

ANIMADVERSIONS ON A TREATISE

ENTITLED

FIAT LUX:

OR,

A GUIDE IN DIFFERENCES OF RELIGION,

BETWEEN

PAPIST AND PROTESTANT, PRESBYTERIAN
AND INDEPENDENT.

BY

JOHN OWEN

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TO THE READER.

READER,

THE treatise, entitled 'Fiat Lux,' which thou wilt find examined in the ensuing discourse, was lent unto me, not long since, by an honourable person, with a request to return an answer unto it. It had not been many hours in my hand, before the same desire was seconded by others. Having made no engagement unto the person of whom I received it, the book, after some few days, was remanded; yet, as it fell out, not before I had finished my animadversions upon it. But before I could send my papers to the press, I heard of a second edition of that treatise; which also occasionally coming to my hands, I perceived it had been printed some good while before I saw or heard of the first. Finding the bulk of the discourse increased, I thought it needful to go through it once more, to see if any thing of moment were added to that edition which I had considered, or any alterations made by the author's second thoughts. This somewhat discouraged me, that, my first book being gone, I could not compare the editions, but must trust to my memory, none of the best, as to what was, or was not, in that I had perused. But not designing any use in a mere comparing of the editions, but only to consider, whether in either of them any thing material was remaining, either not heeded by me, in my hasty passage through the first, or added in the second, undiscussed; I thought it of no great concernment to inquire again after the first book. What

of that nature offered itself unto me, I cast my thoughts upon, into the margin of what was before written, inserting it into the same continued discourse. I therefore desire the reader, that he may not suspect himself deceived, to take notice, that whatever quotations out of that treatise he meets withal, the number of pages throughout, answers the first edition of it.

Of the author of that discourse, and his design therein, I have but little to premise. He seems at first view to be a Naphthali, a hind let loose, and to give goodly words. But though the voice we hear from him sometimes, be the voice of Jacob; yet the hands that put forth themselves, in his progress, are the hands of Esau. Moderation is pretended, but his counsels for peace, centre in an advice for the extermination of the Ishmael (as he esteems it) of Protestancy. We know full well, that the words he begins to flourish withal, are not ‘*Vox ultima Papæ.*’ A discovery of the inconsistency of his real and pretended design, is one part of our business. Indeed, an attentive reader, cannot but quickly discern, that persuasions unto moderation in different professions of Christian religion, with a relinquishment of all others to an embracement of popery, be they never so finely smoothed, must needs interfere. But yet with words, at such real variance among themselves, doth our author hope to impose his sentiments in religion, on the minds of noble and ingenuous persons, not yet accustomed to those severer thoughts and studies, which are needful to form an exact judgment in things of this nature. That he should upon any obtain both his ends, moderation, and popery, is impossible. No two things are more inconsistent. Let him cease the pursuit of the latter, and we will follow after the former with him, or without him. And if any man be so unhappily simple, as to think to come to moderation in religion-feuds, by turning Romanist, I

shall leave him for his conviction to the mistress of such wise men. My present business is, as I find, to separate between his pleas for the moderation pretended, and those for popery really aimed at. What force there may be in his reasons, for that which he would not have, I shall not examine, but shall manifest that there is none in them he uses for what he would. And, reader, if this hasty attempt for the prevention of the application of them find acceptance with thee, I shall, it may be, ere long, give thee a full account of the new ways and principles, which our author, and the men of the same persuasion, have of late years resolved on, for the promotion of their cause and interest.

Farewell.

P R E F A C E.

CONSIDERING the condition of affairs in these nations, in reference to the late miscarriages, and present distempers of men about religion; it was no hard conjecture, that some would improve the advantage, seeming so fairly to present itself unto them, unto ends of their own: men of prudence, ability, and leisure, engaged by all bonds imaginable in the pursuit of any special interest, need little minding of the common ways of wisdom for its promotion. They know, that he that would fashion iron into the image and likeness which he hath fancied, must strike whilst it is hot; when the adventitious efficacy of the fire it hath admitted, makes it pliable to that whereunto in its own nature, it is most opposite. Such seems to be, in these days, the temper of men in religion, from those flames wherewith some have been scorched, others heated, all provoked, and made fit to receive new impressions, if wisely hammered. Neither was it a difficult prognostication for any one to foretell what arguments and mediums would be made use of, to animate and enliven the persuasions of men, who had either right, or confidence enough, to plead or pretend a disinterest in our miscarriages, for an embracement of their profession. Commonly with men that indulge to passion and distempers, as the most of men are apt to do, the last provocation blots out the remembrance of preceding crimes no less heinous. And whatever to the contrary is pretended, men usually have not that indignation against principles which have produced evils they have only heard or read of, that they

have against practices under which they have personally suffered. Hence it might easily be expected, that the Romanists, supposing, at least by the help of those paroxysms they discern amongst us, that the miscarriages of some of their adversaries would prove a garment large enough to cover and hide their own, would, with much confidence, improve them to their special advantage. Nor is it otherwise come to pass. This persuasion and suitable practice thereon runs through all the veins of the discourse we have proposed to consideration; making that seem quick and sprightly, which otherwise would have been but a heap, or a carcase.

That then this sort of men would not only be angling in the lesser brooks of our troubled waters, endeavouring to inveigle wandering, loose, and discontented individuals, which hath been their constant employment; but also come with their nets into our open streams; was the thoughts of all men, who count themselves concerned to think of such things as these. There is scarce a forward emissary amongst them, who cries not in such a season, ‘*An ego occasionem mihi ostentatam, tantam, tam bonam, tam optatam, tam insperatam, amitterem?*’ What baits and tacklings they would principally make use of, was also foreknown. But the way and manner which they would fix on for the management of their design, now displayed in this discourse, lay not, I confess, under an ordinary prospect. For, as to what course the wisdom of men will steer them, in various alterations, *μάντις ἄριστος ὅστις εἰκάζει καλῶς*, ‘He is no mean prophet that can but indifferently guess.’ But yet there wanted not some beams of light to guide men in the exercise of their stocastic faculty, even as to this also. That accommodation of religion, and all its concernments unto the humours, fancies, and conversations of men, wherewith some of

