, are the synagogues of Satan, and they are inseparable and conjunct in their operation, as he is the head of influence unto the church, as also, as he is a head of rule; for in the former sense the Spirit worketh by the word, and in the latter, the word is made effectual by the Spirit. But the sense and apprehension hereof, was for a long time lost in the world, amongst them that called themselves the church. A head they did acknowledge the church must always have, without which it cannot subsist; and they confess that in some sense he was a head of influence unto it; they knew not how to have an image thereof; though by many other pernicious doctrines, they overthrew the efficacy and benefit of it. But how he should be the only head of rule unto the church they could not understand; they saw not how he could act the wisdom and authority of such a head, and without which the church must be headless. They said, he was absent and invisible, they must have one that they could see, and have access unto; he is in heaven, and

they know not how to make address to him, as occasion did require; all things would go to disorder, notwithstanding such a headship. The church is visible, and it must, they thought, have a visible head. It was meet also, that this head should have some such grandeur and pomp in the world, as became the head of so great and glorious a society as the church is. How to apply these things unto Christ and his presence with the church, by his word and Spirit, they knew not. Shall they then forego the principle, that the church is to have such a head and supreme ruler? That must not be done, but be sacredly retained; not only because to deny it in general, is to renounce the gospel; but because they had found out a way to turn it unto their own advantage; they would therefore make an image of Christ, as this head of the church, to possess the place, and act all the powers of such a head; for the church, they say, is visible, and must have a visible head: as though the catholic church, as such, were any other way visible, but as the head of it is, that is, by faith. That there must be a head and centre of union, wherein all the members of the church may agree and be united, notwithstanding all their distinct capacities and circumstances, and how this should be Christ himself, they know not; that without a supreme ruler present in the church, to compose all differences, and determine all controversies, even those concerning himself, which they vainly pretend unto, they expressly affirm, that there never was a society so foolishly ordered as that of the church. And hereon they conclude the insufficiency of Christ to be this sole head of the church, another they must have for these ends. And this was their pope, such an image as is one of the worst of idols that ever were in the world. Unto him they give all the titles of Christ, which relate unto the church, and ascribe all the powers of Christ in and over it, as unto its rule, to him also. But here they fell into a mistake; for when they thought to give him the power of Christ, they gave him the power of the dragon to use against Christ, and those that are his. And when they thought to make an image of Christ, they made an image of the first beast, set up by the dragon, which had two horns like a lamb, but spake as a dragon, whose character and employ is at large described, Rev. xiii. 11—17.

This is the sum of what I shall offer on this head ; those who called themselves the church, had lost all spiritual light enabling them to discern the beauty and glory of the rule of Christ over the church as its head ; and hereon their minds became destitute of all experience of the power and efficacy of his Spirit and word, continually to order the affairs thereof, in the ways, and through the use of means by himself appointed ; they knew not how to acquiesce in these things, nor how the church could be maintained by them : wherefore in this case, ‘ They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good comfort ; so the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer, him that smiteth the anvil.’ They set themselves in their several capacities, to frame this idol, and set him up in the place and stead of Christ, so fixing him in the temple of God, that he might shew himself from thence to be as God. Neither will this idol be ever cast out of the church, until the generality of Christians become spiritually sensible of the authority of Christ, exerting itself in the rule of the church, by his Spirit and his word, unto all the ends of unity, order, peace, and edification ; until that be done, a pope, or something like him, will be thought necessary unto these ends. But never was there a more horrid deformed image made of so beautiful and glorious a head : all the craft of Satan, all the wits of men cannot invent any thing more unlike Christ, as the head of the church, than this pope is. A worse figure and representation of him cannot possibly be made.

This is he of whom, nothing not great, nothing common, nothing not exceeding the ordinary state of mankind, on the one hand or the other, is thought or spoken. Some say, he is the head and husband of the church, the vicar of Christ over the whole world, God’s vicegerent, a vice-god, Peter’s successor, the head and centre of unity unto the whole catholic church, endued with a plenitude of power, with other ascriptions of the same nature innumerable ; whereon it is necessary unto every soul under pain of damnation, to be subject unto him. Others aver that he is antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the beast that came out of the earth with two horns like a lamb, and a voice like the dragon, the false prophet, the idol shepherd, the evil servant that

beateth his fellow-servants, the adulterer of a meretricious and false church ; and there is no mean betwixt these ; he is undoubtedly the one or the other. The Lord Jesus Christ, who hath determined this controversy already in his word, will ere long give it its ultimate issue in his own glorious person, and by the brightness of his coming. And this is an eminent idol in the chamber of imagery in the Roman church. But at present it is evident wherein lies the preservation of believers from being inveigled to bow down to this image, and to worship it. A due sense of the sole authority of Christ in and over his church, with an experience of the power of his word and Spirit unto all the ends of its rule and order, will keep them unto the truth herein, and nothing else will so do. And if once they decline from this in any instances, seem they never so small, so as to admit of any thing in the church, or its worship, which doth not derive immediately from his authority, they will be disposed to admit of another guide and head in all other things also.

5. Again, it is a notion of truth, that the church of Christ is beautiful and glorious.

There are many prophecies and predictions concerning it, that so it should be ; and there are sundry descriptions given of it as such. Its relation unto Christ, with his love unto it, and valuation of it, do require that it should be so glorious ; yea, his great design towards it, was to make it so to be ; Eph. v. 25—27. This therefore all do agree in who profess Christian religion ; but what that glory is, and wherein it doth consist, whence it is, and is said to be glorious, is not agreed upon. The Scripture indeed plainly declares this glory to be spiritual and internal, that it consists in its union unto Christ, his presence with it, the communication of his quickening Spirit unto it, the clothing of it with his righteousness, in its sanctification and purification from the defilement of sin, with its fruitfulness in obedience unto the praise of God. Add hereunto the celebration of divine worship in it, with its rule and order, according to the commandment of Christ, and we have the substance of this glory. And this glory believers do discern, so as to be satisfied with its excellency. They know that all the glories of the world are no way to be compared to it ; for it consists in, and arises from, such things as they do value and prefer infinitely above

all that this world can afford. They are a reflexion of the glory of God, or of Christ himself upon the church, yea, a communication of it thereunto. This they value in the whole, and in every member of it; neither the nature, use, nor end of the church will admit that its glory should consist in things of any other nature. But the generality of mankind had lost that spiritual light, wherein alone this glory might be discerned. They could see no form or beauty in the spouse of Christ, as only adorned with his graces. To talk of a glorious state of men, whilst they are poor and destitute, it may be clothed with rags, and haled unto prisons or stakes, as hath been the lot of the church in most ages, was in their judgment a thing absurd and foolish. Wherefore seeing it is certain, that the church of Christ is very glorious and illustrious in the sight of God, holy angels, and good men, a way must be found out to make it so, and so to appear in the world. Wherefore they agreed on a lying image of this glory, namely, the dignity, promotion, wealth, dominion, power, and splendour of all them that had got the rule of the church. And although it be evident unto all, that these things belong unto the glories of this world, which the glory of the church is not only distinguished from, but opposed unto, yet it must be looked on as that wherein it is glorious; and it is so, though it have not one saving grace in it, as they expressly affirm. When these things are attained, then are all the predictions of its glory accomplished, and the description of it answered. This corrupt image of the true spiritual glory of the church, arising from an ignorance of it, and want of a real experience of the worth and excellency of things internal, spiritual, and heavenly, hath been attended with pernicious consequents in the world. Many have been infatuated by it, and enamoured of it, unto their own perdition. For as a teacher of lies, it is suited only to divert the minds of men from a comprehension and valuation of that real glory, wherein if they have not an interest they must perish for ever.