late have pleased themselves, and laid snares for the ruin of others, did shrewdly portend, what in this attempt of the same party we were to expect. Of this nature is that poetical strain of devotion so much applauded and prevailing in our neighbour-kingdom; whereby men, ignorant of the heavenly power of the gospel, not only to resist, but to subdue the strongest lusts and most towering imaginations of the sons of men, do labour in soft and delicate rhymes, to temperate religion unto the loose and airy fancies of persons wholly indulging their minds to vanity and pleasure. A fond attempt of men not knowing how to manage the sublime, spiritual, severe truths of the gospel, to the ingenerating of faith and devotion in the souls of sinners; but yet that which they suppose is the only way left them to prevent the keeping of religion, and the most of their party at a perpetual distance. So Mahomet saw it necessary to go to the mountain, when the mountain for all his calling would not come to him. And of the same sort is the greatest part of the casuistical divinity of the Jesuits. A mere accommodation of the principles of religion to the filthy lusts and wicked lives of men, who on no other terms would resign the conduct of their souls unto them, seems to be their main design in it. On these effects of others, he that would have pondered what a wise and observing person of the same interest with them, might apprehend of the present tempers, distempers, humours, interests, provocations, fancies, lives of them, with whom he intends to deal, could not have failed of some advantage in his conjectures at the way and manner wherein he would proceed in treating of them. It is of the many, of whom we speak; on whose countenances, and in whose lives, he that runs may read provocations from former miscarriages, supine negligence of spiritual and eternal concernments, ignorance of things past beyond

what they can remember in their own days, sloth in the disquisition of the truth, willingness to be accommodated with a religion pretended secure and unconcerned in present disputes, that may save them and their sins together without farther trouble, delight in quaint language and poetical strains of eloquence, whereunto they are accustomed at the stage, with sundry other inward accoutrements of mind not unlike to these. To this frame and temper of spirit, this composition of humours, it was not improbable, but that those who should first enter into the lists in this design, would accommodate their style and manner of procedure; ‘*Nec spem fefellit expectatio.*’ The treatise under consideration, hath fully answered whatever was of conjecture in this kind. Frequent repetitions of late provocations, with the crimes of the provokers; confident and undue assertions of things past in the days of old; large promises of security temporal and eternal, to nations and all individuals in them; of facility in coming to perfection in religion without more pains of teaching, learning, or fear of opposition; all interwoven with tart sarcasms, pleasant diversions, pretty stories of himself and others, flourished over with a smooth and handsome strain of rhetoric, do apparently make up the bulk of our author’s discourse. Nor is the romance of his conversion, much influenced by the tinkling of bells, and sweeping of churches, suited unto any other principles: a matter, I confess, so much the more admirable, because, as I suppose it, in the way mentioned, to have been his singular lot and good hap; so it was utterly impossible, that for five hundred, I may say a thousand years after Christ, any man should on these motives be turned to any religion, most of them being not in those days ‘*in rerum natura.*’ A way of handling religion he hath fixed on, which, as I suppose, he will himself acknowledge, that the first planters of it were ignorant of;

so I will promise him, that if he can for a thousand years after they have began their work, instance in any one book of an approved Catholic author, written with the same design that this is, he shall have one proselyte to his profession; which is more, I suppose, than otherwise he will obtain by his learned labour. That this is no other, but to persuade men, that they can find no certainty or establishment for their faith in Scripture, but must for it devolve themselves solely on the authority of the pope, will afterward be made to appear, nor will himself deny it. But it may be, it is unreasonable, that when men are eagerly engaged in the pursuit of their interest, we should think from former presidents, or general rules of sobriety, with that reverence which is due to the things of the great and holy God, to impose upon them the way and manner of their progress. The event and end aimed at, is that which we are to respect; the management of their business in reference to this world and that which is to come, is their own concernment. No man, I suppose, who hath any acquaintance with the things he treats about, can abstain from smiling, to observe how dexterously he turns and winds himself in his cloak (which is not every ones work to dance in), how he gilds over the more comely parts of his Amasia, with brave suppositions, presumptions, and stories of things past and present, where he has been in his days; covering her deformities with a perpetual silence; ever and anon bespattering the first reformation and reformers in his passage. Yea, their contentment must needs proceed to a high degree of complacence, in whom compassion for the woful state of them whom so able a man judgeth like to be enveigled by such flourishes and pretences, doth not excite to other affections. The truth is, if ever there blew a wind of doctrine on unwary souls *ἐν κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδεῖαν τῆς πλάνης*, we have

an instance of it in this discourse. Such a disposition of cogging slights, various crafts in enticing words, is rarely met with. Many, I think, are not able to take this course in handling the sacred things of God, and eternal concerns of men; and more, I hope, dare not. But our author is another man's servant; I shall not judge him, he 'stands or falls to his own master.' That which the importunity of some noble friends hath compelled me unto is, to offer somewhat to the judgment of impartial men, that may serve to unmask him of his gilded pretences, and to lay open the emptiness of those prejudices and presumptions, wherewith he makes such a tinkling noise in the ears of unlearned and unstable persons. Occasion of serious debate is very little administered by him; that which is the task assigned me, I shall as fully discharge as the few hours allotted to its performance will allow.

In my dealing with him, I shall not make it my business to defend the several parties, whereinto the men of his contest are distributed by our author as such; not all, not any of them. It is the common Protestant cause which, in and by all of them, he seeks to oppose so far as they are interested and concerned therein; they fall all of them within the bounds of our present defensative. Wherein they differ one from another, or any, or all of them do or may swerve from the principles of the Protestant religion, I have nothing to do with them in this business: and if any be so far addicted to their parties, wherein, it may be, they are in the wrong, as to choose rather not to be vindicated and pleaded for, in that wherein with others I know they are in the right, than to be joined in the same plea with them from whom in part they differ, I cannot help it. I pretend not their commission for what I do; and they may, when they please, disclaim my appearance for them. I suppose by this course I shall please very few,

and I am sure I shall displease some, if not many ; I aim at neither, but to profit all. I have sundry reasons for not owning or avowing particularly any party in this discourse, so as to judge the rest, wherewith I am not bound to acquaint the world. One of them I shall, and I hope it is such a one, as may suffice ingenuous and impartial men, and thereunto some others may be added. The gentleman whose discourse I have undertaken the consideration of, was pleased to front and close it with a part of a speech of my lord chancellor ; and his placing of it manifests how he uses it. He salutes it in his entrance, and takes his leave also of it, never regarding its intendment, until coming to the close of his treatise ; to his 'salve' in the beginning, he adds an 'æternum vale.' That the mention of such an excellent discourse, the best part in both our books, might not be lost, I have suited my plea and defensative of protestantism, to the spirit and principles and excellent ratiocinations of it ; behind that shield I lay the manner of my proceeding, where, if it be not safe, I care not what becomes of it. Besides, it is not for what the men of his title page are differenced amongst themselves, that our author blames them ; but for what he thinks they agree in too well, in reference to the church of Rome ; nor doth he insist on the evils of their contests to persuade them to peace amongst themselves, or to prevail over them to centre in any one persuasion about which they contend ; but to lead them all over to the pope. And if any of them with whom our author deals and sports himself in his treatise, are fallen off from the fundamental denominating principles of Protestant religion, as some of them seem to be, they come not within the compass of our plea, seeing, as such, they are not dealt with by our author. It is the Protestant religion in general, which he charges with all irregularities, uncertainties, and evils, that he expatiates