Look into foreign parts, as Italy and France, where these men pretend their church is in its greatest glory; what is it, but the wealth, and pomp, and power of men, for the most part openly ambitious, sensual, and worldly? Is this the glory of the church of Christ? Do these things belong unto his

kingdom? But by the setting up of this image, by the advancement of this notion, all the true glory of the church hath been lost and despised. Yet these things being suited unto the designs of the carnal minds of men, and satisfactory unto all their lusts; having got this paint and gilding on them, that they render the church of Christ glorious, have been the means of filling this world with darkness, blood, and confusion. For this is that glory of the church, which is contended for with rage and violence. And not a few, do yet doat on these images, who are not sharers in the advantage it brings unto its principal worshippers, whose infatuation is to be bewailed.

The means of our preservation from the adoration of these images also is obvious, from the principles we proceed upon. It will not be done, without light to discern the glory of things spiritual and invisible; wherein alone the church is glorious. And in the light of faith they appear to be what indeed they are in themselves, of the same nature with the glory that is above. The present glory of the church, I say, in its initiation into the glory of heaven, and in general of the same nature with it. Here it is in its dawns and entrances, there in its fulness and perfection. To look for any thing that should be cognate, or of near alliance unto the glory of heaven, or any near resemblance of it, in the outward glories of this world, is a fond imagination. And when the mind is enabled to discern the true beauty and glory of spiritual things, with their alliance unto that which is above, it will be secured from seeking after the glory of the church in things of this world, or putting any value on them unto that end. That self-denial also which is indispensably prescribed in the gospel unto all the disciples of Christ, is requisite hereunto; for the power and practice of it, is utterly inconsistent with an apprehension, that secular power, riches, and domination, do contribute any thing unto the church's glory. The mind being hereby crucified unto a value and estimation of these things, it can never apprehend them as any part of that raiment of the church wherein it is glorious. But where the minds of men, through their native darkness, are disabled to discern the glory of spiritual things, and through their carnal unmortified affection, do cleave unto, and have the highest esteem of, worldly grandeur, it is no

wonder, if they suppose the beauty and glory of the church to consist in them.

6. I shall add one instance more with reference unto the state of the church, and that is in its rule and discipline.

Here also hath been as fatal a miscarriage as ever fell out in Christian religion. For the truth herein being lost, as unto any sense and experience of its efficacy or power, a bloody image, destructive to the lives and souls of men, was set up in the stead thereof. And this also shall be briefly declared. There are certain principles of truth, with respect hereunto, that are acknowledged by all ; as,

(1.) That the Lord Christ hath appointed a rule and discipline in his church, for its good and preservation ; no society can subsist without the power and exercise of some rule in itself. For rule is nothing but the preservation of order, without which there is nothing but confusion. The church is the most perfect society in the earth, as being united and compacted by the best and highest bonds, which our nature is capable of ; Eph. iv. 16. Col. ii. 19. It must therefore have a rule and discipline in itself, which from the wisdom and authority of him, by whom it was instituted, must be supposed to be the most perfect.

(2.) That this discipline is powerful and effectual unto all its proper ends. It must be so esteemed from the wisdom of him by whom it is appointed, and it is so accordingly. To suppose that the Lord Christ should ordain a rule and discipline in his church, that in itself and by its just administration, should not attain its ends, is to reflect the greatest dishonour upon him. Yea, if any church or society of professed Christians, be fallen into that state and condition, wherein the discipline appointed by Christ cannot be effectual unto its proper ends, Christ hath forsaken that church or society. Besides the Holy Ghost affirms, that the ministry of the church, in the administration of it, is mighty through God, unto all its ends ; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

(3.) The ends of this discipline are the order, peace, purity, and holiness of the church, with a representation of the love, care, and watchfulness of Christ over it, and a testimony unto his future judgment. An imagination of any other ends of it, hath been its ruin.

And thus far all who profess themselves Christians are

agreed, at least in words. None dare deny any of these principles, no not to secure their abuse of them, which is the interest of many.

(4.) But unto them all we must also add, and that with the same uncontrollable evidence of truth, that the power and efficacy of this discipline which it hath from the institution of Christ, is spiritual only, and hath all its effects on the souls and consciences of those who profess subjection unto him, with respect unto the ends before mentioned. So the apostle expressly describes it, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds: casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ.' These are the ends, as of preaching of the gospel, so of the discipline of the church; and these are the ways and means of its efficacy: it is spiritually mighty through God, unto all these ends, and others it hath none. But we shall immediately see the total reverse of this order, in an image substituted in the room of it.

(5.) Of the power and efficacy of this spiritual discipline unto its proper end, the primitive Christians, at least, had experience. For three hundred years, the church had no other way or means for the preservation of its order, peace, purity, and holiness, but the spiritual efficacy of this discipline, on the souls and consciences of professed Christians. Neither did it fail therein, nor were the churches any longer preserved in peace and purity, than whilst they had this discipline alone for their preservation, without the least contribution of assistance from secular power, or any thing that should operate on the outward concerns of mankind. And there can be no other reason given, why it should not be of the same use and efficacy still unto all churches, but only the loss of all those internal graces, which are necessary to make any gospel institution effectual; wherefore, all sense and experience hereof, of the spiritual power and efficacy of this discipline was utterly lost, amongst the most of them that are called Christians. Neither those who had assumed a pretence of the administration of it, nor those towards whom it was administered, could find any thing in it, that did