about; and from the principles of it, doth he endeavour to withdraw us. As to the case then under debate with him, it is enough, if we manifest that that profession of religion is not liable or obnoxious to any of the crimes or inconveniences by him objected unto it; and that the remedy of our evils, whether real or imaginary, which he would impose upon us, is so far from being specifical towards their cure, that it is indeed far worse than the disease pretended: to the full as undesirable as the cutting of the throat, for the cure of a sore finger. There is no reason therefore in this business, wherefore I should avow any one persuasion about which Protestants that consent in general in the same confession of faith, may have or actually have difference amongst themselves; especially, if I do also evince there is no cogency in them, to cause any of them to renounce the truth wherein they all agree.

Much less shall I undertake to plead for, excuse, or palliate the miscarriages of any part or parties of men during our late unhappy troubles: nor shall I make much use of what offers itself in a way of recrimination. Certain it is, that as to this gentleman's pretensions, sundry things might be insisted on, that would serve to allay the fierceness of his spirit, in his management of other men's crimes to his own ends and purposes. The sound of our late evils, as it is known to all the world, began in Ireland, amongst his good Roman Catholics, who were blessed from Rome into rebellion and murder, somewhat before any drop of blood was shed in England or Scotland,

——— *Oculis male lippus inunctis*
Cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum
Quam aut Aquila aut Serpens Epidaurius?

Let them that are innocent throw stones at others; Roman Catholics are unfit to be employed in that work. But it was never judged either a safe or honest way, to

judge of any religion by the practices of some that have professed it. Men by doctrines and principles, not doctrines by men, was the trial of old. And if this be a rule to guide our thoughts in reference to any religion, namely, the principles which it avows and asserts, I know none that can vie with the Romanists in laying foundations of, and making provision for, the disturbance of the civil peace of kingdoms and nations. For the present, unto the advantage taken by our author from our late unnatural wars and tumults to reflect on protestancy, I shall only say, that if the religion of sinners be to be quitted and forsaken, I doubt that professed by the pope must be cashiered for company.

Least of all, shall I oppose myself to that moderation in the pursuit of our religious interests, which he pretends to plead for. He that will plead against mutual forbearance in religion, can be no Christian, at least no good one. Much less shall I impeach what he declaims against, that abominable principle of disturbing the peace of kingdoms and nations, under a pretence of defending, reforming, or propagating of our faith and opinions. But I know that neither the commendation of the former, nor the decrying of the latter, is the proper work of our author; for as the present principles and past practices of the men of that church and religion which he defends, will not allow him to entertain such hard thoughts of the latter as he pretends unto; so as to the former, where he has made some progress in his work, and either warmed his zeal beyond his first intendment for its discovery, or has gotten some confidence that he hath obtained a better acceptance with his reader, than at the entrance of his discourse he could lay claim unto, laying aside those counsels of moderation and forbearance which he had gilded over, he plainly declares, that the only way of procuring peace amongst us, is by the extermination of protestancy. For

having compared the Roman Catholic to Isaac, the proper heir of the house, and Protestants to Ishmael vexing him in his own inheritance, the only way to obtain peace he tells us, is, ‘*Projice ancillam cum filio suo* ;’ ‘Cast out the handmaid with her son ;’ that is, in the gloss of their former practices, either burn them at home, or send them to starve abroad. There is not the least reason then, why I should trouble myself with his flourishes and stories, his characters of us and our neighbour nations, in reference unto moderation and forbearance in religion ; that is not the thing by him intended ; but is only used to give a false alarm to his unwary readers, whilst he marches away with a rhetorical persuasive unto popery. In this it is wherein alone I shall attend his motions ; and if, in our passage through his other discourses, we meet with any thing lying in a direct tendency unto his main end, though pretended to be used to another purpose, it shall not pass without some animadversion.

Also, I shall be far from contending with our author in those things wherein his discourse excelleth, and that upon the two general reasons of will and ability. Neither could I compare with him in them if I would, nor would if I could. His quaint rhetoric, biting sarcasms, fine stories, smooth expressions of his high contempt of them with whom he has to do ; with many things of that sort, the repetition of whose names hath got the reputation of incivility, are things wherein, as I cannot keep pace with him (for ‘*illud possumus quod jure possumus*’), so I have no mind to follow him.

ANIMADVERSIONS ON A TREATISE

ENTITLED

FIAT LUX.

CHAP. I.

Our author's preface. And his method.

IT is not any disputation, or rational debate, about differences in religion, that our author intends; nor, until towards the close of his treatise, doth he at all fix directly on any thing in controversy between Romanists and Protestants. In the former parts of his discourse, his design is sometimes covered, always carried on in the way of a rhetorical declamation; so that it is not possible, and is altogether needless, to trace all the particular passages and expressions as they lie scattered up and down in his discourse, which he judgeth of advantage unto him in the management of the work he has undertaken. Some suppositions there are which lie at the bottom of his whole superstructure, quickening the oratory and rhetorical part of it (undoubtedly its best), which he chose rather to take for granted, than to take upon himself the trouble to prove. These being drawn forth and removed, whatever he hath built upon them, with all that paint and flourish wherewith it is adorned, will of itself fall to the ground. I shall then first briefly discuss what he offers as to the method of his procedure, and then take this for my own: namely, I shall draw out and examine the fundamental principles of his oration, upon whose trial the whole must stand or fall, and then pass through the severals of the whole treatise, with such animadversions, as what remaineth of it may seem to require.