affect the consciences of men, with respect unto its proper ends. They found it a thing altogether useless in the church, wherein none of any sort would be concerned. What shall they now do? What course shall they take? Shall they renounce all those principles of truth concerning it, which we have laid down, and exclude it both name and thing out of the church? This probably would have been the end of it, had they not found out a way to wrest the pretence of it unto their unspeakable advantage. Wherefore they contrived and made a horrid image of the holy, spiritual rule and discipline of the gospel: an image it was, consisting in outward force and tyranny over the persons, liberties, and lives of men; exercised with weapons, mighty through the devil to cast men into prison, and to destroy them. Hereby that which was appointed for the peace and edification of the church, being lost, an engine was framed under its name and pretence unto its ruin and destruction; and so it continues unto this day. It had never entered into the hearts of men, to set up a discipline in the church of Christ, by law, courts, fines, mulcts, imprisonments, and burnings, but that they had utterly lost in themselves, and suffered to be lost in others concerned, all experience of the power and efficacy of the discipline of Christ, towards the souls and consciences of men. But hereon they laid it aside, as a useless tool, that might do some service in the hands of the apostles, and the primitive churches, whilst there was spiritual life and sense left amongst Christians; but as unto them, and what they aimed at, it was of no use at all. The deformity of this image in the several parts of it, its universal dissimilitude unto that whose name it bears, and which it pretends to be, the several degrees whereby it was forged, framed, and erected, with the occasions and advantages taken for its exaltation, would take up much time to declare: for it was subtly interwoven with other abominations, in the whole mystery of iniquity, until it became the very life or animating principle of antichristianism. For however men may set light by the rule and discipline of Christ in his church, and its spiritual power or efficacy towards the souls and consciences of men, the rejection of it, and the setting up of a horrid image of worldly power, domination, and force in

the room of it, and under its name, is that which began, carried on, and yet maintains the fatal apostacy in the church of Rome.

I shall instance only in one particular. On the change of this rule of Christ, and together with it, the setting up of Mauzzim, or an image, or god of forces in the stead of it; they were compelled to change all the ends of that discipline, and to make an image of them also. For this new instrument of outward force, was of no use with respect unto them; for they are, as was declared, the spiritual peace, purity, love, and edification of the church. Outward force is no way meet to attain any of these ends. Wherefore they must make an image of these also, or substitute some dead form in their room; and this was a universal subjection unto the pope, according unto all the rules, orders, and canons which they should invent. Uniformity herein and canonical obedience, is all the end which they will allow unto their church discipline; and these things hang well together, for nothing but outward force by law and penalties, is fit to attain this end. So was there an image composed and erected of the holy discipline of Christ, and its blessed ends, consisting of these two parts, outward force and feigned subjection. For hardly can an instance be given in the world, of any man who ever bowed down to this image, or submitted unto any ecclesiastical censure, out of a conscientious respect unto it. Force and fear rule all.

This is that discipline, in whose execution the blood of an innumerable company of holy martyrs hath been shed; that wherein all the vital spirits of the papacy do act themselves, and whereby it doth subsist, and although it be the image of jealousy, or the image of the first beast, set up by the dragon, yet it cannot be denied, but that it is very wisely accommodated unto the present state of the generality of them that are called Christians amongst them. For being both blind and carnal, and having thereby lost all sense and experience of the spiritual power of the rule of Christ in their consciences, they are become a herd not fit to be governed or ruled any other way. Under the bondage of it therefore they must abide, till the veil of blindness be taken away, and they are turned unto God by his word and Spirit; for

‘where the Spirit of the Lord is, there,’ and there alone, is, liberty.’

7. Unto the foregoing particular instances, with respect unto the church, I shall yet add one more general, which is indeed comprehensive of them all; or the root from whence they spring; a root bearing gall and wormwood. And this is concerning the catholic church.

What belongs unto this catholic church, what is comprised in its communion, the apostle declares, Heb. xii. 22—25. It is ‘the recapitulation of all things in heaven and earth in Christ Jesus.’ Eph. i. 10. ‘His body, his spouse, or bride, the Lamb’s wife, the glorious temple, wherein God doth dwell by his Spirit;’ a holy mystical society, purchased and purified by the blood of Christ, and united unto him by his Spirit, or the inhabitation of the same Spirit in him, and those whereof it doth consist. Hence they with him, as the body with its head, are mystically called Christ; 1 Cor. xii. 12. And there are two parts of it, the one whereof is already perfected in heaven, as unto their spirits, and the other yet continued in the way of faith and obedience in this world. Both these constitute ‘one family in heaven and earth,’ Eph. iii. 15. in conjunction with the holy angels, one mystical body, one catholic church. And although there is a great difference in their present state and condition, between these two branches of the same family, yet are they both equally purchased by Christ, and united unto him as their head, having both of them effectually the same principle of the life of God in them. Of a third part of this church, neither in heaven nor in earth, in a temporary state, participant somewhat of heaven, and somewhat of hell, called purgatory, the Scripture knoweth nothing at all, neither is it consistent with the analogy of faith, or the promises of God unto them that do believe, as we shall see immediately. This church, even as unto that part of it which is in this world, as it is adorned with all the graces of the Holy Spirit, is the most beautiful and glorious effect, next unto the forming and production of its head in the incarnation of the Son of God, which divine wisdom, power, and grace will extend themselves unto, here below: but these things, the glory of this state is visible only unto the eye of

faith; yea, it is perfectly seen and known only to Christ himself. We see it obscurely in the light of faith and revelation, and are sensible of it, according unto our participating of the graces and privileges wherein it doth consist.

But that spiritual light which is necessary to the discerning of this glory, was lost among those of whom we treat. They could see no reality nor beauty in these things, nor any thing that should be of advantage unto them. For upon their principle, of the utter uncertainty of men's spiritual estate and condition in this world, it is evident that they could have no satisfactory persuasion of any concernment in it. But they had possessed themselves of the notion of a catholic church, which with mysterious artifices they have turned unto their own incredible secular advantage. This is that whereof they boast, appropriating it unto themselves, and making it a pretence of destroying others, what lies in them both temporally and eternally. Unto this end they have formed the most deformed and detestable image of it that ever the world beheld; for the catholic church which they own, and which they boast that they are, instead of that of Christ, is a company or society of men, unto whom in order unto the constitution of that whole society, there is no one real Christian grace required, nor spiritual union unto Christ the head, but only an outside profession of these things, as they expressly contend. A society united unto the pope of Rome, as its head by a subjection unto him, and his rule according to the laws and canons whereby he will guide them. This is the formal reason and cause constituting that catholic church which they are, which is compacted in itself by horrid bonds and ligaments, for the ends of ambition, worldly domination and avarice. A catholic church openly wicked in the generality of its rulers, and them that are ruled; and in its state cruel, oppressive, and dyed with the blood of saints, and martyrs innumerable. This I say is that image of the holy catholic church, the spouse of Christ, which they have set up. And it hath been as the image of Moloch, that hath devoured and consumed the children of the church, whose cries, when their cruel stepmother pitied them not, and when their pretended ghostly fathers cast them into the flames, came up unto the ears of the Lord of hosts; and their blood still cries for

vengeance on this idolatrous generation. Yet is this pretence of the catholic church pressed in the minds of many, with so many sophistical artifices, through the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; proposed with the allurements of so many secular advantages, and imposed oftentimes on Christians with so much force and cruelty, that nothing can secure us from the admission of it, unto the utter overthrow of religion, but the means before insisted on. A spiritual light is necessary hereunto, to discern the internal spiritual beauty and glory of the true catholic church of Christ: where this is in its power, all the paintings and dresses of their deformed image will fall off from it, and its abominable filth will be made to appear. And this will be accompanied with an effectual experience of the glory and excellency of that grace in the souls of those that believe, derived from Christ the sole head of this church, whereby they are changed 'from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.' The power, life, and sweetness hereof, will give satisfaction unto their souls, to the contempt of the pretended order, or dependance on the pope as a head. By these means the true catholic church, which is the body of Christ, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, growing up unto him in all things who is the head, despiseth this image, and dagon will fall to the ground when this ark is brought in, yea, though it be in his own temple.

8. In the farther opening of this chamber of imagery, we shall yet, if it be possible, see greater abominations. At least that which doth next ensue, is scarce inferior unto any of them that went before. It is a principle in Christian religion, an acknowledged verity, that it is the duty of the disciples of Christ, especially as united in churches, to propagate the faith of the gospel, and to make the doctrine of it known unto all, as they have opportunity: yea, this is one principal end of the constitution of churches and officers in them; Matt. v. 13—16. 1 Tim. iii. 15.

This our Lord Jesus Christ gave in special charge unto his apostles at the beginning; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Hereby they were obliged unto the work of propagating the faith of the gospel, and the knowledge of him therein in all places, and were justified in their so doing. And this they did with that efficacy and success,

that in a short time, like the light of the sun, 'Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world;' Rom. x. 18. And the gospel was said to be 'preached unto every creature which is under heaven;' Col. i. 23. The way therefore, whereby they propagated the faith, was by diligent laborious preaching of the doctrine of the gospel unto all persons in all places, with patience and magnanimity in undergoing all sorts of sufferings on the account of it, and a declaration of its power in all those virtues and graces, which are useful and exemplary unto mankind. It is true, their office, and the discharge of it, is long since ceased; howbeit it cannot be denied but that the work itself is incumbent in a way of duty on all churches, yea, on all believers, as they have providential calls unto it, and opportunities for it. For it is the principal way whereby they may glorify God, and benefit men in their chiefest good, which without doubt they are obliged unto.

This notion of truth is retained in the church of Rome: and the work itself is appropriated by them, unto themselves alone. Unto them, and them only, as they suppose, it belongs to take care of the propagation of the faith of the gospel, with the conversion of infidels and heretics. Whatever is done unto this purpose by others, they condemn and abhor. What do they think of the primitive way of doing it, by personal preaching, sufferings, and holiness? Will the pope, his cardinals and bishops, undertake this work or way of the discharge of it? Christ hath appointed no other, the apostles and their successors knew no other, no other becomes the gospel; nor ever had success. No, they abhor and detest this way of it. What then is to be done? Shall the truth be denied? Shall the work wholly and avowedly be laid aside? Neither will this please them, because it is not suited unto their honour; wherefore they have erected a dismal image of it unto the horrible reproach of Christian religion. They have indeed provided a double painting for the image which they have set up. The first is the constant consult of some persons at Rome, which they call '*Congregatio de propaganda fide*,' a council for the propagation of the faith, under the effect of whose consultations Christendom hath long groaned. And the other is, the sending of

missionaries as they call them, or a surcharge of friars from their over numerous fraternities upon their errands into remote nations.

But the real image itself consists of these three parts: (1.) The sword; (2.) The inquisitions; (3.) Plots and conspiracies.

By these, it is that they design to propagate the faith and promote Christian religion. And if hell itself can invent a more deformed image, and representation of the sacred truth and work, which it is a counterfeit of, I am much mistaken.

(1.) Thus have they in the first way carried Christian religion into the Indies, especially the western parts of the world, so called. First, the pope out of the plenitude of his power, gives unto the Spaniard all those countries, and the inhabitants of them, that they may be made Christians. But Christ dealt not so with his apostles, though he were Lord of all, when he sent them to teach and baptize all nations. He dispossessed none of them of their temporal rights or enjoyments, nor gave to his apostles a foot breadth of inheritance among them. But upon this grant, the Spanish Catholics propagated the faith, and brought in Christian religion amongst them. And they did it by killing and murdering many millions of innocent persons, as some of themselves say more than are alive in Europe in any one age. And this savage cruelty hath made the name of Christians detestable amongst all that remained of them, that had any exercise of reason; some few slavish brutes being brought by force to submit unto this new kind of idolatry. And this we must think to be done, in obedience unto that command of Christ, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' This is the deformed image, which they have set up of obedience unto his holy commands, whereunto they apply that voice to Peter with respect unto the eating of all sorts of creatures, 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat.' So have they dealt with those poor nations whom they have devoured. But blood, murder, and unjust war (as all war is for the propagation of religion), with persecution, began in Cain, who derived it from the devil, that

murderer from the beginning; for he was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. Jesus Christ the Son of God was 'manifest to destroy these works of the devil;' Heb. ii. [1 John iii. 18.] And he doth it in this world by his word and doctrine, judging and condemning them. And he does it in his disciples by his Spirit, extirpating them out of their minds, hearts, and ways; so as that there is not a more assured character of a derivation from the evil spirit, than force and blood in religion for the propagating of it.

(2.) The next part of this image, the next way used by them for the propagating of the faith, and the conversion of them they call heretics, is the inquisition. So much hath been declared, and is known thereof, that it is needless here to give a portraiture of it. It may suffice, that it hath been long since opened like Cacus's den, and discovered to be the greatest arsenal of cruelty, the most dreadful shambles of blood and slaughter, that ever was in the world. This is that engine, which hath supplied the scarlet whore with the blood of saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, until she was drunk with it. And this is the second way, or means whereby they propagate the faith of the gospel, and endeavour, as they say, the conversion of the souls of men. This is the second part of that image which they have set up instead of the holy appointment of Jesus Christ.

(3.) The third way they insist on unto this purpose, the third part of this image, consists in plots and contrivances to murder princes, to embroil nations in blood, to stir up sedition unto their ruin, inveigling and alluring all sorts of vicious, indigent, ambitious persons, into an association with them, so to introduce the Catholic religion in the places which they design to subvert. This engine for the propagation of the faith, hath been plied with various successes in many nations of Europe, and is still at work unto the same purpose. And hereunto belong all the arts which they use for the infatuation of the minds of princes and great men, all the baits they lay for others of all sorts to work them over unto a compliance with their designs.