His method he speaks unto, p. 13. ‘My method,’ saith
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he, 'I do purposely conceal, to keep therein a more handsome decorum: for he that goes about to part a fighting fray, cannot observe a method, but must turn himself this way and that, as occasion offers; be it a corporal or mental duel. So did good St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, which, of all his other epistles, as it hath most of solidity, so it hath least of method in the context: the reason is,' &c. These are handsome words, of a man that seems to have good thoughts of himself and his skill in parting frays. But yet I see not how they hang well together, as to any congruity of their sense and meaning. Surely, he that useth no method, nor can use any, cannot conceal his method; no, though he purpose so to do. No man's purpose to hide, will enable him to hide that which is not. If he hath concealed his method, he hath used one; if he hath used none, he hath not concealed it: for, that which is wanting cannot be numbered. Nor hath he by this, or any other means, kept any 'handsome decorum:' not having once spoken the sense, or according to the principles of him whom he undertakes to personate; which is such an observance of a decorum as a man shall not lightly meet with. Nor hath he discovered any mind so to part a fray, as that the contenders might hereafter live quietly one by another; his business being avowedly to persuade as many as he can to a conjunction in one party, for the destruction of all the rest. And whatever he saith of 'not using a method,' that method of his discourse, with the good words it is set off withal, is the whole of his interest in it. He pretends indeed, to pass through 'loca nullius ante Trita solo;' yet, setting aside his management of the advantages given him by the late miserable tumults in these nations; and the provision he has made for the entertainment of his reader, are worts boiled a hundred times over, as he knows well enough. And, for the method which he would have us believe not to be, and yet to be concealed, it is rather *μεθοδεῖα* than *μεθόδος*; rather a crafty various distribution of enticing words, and plausible pretences to inveigle and delude men unlearned and unstable, than any decent contexture of, or fair progress in, a rational discourse, or regular disposition of nervous topics, to convince or persuade the minds of men, who have their eyes in their heads. I shall therefore little trouble myself farther about it, but

only discover it as occasion shall require ; for the discovery of sophistry is its proper confutation.

However, the course he steers is the same that good St. Paul used in his Epistle to the Romans, which hath, as he tells us, ‘most of solidity and least of method of all his Epistles.’ I confess I knew not before, that his church had determined which of St. Paul’s epistles had ‘most of solidity,’ which least. For I have such good thoughts of him, that, I suppose, he would not do it of his own head ; nor do I know that he is appointed umpire to determine upon the writings, that came all of them by inspiration from God, which is most solid. This therefore must needs be the sense of his church, which he may be acquainted with twenty ways that I know not of. And here his Protestant visor, which by and by he will utterly cast off, fell off from him, I presume at unawares. That he be no more so entrapped, I wish he would take notice against the next time he hath occasion to personate a Protestant ; that although for method purely adventitious, and belonging to the external manner of writing, Protestants may affirm, that one epistle is more methodical than another, according to those rules of method, which ourselves, or other worms of the earth like to ourselves, have invented ; yet, for their solidity, which concerns the matter of them, and efficacy, for conviction, they affirm them all equal. Nor is he more happy in what he intimates of the immethodicalness of that epistle to the Romans : for, as it is acknowledged by all good expositors, that the apostle useth a most clear, distinct, and exact method in that epistle, whence most theological systems are composed by the rule of it ; so our author himself assigneth such a design unto him, and the use of such ways and means in the prosecution of it, as argues a diligent observance of a method. I confess he is deceived in the occasion and intention of the epistle, by following some few late Roman expositors, neglecting the analysis given of it by the ancients : but we may pass that by ; because I find his aim in mentioning a false scope and design, was not to acquaint us with his mistake, but to take an advantage to fall upon our ministers ; and, I think, a little too early, for one so careful to keep a handsome decorum, for ‘culling out of this epistle, texts against the Christian doctrine of good works done in Christ, by his special grace, out of obedience

to his command, with a promise of everlasting reward and intrinsic acceptability thence accruing.' Thus we see still

*Inceptis gravibus plerunque et magna professis
Purpureus late qui splendeat unus et alter
Assuitur pannus ; —
Sed nunc non erat his locus.*

Use of disputing has cast him, at the very entrance of his discourse, upon, as he supposeth, a particular controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics, quite besides his design and purpose ; but, instead of obtaining any advantage, by this transgression of his own rule, he is fallen upon a new misadventure ; and that so much the greater, because it evidently discovers somewhat in him besides mistake. I am sure I have heard as many of our ministers preach as he, and read as many of their books as he, yet I can testify, that I never heard or read them opposing ' the Christian doctrine of good works.' Often I have heard and found them pressing a universal obedience to the whole law of God, teaching men to abound in good works, pressing the indispensable necessity of them from the commands of law and gospel, encouraging men unto them by the blessed promises of acceptance and reward in Christ, declaring them to be the way of men's coming to the kingdom of heaven ; affirming, that all that believe are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and for men to neglect, to despise them, is wilfully to neglect their own salvation. But, ' opposing the Christian doctrine of good works ;' and that with ' sayings culled out of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans,' I never heard, I never read any Protestant minister. There is but one expression in that declaration of the doctrine of good works, which, he saith, Protestants oppose, used by himself, that they do not own ; and, that is their ' intrinsic acceptability : ' which I fear he doth not very well understand. If he mean by it, that there is in no good works an intrinsical worth and value, from their exact answerableness to the law, and proportion to the reward, so as on rules of justice to deserve and merit it ; he speaks daggers, and doth not himself believe what he says, it being contradictory ; for he lays their acceptability on the account of the promise. If he intend, that God having graciously promised to accept and receive them in Christ, they become thereupon acceptable and rewardable ; this, Protestant ministers teach

daily. Against the former explication of their acceptability, in reference to the justice of God, on their own account, and the justification of their persons that perform them, for them; I have often heard them speaking, but never with any authority, or force of argument, comparable to that used by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, to the same purpose. But this tale of Protestants opposing the Christian doctrine of good works, hath been so often told by the Romanists, that I am persuaded, some of them begin to believe it; however it be not only false, but from all circumstances, very incredible. And finding our author hugely addicted to approve any thing that passeth for current in his party, I will not charge him with a studied fraud; in the finding it so advantageous to his cause, he took hold of a very remote occasion to work an early prejudice in the minds of his readers, against them and their doctrine, whom he designeth to oppose. When he writes next, I hope he will mind the account we have all to make of what we do write and say, and be better advised, than to give countenance to such groundless slanders.

CHAP. II.

Heathen pleas. General principles.

WE have done with his method, or manner of proceeding; our next view shall be of those general principles and suppositions, which animate the parænetical part of his work, and whereon it is solely founded. And here I would entreat him not to be offended, if, in the entrance of this discourse I make bold to mind him, that the most, if not all, of his pleas, have been long since insisted on by a very learned man, in a case not much unlike this which we have in hand; and were also long since answered by one as learned as he, or as any the world saw in the age wherein he lived, or it may be since, to this day, though he died now 1400 years ago. The person I intend is Celsus the philosopher, who objected the very same things, upon the same general grounds, and ordered his objections in the same manner, against the Christians of old, as our author doth against the Protestants. And the an-

swer of Origen to his eight books, will save any man the labour of answering this one, who knows how to make application of general rules and principles, unto particular cases that may be regulated by them. Doth our author lay the cause of all the troubles, disorders, tumults, wars, wherewith the nations of Europe have been for some season, and are still, in some places, infested, on the Protestants? So doth Celsus charge all the evils, commotions, plagues, and famines, wherewith mankind in those days was much wasted, upon the Christians. Doth our author charge the Protestants, that by their breaking off from Rome, with schisms and seditions, they made way for others, on the same principles to break off seditiously from themselves? So did Celsus charge the Jews and Christians; telling the Jews, that by their seditious departure from the common worship and religion of the world, they made way for the Christians, a branch of themselves, to cast off them and their worship in like manner, and to set up for themselves: and, following on his objection, he applies it to the Christians, that they, departing from the Jews, had broached principles for others to improve into a departure from them; which is the sum of most that is pleaded with any fair pretence, by our author, against Protestants. Doth he insist upon the divisions of the Protestants, and to make it evident that he speaks knowingly, boast, that he is acquainted with their persons, and hath read the books of all sorts amongst them? So doth Celsus deal with the Christians, reproaching them with their divisions, discords, mutual animosities, disputes about God and his worship; boasting, that he had debated the matter with them, and read their books of all sorts. Hath he gathered a rhapsody of insignificant words, at least, as by him put together, out of the books of the Quakers, to reproach Protestants with their divisions? So did Celsus, out of the books and writings of the Gnostics, Ebionites, and Valentinians. Doth he bring in Protestants, pleading against the sects that are fallen from them, and these pleading against them, justifying the Protestants against them, but at length equally rejecting them all? So dealt Celsus with the Jews, Christians, and those that had fallen into singular opinions of their own. Doth he manage the arguments of the Jews against Christ, to intimate that we cannot well by Scripture prove him to

be so? The very same thing did Celsus, almost in the very words here used. Doth he declaim openly about the obscurity of divine things, the nature of God, the works of creation and providence, that we are not like to be delivered from it by books of poems, stories, plain letters? So doth Celsus. Doth he insist on the uncertainty of our knowing the Scripture to be from God; the difficulty of understanding it; its insufficiency to end men's differences about religion and the worship of God? The same doth Celsus at large, pleading the cause of paganism, against Christianity. Doth our author plead, that where, and from whom, men had their religion of old, there and with them they ought to abide, or to return unto them? The same doth Celsus, and that with pretences far more specious than those of our author. Doth he plead the quietness of all things in the world, the peace, the plenty, love, union, that were in the days before Protestants began to trouble all, as he supposeth, about religion? The same course steers Celsus, in his contending against Christians in general. Is there intimated by our author, a decay of devotion and reverence to religious things, temples, &c.? Celsus is large on this particular; the relinquishment of temples, discouragement of priests in their daily sacrifices, and heavenly contemplations, with other votaries; contempt of holy altars, images, and statues of worthies deceased, all heaven-bred ceremonies and comely worship by the means of Christians, he expatiates upon. Doth he profess love and compassion to his countrymen, to draw them off from their folly, to have been the cause of his writing? So doth Celsus. Doth he deride and scoff at the first reformers, with no less witty and biting sarcasms than those wherewith Aristophanes jeered Socrates on the stage? Celsus deals no otherwise with the first propagators of Christianity. Hath he taken pains to palliate and put new glosses and interpretations upon those opinions and practices in his religion, which seem most obnoxious to exception? The same work did Celsus undertake, in reference to his Pagan theology and worship. And in sundry other things may the parallel be traced; so that I may truly say, I cannot observe any thing of moment or importance of the nature of a general head or principle in this whole discourse made use of against Protestants, but that the same was used, as by others of old,

so in particular by Celsus, against the whole profession of Christianity. I will not be so injurious to our author, as once to surmise, that he took either aim or assistance in his work from so bitter a professed enemy of Christ Jesus, and the religion by him revealed; yet he must give me leave to reckon this coincidence of argumentation between them, amongst other instances that may be given, where a similitude of cause hath produced a great likeness, if not identity, in the reasonings of ingenious men. I could not satisfy myself without remarking this parallel; and perhaps, much more needs not to be added, to satisfy an unprejudiced reader in, or to, our whole business: for if he be one that is unwilling to forego his Christianity, when he shall see that the arguments that are used to draw him from his protestancy, are the very same in general, that wise men of old made use of to subvert that which he is resolved to cleave unto; he needs not much deliberation with himself what to do or say in this case, or be solicitous what he shall answer, when he is earnestly entreated to suffer himself to be deceived.

Of the pretences before mentioned, some with their genuine inferences, are the main principles of this whole discourse. And seeing they bear the weight of all the pleas, reasonings, and persuasions that are drawn from them, which can have no farther real strength and efficacy, than what is from them communicated unto them, I shall present them in one view to the reader, that he lose not himself in the maze of words, wherewith our author endeavours to lead him up and down, still out of his way; and that he may make a clear and distinct judgment of what is tendered to prevail upon him to desert that profession of religion wherein he is engaged. For, as I dare not attempt to deceive any man, though in matters incomparably of less moment than that treated about; so, I hope, no man can justly be offended, if in this I warn him to take heed to himself, that he be not deceived. And they are these that follow:

I. 'That we in these nations first received the Christian religion from Rome, by the mission and authority of the pope.'

II. 'That whence, and from whom, we first received our religion; there, and with them, we ought to abide, to them we must repair for guidance in all our concernments in it,

and speedily return to their rule and conduct, if we have departed from them.'

III. 'That the Roman profession of religion and practice in the worship of God, is every way the same as it was when we first received our religion from thence; nor can ever otherwise be.'

IV. 'That all things as to religion were quiet and in peace, all men in union and at agreement amongst themselves, in the worship of God, according to the mind of Christ, before the relinquishment of the Roman see by our forefathers.'