Of these parts, I say, is that dreadful image made up and composed, which they set up, embrace, and adore, in

the room of the holy way for the propagation of the gospel appointed by Jesus Christ. In his way they can see no beauty, they can expect no success; they cannot believe that ever the world will be converted by it, or be brought in subjection unto the pope, and therefore betake themselves unto their own. Faith, prayer, holiness, preaching, suffering, all in expectation of the promised presence and assistance of Christ, are no ways for efficacy, success, and advantage, to be compared unto the sword, inquisition, and underhand designings. And this also is that which they call zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of Christ; another deformed image which they have brought into religion. For whereas that grace consists principally in postponing self, and all self-concerns, with an undervaluation of them, unto the glory of God, and the special duties whereby it may be promoted, this impious design to destroy mankind by all ways of subtlety, and cruelty, unto their own advantage, is set up in the room of it. But the consideration of the nature and spirit, of the use and end of the gospel, of the design of Christ in it, and by it, is sufficient to preserve the souls of men not utterly infatuated, in an abhorrency of this image of its propagation. It is that wherein the God of this world, by the help of their blindness and lusts, hath put a cheat on mankind, and prevailed with them, under a pretence of doing Christ honour, to make the vilest representation of him to the world, that can be conceived. If he hath appointed this way for the propagating of the gospel, he cannot well be distinguished from Mahomet; but there is nothing more contrary unto him, nothing that his holy soul doth more abhor. And had not men lost all spiritual sense of the nature and ends of the gospel, they could never have given up themselves unto these abominations. For any to suppose that the faith of the gospel is to be propagated by such cruelty and blood, by art and subtlety, by plots, conspiracies, and contrivances, any way but by the foolishness of preaching, which unto that end, is the power and wisdom of God, is to declare his own ignorance of it, and unconcernment in it. And had not men conceived and embraced another religion, than what is taught therein, or abused a pretence thereof unto ends and advantages of their

own, this imagination of the propagation of it, had never taken place in their minds, it is so diametrically opposite unto the whole nature, and all the ends of it.

9. There is yet amongst them another image of a general principle, no less horrid than that before mentioned, and that with respect unto religious obedience. It is the great foundation of all religion, and in especial of Christian religion, that God in all things is to be obeyed absolutely and universally.

Of all our obedience, there is no other reason, but that it is his will, and is known unto us so to be. This follows necessarily from the infinite perfections of the divine nature. As the first essential verity he is to be believed in what he reveals above, and against all contradiction from pretended reasons, or any imaginations whatever; and as he is the only absolute independent being, essential goodness, and the sovereign Lord of all things, he is without farther reason, motive, or inducement, to be absolutely obeyed in all his commands. An instance whereof we have in Abraham offering his only son without dispute or hesitation, in compliance with a divine revelation and command.

It will seem very difficult to frame an image hereof amongst men, with whom there is not the least shadow of these divine perfections, namely, essential verity, and absolute sovereignty, in conjunction with infinite wisdom and goodness, which alone renders such an obedience lawful, useful, or suitable unto the principles of our rational natures: but these of whom we speak, have not been wanting unto themselves herein, especially the principal craftsmen of this image trade. The order of the Jesuits have made a bold attempt for the framing of it. Their vow of blind obedience (as they call it) unto their superiors, whereto they resign the whole conduct of their souls, in all the concernments of religion, in all duties toward God and man, unto their guidance and disposal, is a cursed image of this absolute obedience unto the commands of God, which he requireth of us. Hence the founder of their order, was not ashamed in his epistle '*ad fratres Lusitanos*,' to urge and press this blind obedience from the example of Abraham yielding obedience unto God, without debate or consideration; as if the superiors of the order were good, and not evil and sinful men.

Whilst this honour was reserved unto God, whilst this was judged to be his prerogative alone, namely, that his commands are to be obeyed in all things, without reasonings and examinations as unto the matter, justice, and equity of them, merely because they are his, which absolutely and infallibly conclude them good, holy, and just, the righteous government of the world, and the security of men in all their rights, was safely provided for ; for he neither will nor can command any thing but what is holy, just, and good. But since the ascription of such a god-like authority unto man, as to secure blind obedience unto all their commands, innumerable evils, in murders, seditions, and perjuries, have openly ensued thereon. But besides those particular evils in matter of fact, which have proceeded from this corrupt fountain, this persuasion at once takes away all grounds of peace and security from mankind ; for who knows what a crew or sort of men, called the Jesuits' superiors, known only by their restless ambition, and evil practices in the world, may command their vassals, who are sworn to execute whatever they command, without any consideration whether it be right or wrong, good or evil ?

Let princes and other great men flatter themselves whilst they please, that on one consideration or other, they shall be the objects only of their kindness, if these men, according to their profession, be obliged in conscience to execute whatever their superiors shall command them, no less than Abraham was to sacrifice his son on the command of God ; they hold their lives at the mercy, and on the good nature of these superiors, who are always safe out of the reach of revenge. It is marvellous that mankind doth not agree to demolish this cursed image, or the ascription of a god-like power unto men, to require blind obedience unto their commands, especially considering what effects it hath produced in the world. All men know by whose device it was first set up and erected ; by whom, what means, and unto what end it was confirmed and consecrated ; and at this day it is maintained by a society of men, of an uncertain extract and original, like that of the Janizaries in the Turkish empire, their rise being generally out of obscurity, among the meanest and lowest of the people. Such they are who by the rules of their education, are taught to renounce all re-

spect unto their native countries, and alliances therein, but so as to make them only the way and matter for the advancement of the interest of this new society. And this sort of men being nourished from their very first entrance into the conduct of the society, unto hopes and expectations of wealth, honour, power, interest in the disposal of all public affairs of mankind and the regulation of the consciences of men, it is no wonder if with the utmost of their arts and industry, they endeavour to set up and preserve this image which they have erected, from whence they expect all the advantage which they do design. But hereof I may treat more fully, when I come to speak of the image of jealousy itself.

10. From these generals, I shall proceed unto more particular instances; and those for the most part in important principles of religion, wherein Christian faith and practice are most concerned. And I shall begin with that which is of signal advantage unto the framers of these images, as the other also are in their degree; for by this craft they have their livelihood and wealth, and most pernicious to the souls of other men. It is a principle of truth, and that such as wherein the whole course of Christian obedience is concerned, that there is a spiritual defilement in sin.

This the Scripture everywhere declares, representing the very nature of it by spiritual uncleanness. And this uncleanness is its contrariety unto the holiness of the divine nature, as represented unto us in the law. This defilement is in all men equally by nature; all are alike born in sin, and the pollution of it; 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' And it is in all personally, in various degrees; some are more polluted with actual sins than others, but all are so in their degree and measure. This pollution of sin must be purged and taken away before our entrance into heaven; for no unclean thing shall enter into the kingdom of God. Sin must be destroyed in its nature, practice, power, and defects, or we are not saved from it. This purification of sin is wrought in us initially and gradually in this life, and accomplished in death, when the spirits of just men are made perfect. In a compliance with this work of God's grace towards them, whereby they purify themselves, consists one principal part of the obedience of believers in this world,

and of the exercise of their faith. The principal, internal, immediate, efficient cause of this purification of sins, is the blood of Christ; the 'blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, cleanseth us from all our sins;' 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jesus purgeth our consciences from dead works;' Heb. ix. 14. 'He washeth us in his own blood;' Rev. i. 5. And there is an external helping cause thereof, which is trials and afflictions, made effectual by the word, and accomplished in death.