V. 'That the first reformers were the most of them sorry contemptible persons, whose errors were propagated by indirect means, and entertained for sinister ends.'

VI. 'That our departure from Rome hath been the cause of all our evils, and particularly of all those divisions which are at this day found amongst the Protestants, and which have been ever since the reformation.'

VII. 'That we have no remedy of our evils, no means of ending our differences, but by a return unto the rule of the Roman see.'

VIII. 'The Scripture upon sundry accounts is insufficient to settle us in the truth of religion, or to bring us to an agreement amongst ourselves; seeing it is, 1. Not to be known to be the word of God, but by the testimony of the Roman church; 2. Cannot be well translated into our vulgar language; 3. Is in itself obscure; and, 4. We have none to determine of the sense of it.'

IX. 'That the pope is a good man, one that seeks nothing but our good, that never did us harm, and hath the care and inspection of us committed unto him by Christ.'

X. 'That the devotion of the Catholics far transcends that of Protestants, nor is their doctrine or worship liable to any just exception.'

I suppose our author will not deny these to be the principal nerves and sinews of his oration; nor complain, I have done him the least injury in this representation of them; or that any thing of importance unto his advantage by himself insisted on, is here omitted. He that runs and reads, if he observe any thing that lies before him, besides handsome words and ingenious diversions, will consent that here lies the substance of what is offered unto him. I shall not need

then to tire the reader and myself, with transcriptions of those many words from the several parts of his discourse, wherein these principles are laid down and insinuated, or gilded over, as things on all hands granted. Besides, so far as they are interwoven with other reasonings, they will fall again under our consideration in the several places where they are used and improved. If all these principles upon examination be found good, true, firm, and stable, it is most meet and reasonable that our author should obtain his desire; and if, on the other side, they shall appear some of them false, some impertinent, and the deductions from them sophistical, some of them destructive to Christian religion in general; none of them singly, nor all of them together able to bear the least part of that weight which is laid upon them; I suppose he cannot take it ill, if we resolve to be contented with our present condition, until some better way of deliverance from it be proposed unto us; which, to tell him the truth, for my part, I do not expect from his church or party. Let us then consider these principles apart, in the order wherein we have laid them down, which is the best I could think on upon the sudden, for the advantage of him who makes use of them.

The first is a hinge, upon which many of those which follow do in a sort depend; yea, upon the matter, all of them. Our primitive receiving Christian religion from Rome, is that which influences all persuasions for a return thither. Now if this must be admitted to be true, that we in these nations first received the Christian religion from Rome, by the mission and authority of the pope, it either must be so, because the proposition carries its own evidence in its very terms, or because our author, and those consenting with him, have had it by revelation, or it hath been testified to them by others, who knew it so to be. That the first it doth not, is most certain; for, it is very possible, it might have been brought unto us from some other place, from whence it came to Rome; for, as I take it, it had not there its beginning. Nor do I suppose, they will plead special revelation, made either to themselves, or any others about this matter. I have read many of the revelations that are said to be made to sundry persons canonized by his church for saints, but never met with any thing concerning the place from whence

England first received the gospel. Nor have I yet heard relation pleaded to this purpose by any of his co-partners in design. It remains, then, that somebody hath told him so, or informed him of it, either by writing or by word of mouth. Usually, in such cases, the first inquiry is, whether they be credible persons who have made the report. Now the pretended authors of this story, may, I suppose, be justly questioned, if on no other, yet on this account, that he who designs an advantage by their testimony, doth not indeed believe what they say. For notwithstanding what he would fain have us believe of Christianity coming into Britain from Rome, he knows well enough, and tells us elsewhere himself, that it came directly by sea from Palestine into France, and was thence brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea. And what was that faith and worship which he brought along with him, we know full well, by that which was the faith and worship of his teachers and associates, in the work of propagating the gospel recorded in the Scripture. So that Christianity found a passage to Britain, without so much as once visiting Rome by the way. Yea, but one hundred and fifty years after, Fugatius and Damianus came from Rome, and propagated the gospel here; and four hundred years after them, Austin the monk. Of these stories we shall speak particularly afterward. But this quite spoils the whole market in hand; this is not a first receiving of the gospel, but a second and third at the best; and if that be considerable, then so ought the proposition to be laid. These nations a second and third time, after the first from another place, received the gospel from Rome; but this will not discharge that bill of following items which is laid upon it. Whatever then there is considerable in the place or persons, from whence or whom, a nation or people receive the gospel, as far as it concerns us in these kingdoms, it relates to Jerusalem and Jews, not Rome and Italians. Indeed, it had been very possible, that Christian religion might have been propagated at first from Rome into Britain, considering what in these days was the condition of the one place and the other; yet things were so ordered in the providence of the Lord, that it fell out otherwise; and the gospel was preached here in England probably before ever St. Paul came to Rome, or St. Peter either, if ever he came there.

But yet, to prevent wrangling about Austin and the Saxons, let us suppose that Christian religion was first planted in these nations by persons coming from Rome, if you will, men sent by the pope, before he was born, for that purpose; what then will follow? Was it the pope's religion they taught and preached? Did the pope first find it out and declare it? Did they baptize men in the name of the pope? or, declare that the pope was crucified for them? You know whose arguments these are, to prove men should not lay weight upon, or contend about, the first ministerial revealers of the gospel; but rest all in him who is the author of it, Christ Jesus. Did any come here and preach in the pope's name, declare a religion of his revealing, or resting in him as the fountain and source of the whole business they had to do? If you say so, you say something which is near to your purpose, but certainly very wide from the truth. But because it is most certain that God had not promised originally to send the rod of Christ's strength out of Rome, I shall take leave to ask, Whence the gospel came thither? or, to use the words made use of once and again by our author, Came the gospel from them, or came it to them only? I suppose they will not say so, because they speak to men that have seen the Bible. If it came to them from others, what privilege had they at Rome, that they should not have the same respect for them from whom the gospel came to them, as they claim from those unto whom they plead, that it came from themselves? The case is clear; St. Peter coming to Rome, brought his chair along with him, after which time that was made the head, spring, and fountain of all religion, and no such thing could befall those places, where the planters of the gospel had no chairs to settle. I think I have read this story in a hundred writers, but they were all men of yesterday, in comparison; who, whatever they pretend, know no more of this business than myself. St. Peter speaks not one word of it in his writings, nor yet St. Luke, nor St. Paul, nor any one who by divine inspiration committed any thing to remembrance of the state of the church, after the resurrection of Christ. And not only are they utterly silent of this matter, but also Clemens, and Ignatius, and Justin Martyr, and Tertullian, with the rest of knowing men in those days. I confess, in after ages, when some began to think it meet, that the