But this way of purging sins by the blood of Christ is mysterious: there is no discerning of its glory but by spiritual light, no experience of its power, but by faith. Hence it is despised and neglected by the most that yet outwardly profess the doctrine of the gospel. Men generally think there are a thousand better ways for the purging of sin, than this by the blood of Christ, which they cannot understand; see Micah vi. 6, 7. It is mysterious in the application of it unto the souls and consciences of believers by the Holy Ghost; it is so in the spring of its efficacy, which is the oblation of it, for a propitiation, and in its relation unto the new covenant, which first it establisheth, and then makes effectual unto this end. The work of it is gradual and imperceptible unto any thing but the eyes of faith, and diligent spiritual experience.

Again, it is so ordered by divine wisdom, as strictly to require, to begin, excite, and encourage, the utmost diligence of believers in a compliance with its efficacy unto the same end. What Christ did for us, he did without us, without our aid or concurrence. As God made us without ourselves, so Christ redeemed us; but what he doth in us, he doth also by us; what he works in a way of grace, we work in a way of duty: and our duty herein consists as in the continual exercise of all gracious habits, renewing, changing, and transforming the soul into the likeness of Christ (for he who hopes to see him, purifieth himself as he is pure), so also in universal, permanent, uninterrupted mortification unto the end, whereof we shall speak afterward. This also renders the work both mysterious and difficult. The improvement of afflictions unto the same end, is a principal part of the wisdom of faith; without which they can be of no spiritual use unto the souls of men.

This notion of the defilement of sin, and that of the necessity of its purification, were retained in the church of Rome; for they could not be lost, without not only a rejection of the Scripture, but the stifling of natural conceptions about them, which are indelibly fixed in the consciences of men. But spiritual light into the glory of the thing itself, or the mystical purification of sin, with an experience of the power and efficacy of the blood of Christ, as applied unto the consciences of believers unto that end, by the Holy Ghost, were lost amongst them. In vain shall we seek for any thing of this nature, either in their doctrine or their practice. Wherefore having lost the substance of this truth, and all experience of its power, to retain the use of its name, they have made sundry little images of it, creeping things, whereunto they ascribe the power of purging sin; such as holy water, pilgrimages, disciplines, masses, and various commutations. But they quickly found by experience, that these things would neither purify the heart, nor pacify the consciences of sinners, any more than the blood of bulls and of goats could do it under the law; yea, any more than the lustrations and expiations of sin amongst the heathen could effect it. Wherefore they have at length formed a more stated and specious image of it, to serve all the turns of convinced sinners; and this is a purgatory after this life; that is, a subterraneous place, and various means where, and whereby, the souls of men are purged from all their sins, and made meet for heaven, when the Lord Christ thinks meet to send for them, or the pope judges it fit to send them to him. Hereunto, let them pretend what they please, the people under their conduct do trust a thousand times more for the purging of their sins, than unto the blood of Christ: but it is only a cursed image of the virtue of it, set up to draw off the minds of poor sinners from seeking an interest in a participation of the efficacy of that blood for that end, which is to be obtained by faith alone; Rom. iii. 25. Only they have placed this image behind the curtain of mortality, that the cheat of it might not be discovered; none, who find themselves deceived by it, can come back to complain or warn others to take care of themselves; and it was in an especial manner suited unto their delusion, who lived in pleasures, or in the pursuit of unjust gain, without exercise

of afflictions in this world. From these two sorts of persons, by this engine they raised a revenue unto themselves, beyond that of kings or princes; for all the endowments of their religious houses and societies, were but commutations for the abatement of the fire of this purgatory. But whereas in itself it was a rotten post that could not stand or subsist, they were forced to prop it with many other imaginations; for unto this end to secure work for this purgatory, they coined the distinction of sin into mortal and venial; not as unto their end, with respect unto faith and repentance, nor as unto the degrees of sin with respect unto the aggravations, but as unto the nature of them; some of them being such, namely, those that are venial, as were capable of a purging expiation after this life, though men die without any repentance of them. And when this was done, they have cast almost all the sins that can be named under this order; and hereon this image is become an engine to disappoint the whole doctrine of the gospel, and to precipitate secure sinners into eternal ruin. And to strengthen this deceiving security, they have added another invention of a certain storehouse of ecclesiastical merits, the keys whereof are committed to the pope, to make application of them as he sees good unto the ease and relief of them that are in this purgatory. For whereas many of their church and communion have, as they say, done more good works than were needful for their salvation (which they have received upon a due balance of commutative justice), the surplusage is committed to the pope, to commute with it for the punishment of their sins, who are sent into purgatory to suffer for them; than which they could have found out no engine more powerful, to evacuate the efficacy of the blood of Christ, both as offered and as sprinkled, and therewith the doctrine of the gospel concerning faith and repentance. Moreover, to give it farther countenance (as one lie must be thatched with another, or it will quickly rain through), they have fancied a separation to be made between guilt and punishment, so as that when the guilt is fully remitted and pardoned, yet there may punishment remain on the account of sin. For this is the case of them in purgatory; their sins are pardoned, so as that the guilt of them shall not bind them over to eternal damnation, though 'the wages of sin

is death,' yet they must be variously punished for the sins that are forgiven. But as this is contradictory in itself, it being utterly impossible there should be any punishment properly so called, but where there is guilt as the cause of it, so it is highly injurious both to the grace of God and blood of Christ, in procuring and giving out such a lame pardon of sins, as should leave room for punishment next to that which is eternal. These are some of the rotten props which they have fixed on the minds of persons credulous and superstitious, terrified with guilt and darkness, to support this tottering deformed image, set up in the room of the efficacy of the blood of Christ, to purge the souls and consciences of believers from sin. But that whereby it is principally established and kept up, is the darkness, ignorance, guilt, fear, terror of conscience, accompanied with a love of sin, that the most among them are subject and obnoxious unto, being disquieted, perplexed, and tormented with these things, and utterly ignorant of the true and only way of their removal and deliverance from them, they greedily embrace this sorry provision for their present ease and relief, being accommodated unto the utmost that human or diabolical craft can extend unto, to abate their fear, ease their torments, and to give security unto their superstitious minds. And hereby it is become to be the life and soul of their religion, diffusing itself into all the parts and concerns of it, more trusted unto than either God, or Christ, or the gospel.