chiefest apostle should go to the then chiefest city in the world, divers began to speak of his going thither, and of his martyrdom there, though they agree not in their tales about it. But be it so; as for my part, I will not contend in a matter so dark, uncertain, of no moment in religion; this I know, that being the apostle of the circumcision, if he did go to Rome, it was to convert the Jews that were there, and not to found that Gentile church, which in a short space got the start of the other: but yet, neither do these writers talk of bringing his chair thither, much less is there in them one dust of that rope of sand, which men of latter days have endeavoured to twist with inconsistent consequences, and groundless presumptions to draw out from thence the pope's prerogative. The case then is absolutely the same as to those in respect of the Romans, who received the gospel from them, or by their means; and of the Romans themselves, in respect of those from whom they received it. If they would win worship to themselves from others, by pretending that the gospel came forth from them unto them, let them teach them by the example of their devotion towards those from whom they received it. I suppose they will not plead that they are not now 'in rerum natura,' knowing what will ensue to their disadvantage on that plea. For, if that church is utterly failed and gone from whence they first received the gospel, that which others received it from, may possibly be not in a much better condition. But I find myself, before I was aware, fallen into the borders of the second principle or presumption mentioned. I shall therefore shut up my consideration of this first pretence, with this only; that neither is it true that these nations first received Christianity from Rome, much less by any mission of the pope; nor, if they had done so, in the exercise of a ministerial work and authority, would this make any thing to what is pretended from it; nor will it ever be of any use to the present Romanists, unless they can prove that the pope was the first author of Christian religion, which as yet they have not attempted to do, and thence it is evident, what is to be thought of the second principle before mentioned; namely,

II. 'That whence, and from whom, we first receive our religion, there, and with them, we must abide therein, to

them we must repair for guidance, and return to their rule and conduct, if we have departed from them.'

I have shewed already, that there is no privity of interests between us and the Romanists in this matter. But suppose, we had been originally instructed in Christianity by men sent from Rome to that purpose (for unless we suppose this, for the present, our talk is at an end), I see not, as yet, the verity of this proposition. With the truth wherever it be, or with whomsoever, it is most certainly our duty to abide. And if those, from whom we first received our Christianity ministerially, abide in the truth, we must abide with them; not because they, or their predecessors, were the instruments of our conversion; but, because they abide in the truth. Setting aside this consideration of truth, which is the bond of all union, and that which fixeth the centre, and limits the bounds of it, one people's, or one church's abiding with another in any profession of religion, is a thing merely indifferent. When we have received the truth from any, the formal reason of our continuance with them in that union, which our reception of the truth from them gives unto us, is their abiding in the truth, and no other. Suppose some persons, or some church or churches, do propagate Christianity to another; and in progress of time, themselves fall off from some of those truths, which they, or their predecessors, had formerly delivered unto these instructed by them? If our author shall deny, that such a supposition can well be made, because it never did, nor can fall out, I shall remove his exception, by scores of instances out of antiquity, needless in so evident a matter to be here mentioned. What in this case would be their duty who received the gospel from them? Must they abide with them, follow after them, and embrace the errors they are fallen into, because they first received the gospel from them? I trow not. It will be found their duty to abide in the truth, and not pin their faith upon the sleeves of them, by whom ministerially it was at first communicated unto them. But this case, you will say, concerns not the Roman church, and Protestants; for, as these abide not in the truth, so they never did, nor can, depart from it. Well, then, that we may not displease them at present, let us put the

case so, as I presume, they will own it. Suppose men, or a church, intrusted by Christ authoritatively to preach the gospel, do propagate the faith unto others according to their duties; these, being converted by their means, do afterward, through the craft and subtlety of seducers, fall in sundry things from the truths they were instructed in, and wherein their instructors do constantly abide; yea, say our adversaries, this is the true case indeed; I ask then, in this case, What is, and ought to be, the formal motive to prevail with these persons to return to their former condition from whence they were fallen? Either this, That they are departed from the truth, which they cannot do, without peril to their souls, and whereunto, if they return not, they must perish; or this, That it is their duty to return to them from whom they first received the doctrine of Christianity, because they so received it from them. St. Paul, who surely had as much authority in these matters as either the pope, or church of Rome, can with any modesty lay claim unto, had to deal with very many in this case. Particularly, after he had preached the gospel to the Galatians, and converted them to the faith of Christ, there came in some false teachers and seducers amongst them, which drew them off from the truth wherein they had been instructed, in divers important and some fundamental points of it. What course doth the apostle proceed in, towards them? Doth he plead with them about their falling away from him that first converted them? or falling away from the truth whereunto they were converted? If any one will take the pains to turn to any chapter in that epistle, he may be satisfied as to this inquiry; it is their falling away from the gospel, from the truth they had received, from the doctrine, in particular, of faith and justification by the blood of Christ, that alone he blamed them for: yea, and makes doctrines so far the measure and rule of judging and censuring of persons, whether they preach the word first or last, that he pronounceth a redoubled anathema, against any creature in heaven or earth, upon a supposition of their teaching any thing contrary unto it, chap. i. 8. He pleads not, we preached first unto you, by us you were converted, and therefore with us you must abide, from whom the faith came forth unto you; but saith, 'If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be

accursed.' This was the way he chose to insist on; and it may not be judged unreasonable, if we esteem it better than that of theirs, who, by false pretending to have been our old, would very fain be our new masters. But the mentioned maxim lets us know, that the persons, and churches, that have received the faith from the Roman church, or by means thereof, should abide under the rule and conduct of it, and, if departed from it, return speedily to due obedience. I think it will be easily granted, that, if we ought to abide under its rule and conduct, whither ever it shall please to guide us, we ought quickly to return to our duty and task, if we should make any elopement from it. It is not meet, that those that are born mules to bondage, should ever alter their condition. Only we must profess, we know not the springs of that unhappy fate, which should render us such animals. Unto what is here pretended, I only ask, Whether this right of presidency and rule in the Roman church, over all persons and churches pretended of old to be converted by her means, do belong unto her by virtue of any general right that those who convert others, should for ever have the conduct of those converted by them, or by virtue of some special privilege granted to the church of Rome, above others? If the first, or general title, be insisted on, it is most certain, that a very small pittance of jurisdiction, will be left unto the Roman see, in comparison of that vast empire, which now it hath, or layeth claim unto, knowing no bounds, but those of the universal nature of things here below. For all men know, that the gospel was preached in very many places of the world, before its sound reached unto Rome, and in most parts of the then known world, before any such planting of a church at Rome, as might be the foundation of any authoritative mission of any from thence for the conversion of others; and, after that a church was planted in that city, for any thing that may be made to appear by story, it was as to the first edition of Christianity in the Roman empire, as little serviceable in the propagation of the gospel, as any other church of name in the world; so that, if such principles should be pleaded, as of general equity, there could be nothing fixed on more destructive to the Romanist's pretences. If they have any special privilege to found this claim upon, they may do well to produce