Spiritual light and experience, with the consequents of them in peace with God, will safeguard the minds of believers from bowing down to this horrid image, though the acknowledgments of its divinity should be imposed on them with craft and force, otherwise it will not be done; for without this, there will a strong inclination and disposition, arising from a mixture of superstitious fear and love of sin, possess the minds of men to close with this pretended relief and satisfaction. The foundation of our preservation herein lies in spiritual light, or an ability of mind, from supernatural illumination, to discern the beauty, glory, and efficacy of the purging of our sins by the blood of Christ; when the glory of the wisdom and grace of God, of the love and grace of Christ, of the power of the Holy Ghost herein, is made manifest unto us, we shall despise all the paintings of this

invention, Dagon will fall before the ark; and all these things do gloriously shine forth and manifest themselves unto believers in this mysterious way of purging all our sins by the blood of Christ. Hereon will ensue an experience of the efficacy of this heavenly truth in our own souls. There is no man whose heart and ways are cleansed by the blood of Christ, through the effectual application of it by the Holy Spirit, in the ordinance of the gospel, but he hath or may have a refreshing experience of it in his own soul, and by the power which is communicated therewith, he is stirred up unto all that exercise of faith, and all those duties of obedience, whereby the work of purifying and cleansing the whole person may be carried on toward perfection: see 2 Cor. vii. 1. 1 Thess. v. 23. 1 John iii. 3. And he who is constantly engaged in that work with success, will see the folly and vanity of any other pretended way for the purging of sins here or hereafter. The consequent of these things is peace with God, for they are assured pledges of our justification and acceptance with him, and being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and where this is attained by the gospel, the whole fabric of purgatory falls to the ground, for it is built on these foundations, that no assurance of the love of God, or of a justified state, can be obtained in this life: for if it may be so, there can be no use of purgatory. This then will assuredly keep the souls of believers in a contempt of that which is nothing but a false relief for sinners, under disquietment of mind for want of peace with God.

11. Some other instances of the same abomination I shall yet mention, but with more brevity, and sundry others must at present be passed over without a discovery. It is the known method of gospel faith and obedience, the way of God's dealing with believers in the covenant of grace, that after their initiation and implantation into Christ, they should labour to thrive and grow in grace, by its continual exercise, until they come to be strengthened and confirmed therein. And this in the ordinary way of God's dealing with the church, they shall never fail of, unless it be through their own neglect: for there are many divine promises to this purpose, and it lies in the nature of the things themselves: for the seeds of grace are of that kind of habits, which will be increased and strengthened by exercise. Wherefore this con-

firmation in grace, is that whereof believers have a blessed experience.

This truth in general of an implantation into Christ, and the ensuing confirmation in grace, is universally assented unto, none can deny it, without denying the whole doctrine of the gospel. But the sense and experience of it was lost amongst them of whom we treat; yet would they not forego the profession of the principle itself, which would have proclaimed them apostates from the grace of Christ: wherefore they formed an image of it, or images of both its distinct parts, which they could manage unto their own ends, and such as the carnal minds of men could readily comply with, and rest in. As in the other sacrament they turned the outward signs into the things signified; so in this of baptism, they make it to stand in the stead of the thing itself, which is to make it, if not an idol, yet an image of it. The outward participation of that ordinance with them is regeneration, and implantation into Christ, without any regard unto the internal grace that is signified thereby; so that which in itself is a sacred figure, is made an image to delude the souls of men.

And that which they would impose in the room of spiritual confirmation in grace, is yet more strange. The image which they set up hereof is episcopal imposition of hands. When one that hath been baptized can answer some few questions out of a catechism, though he be very ignorant, and openly vicious in his conversation, by this laying on of hands he is confirmed in grace.

It may be some will say, there is no great matter one way or other in things of this sort; they may be suffered to pass at what rate they will in this world. I confess I am not so minded. If there be any thing in them but mere formality and custom, if they are trusted unto as the things whose names they bear, they are pernicious unto the souls of men: for if all that are outwardly baptized, should thereon judge themselves implanted into Christ, without regard unto the internal washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; and all who have had this imposition of hands, should without more ado, suppose themselves confirmed in grace, they are in the ready way to eternal ruin.

12. It is granted among all Christians, that all our helps,

our relief, our deliverance from sin, Satan, and the world, are from Christ alone.

This is included in all his relations unto the church, in all his offices, and the discharge of them; and is the express doctrine of the gospel. It is no less generally acknowledged, at least the Scripture is no less clear and positive in it, that we receive and derive all our supplies of relief from Christ by faith, other ways of the participation of any thing from him, the Scripture knoweth not. Wherefore it is our duty on all occasions to apply ourselves unto him by faith, for all supplies, reliefs, and deliverances: but these men can find no life nor power herein, at least if they grant that somewhat might be done this way, yet they know not how to do it, being ignorant of the life of faith, and the due exercise of it. They must have a way more ready and easy, exposed to the capacities and abilities of all sorts of persons good and bad, yea, that will serve the turn of the worst of men unto these ends. An image therefore must be set up for common use, instead of this spiritual application unto Christ for relief, and this is the making of the sign of the cross. Let a man but make the sign of the cross on his forehead, his breast, or the like, which he may as easily do as take up or cast away a straw, and there is no more required to engage Christ unto his assistance at any time. And the virtues which they ascribe hereunto are innumerable, but this also is an idol, a teacher of lies, invented and set up for no other end, but to satisfy the carnal minds of men, with a presumptuous supposition, in the neglect of the spiritually laborious exercise of faith; an experience of the work of faith in the derivation of all supplies of spiritual life, grace, and strength, with deliverance and supplies from Jesus Christ, will secure believers from giving heed unto this trifling deceit.

13. One thing more amongst many others of the same sort may be mentioned. It is a notion of truth which derives from the light of nature, That those who approach unto God in divine worship, should be careful that they be pure and clean, without any offensive defilements.

This the heathens themselves give testimony unto, and God confirmed it in the institutions of the law. But what are these defilements and pollutions which make us unmeet

to approach unto the presence of God, how and by what means we may be purified and cleansed from them, the gospel alone declares. And it doth, in opposition unto all other ways and means of it, plainly reveal, that it is by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon our consciences, so to purge them from 'dead works, that we may serve the living God : ' see Heb. ix. 14. x. 19—21. But this is a thing mysterious, nothing but spiritual light and saving faith can direct us herein. Men destitute of them could never attain an experience of purification in this way. Wherefore they retained the notion of truth itself, but made an image of it for their use, with a neglect of the thing itself. And this was the most ludicrous that could be imagined ; namely, the sprinkling of themselves and others with that they call holy water, when they go into the places of sacred worship ; which yet also they borrowed from the Pagans ; so stupid and sottish are the minds of men, so dark and ignorant of heavenly things, that they have suffered their souls to be deceived and ruined by such vain superstitious trifles.

This discourse hath already proceeded unto a greater length than was at first intended ; and would be so much more, should we look into all parts of this chamber of imagery, and expose to view all the abominations in it. I shall therefore put a close unto it, in one or two instances, wherein the church of Rome doth boast itself as retaining the truth and power of the gospel in a peculiar manner, whereas in very deed they have destroyed them, and set up corrupt images of their own, in their stead.

14. The first of these is the doctrine and grace of mortification.

That this is not only an important evangelical duty, but also of indispensable necessity unto salvation, all who have any thing of Christian religion in themselves must acknowledge. It is also clearly determined in the Scripture, both what is the nature of it, with its causes, and in what acts and duties it doth consist. For it is frequently declared to be the crucifying of the body of sin with all the lusts thereof. For mortification must be the bringing of something to death ; and this is sin, and the dying of sin consists in the casting out of all vicious habits and inclinations, arising from the original depravation of nature ; it is the weakening and gra-

duate extirpation, or destruction of them, in their roots, principles, and operations: whereby the soul is set at liberty to act universally from the contrary principle of spiritual life and grace. The means on the part of Christ, whereby this is wrought and effected in believers, is the communication of his Spirit unto them, to make an effectual application of the virtue of his death, unto the death of sin; for it is by his Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the flesh, and the flesh itself, and that as we are implanted by him into the likeness of the death of Christ. By virtue thereof, we are crucified, and made dead unto sin; in the declaration of which things the Scripture doth abound. The means of it on the part of believers, is the exercise of faith in Christ, as crucified; whereby they derive virtue from him, for the crucifying of the body of death: and this exercise of faith is always accompanied with diligence and perseverance in all holy duties of prayer, with fasting, godly sorrow, daily renewed repentance, with a continual watch against all the advantages of sin. Herein consists principally that spiritual warfare and conflict that believers are called unto, this is all the killing work which the gospel requires. That of killing other men for religion, is of a latter date, and another original. And there is nothing in the way of their obedience, wherein they have more experience of the necessity, power, and efficacy, of the graces of the gospel.

This principle of truth concerning the necessity of mortification is retained in the church of Rome; yea, she pretends highly unto it, above any other Christian society. The mortification of their devotionists, is one of the principal arguments which they plead to draw unwary souls over unto their superstition. Yet in the height of their pretences unto it, they have lost all experience of its nature, with the power and efficacy of the grace of Christ therein, and have, therefore, framed an image of it unto themselves. For,

(1.) They place the eminency and height of it in a monastical life, and pretended retirement from the world. But this may be, hath been, in all or the most, without the least real work of mortification in their souls: for there is nothing required in the strictest rules of these monastic votaries, but may be complied withal, without the least effectual operation of the Holy Spirit in their minds, in the applica-

tion of the virtue of the death of Christ unto them ; besides, the whole course of life which they commend under this name, is neither appointed in, nor approved by, the gospel. And some of those who have been most renowned for their severities therein, were men of blood, promoting the cruel slaughter of multitudes of Christians upon the account of their profession of the gospel, in whom there could be no one evangelical grace ; for no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

(2.) The ways and means which they prescribe and use for the attaining of it, are such as are no way directed by the divine wisdom of Christ in the Scripture ; such as multiplied confessions to priests, irregular ridiculous fastings, penances, self-macerations of the body, unlawful vows, self-devised rules of discipline and habits, with the like trinkets innumerable. Hence, whatever their design be, they may say of it in the issue, what Aaron said of his idol, ‘ I cast the gold into the fire, and there came out this calf :’ they have brought forth only an image of mortification, diverting the minds of men from seeking after that which is really and spiritually so. And under this pretence, they have formed a state and condition of life, that hath filled the world with all manner of sins and wickedness ; and many of those who have attained unto some of the highest degrees of this mortification, on their principles, and by the means designed unto that end, have been made ready thereby for all sorts of wickedness.

Wherefore, the mortification which they retain, and whereof they boast, is nothing but a wretched image of that which is truly so, substituted in its room, and embraced by such, as had never attained any experience of the nature or power of gospel-grace in the real mortification of sin.

15. The same is to be said concerning good works ; the second evangelical duty whereof they boast.

The necessity of these good works unto salvation, according unto men’s opportunities and abilities, is acknowledged by all. And the glory of our profession in this world, consisteth in our abounding in them ; but their principle, their nature, their motives, their use, their ends are declared and limited in the Scripture, whereby they are distinguished from what may seem materially the same, in those which

may be wrought by unbelievers. In brief, they are the acts and duties of true believers only; and they are in them effects of divine grace, or the operation of the Holy Ghost; for they 'are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained, that they should walk in them.' But the principal mystery of their glory, which the Scripture insists upon, is, that although they are necessary, as a means unto the salvation of believers, yet are they utterly excluded from any influence unto the justification of sinners; so there was never any work evangelically good, performed by any, who were not before freely justified.

Unto these good works, those with whom we have to do, lay a vehement claim, as though they were the only patrons of them, and pleaders for them: but they have also excluded them out of Christian religion, and set up a deformed image of them, in defiance of God, of Christ, and the gospel: for the works they plead for, are such, as so far proceed from their own free will, as to render them meritorious in the sight of God. They have confined them partly unto acts of superstitious devotion, partly unto those of charity, and principally unto those that are not so; such are the building of monasteries, nunneries, and such pretended religious houses, for the maintenance of swarms of monks and friars, filling the world with superstition and debauchery. They make them meritorious, satisfactory, yea, some of them, which they call of supererogation, above all that God requireth of us, and the causes of our justification before God. They ascribe unto them a condignity of the heavenly reward, making it of works, and so not of grace, with many other defiling imaginations; but whatever is done from these principles, and for these ends, is utterly foreign unto those good works which the gospel enjoineth, as a part of our new or evangelical obedience. But having, as in other cases, lost all sense and experience of the power and efficacy of the grace of Christ, in working believers unto this duty of obedience, unto the glory of God, and benefit of mankind, they have set up the image of them, in defiance of Christ, his grace, and his gospel.

These are some of the abominations which are pourtrayed on the walls of the chamber of imagery in the church of Rome; and more will be added in the consideration of the

image of jealousy itself, which, God willing, shall ensue in another way. These are the shadows which they bet ke themselves unto, in the loss of spiritual light to discern the truth and glory of the mystery of the gospel, and the want of an experience of their power and efficacy unto all the ends of the life of God, in their own minds and souls. And although they are all of them expressly condemned in the letter of the Scripture, which is sufficient to secure the minds of true believers from the admission of them, yet their establishment against all pleas, pretences, and force, for a compliance with them, depends on their experience of the power of every gospel truth unto its proper end, in communicating unto us the grace of God, and transforming our minds into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.