it. In the Scripture, though there be of many believers, yet there is no mention made of any church at Rome, but only of that little assembly that used to meet at Aquila's house; Rom. xvi. 5. Of any such privilege annexed unto that meeting, we find nothing; the first general council, confirming power and rule over others in some churches, acknowledges indeed, more to have been practised in the Roman church than I know how they could prove to be due unto it. But yet that very unwarrantable grant, is utterly destructive to the present claim and condition of the pope and church of Rome. The wings, now pretended to be like those of the sun, extending themselves, at once to the ends of the earth, were then accounted no longer, than to be able to cover the poor believers in the city and suburbs of it, and some few adjacent towns and villages. It would be a long story, to tell the progress of this claim in after times; it is sufficiently done in some of those books, of which our author says, there are enough to fill the Tower of London; where, I presume, or into the fire, he could be contented they should be for ever disposed of, and therefore we may dismiss this principle also.

III. That which is the main pillar, bearing the weight of all this fine fabric, is the principle we mentioned in the third place, viz. 'That the Roman profession of religion, and practice in the worship of God, are every way the same, as when we first received the gospel from the pope, nor can they ever otherwise be.'

This is taken for granted, by our author, throughout his discourse. And the truth is, that, if a man hath a mind to suppose, and make use of things that are in question between him and his adversary, it were a folly not to presume on so much as should assuredly serve his turn. To what purpose is it to mince the matter, and give opportunity to new cavils, and exceptions, by baby-mealy-mouthed petitions of some small things that there is a strife about, when a man may as honestly, all at once, suppose the whole truth of his side, and proceed without fear of disturbance. And so wisely deals our author in this business. That which ought to have been his whole work, he takes for granted to be already done. If this be granted him, he is safe; deny it, and all his fine oration dwindles into a little sapless so-

phistry. But he must get the great number of books that he seems to be troubled with, out of the world, and the Scripture to boot, before he will persuade considerate and unprejudiced men, that there is a word of truth in this supposition. That we in these nations received not the gospel originally from the pope (which p. 354. our author tells us is his, purely his, whereas we thought before, it had been Christ's) hath been declared, and shall, if need be, be farther evinced. But let us suppose once again, that we did so; yet we constantly deny the church of Rome to be the same in doctrine, worship, and discipline, that she was when it is pretended, that by her means we were instituted in the knowledge of truth. Our author knows full well, what a facile work I have now lying in view; what an easy thing it were to go over most of the opinions of the present church of Rome, and most, if not all their practices in worship, and to manifest their vast distance from the doctrine, practice, and principles of that church of old. But, though this were really a more serious work, and more useful, and much more accommodated to the nature of the whole difference between us, more easy and pleasant to myself than the pursuit of this odd rambling chase that by following of him I am engaged in; yet, lest he should pretend, that this would be a division into common places, such as he hath purposely avoided (and that not unwisely, that he might have advantage all along to take for granted, that which he knew to be principally in question between us), I shall dismiss that business, and only attend unto that great proof of this assertion, which himself thought meet to shut up his book withal, as that which was fit to pin down the basket, and to keep close and safe all the long billed birds, that he hoped to limetwig by his preceding rhetoric and sophistry. It is in pp. 362, 363. Though I hope I am not contentious, nor have any other hatred against popery than what becomes an honest man to have against that which he is persuaded to be so ill as popery must needs be, if it be ill at all; yet, upon his request, I have seriously pondered his queries (a captious way of disputing), and falling now in my way, do return this answer unto them.

1. The supposition on which all his ensuing queries are founded, must be rightly stated, its terms freed from ambi-

guity, and the whole from equivocation; which a word or two unto, first, the subject; and then, secondly, the predicate of the proposition, or what is attributed unto the subject spoken of; and, thirdly, the proof of the whole; will suffice to do. The thesis laid down is this; 'The church of Rome was once a most pure, excellent, flourishing, and mother church: this good St. Paul amply testifies in his epistle to them, and is acknowledged by Protestants.' The subject is the church of Rome. And this may be taken either for the church that was founded in Rome, in the apostles' days, consisting of believers, with those that had their rule and oversight in the Lord; or it may be taken for the church of Rome, in the sense of latter ages, consisting of the pope its head, and cardinals, principal members, with all the jurisdiction dependant on them, and way of worship established by them, and their authority; or, that collection of men throughout the world that yield obedience to the pope in their several places and subordinations, according to the rules by him and his authority given unto them. That which is attributed to this church is, 'that it was once a most pure, excellent, flourishing, and mother church;' all, it seems, in the superlative degree. I will not contend about the purity, excellency, or flourishing of that church; the boasting of the superlativeness of that purity and excellency, seems to be borrowed from that of Rev. iii. 15. But we shall not exagitate that, in that church, which it would never have affirmed of itself, because it is fallen out to be the interest of some men in these latter days to talk at such a rate, as primitive humility was an utter stranger unto. I somewhat guess at what he means by a mother church; for, though the Scripture knows no such thing, but only appropriates that title to 'Jerusalem that was above,' which is said to be the 'mother of us all,' Gal. iv. 26. which I suppose is not Rome (and I also think that no man can have two mothers), nor did purer antiquity ever dream of any such mother, yet the vogue of latter days hath made this expression not only passable in the world, but sacred and unquestionable; I shall only say, that in the sense wherein it is by some understood, the old Roman church could lay no more claim unto it, than most other churches in the world, and not so good as some others could.

The proof of this assertion lies first on the testimony of St. Paul, and then on the acknowledgment of Protestants. First, 'Good St. Paul,' he says, 'amply testifies this in his Epistle to the Romans.' This? What, I pray? That the then Roman church was a mother church: not a word in all the epistle of any such matter. Nay, as I observed before, though he greatly commends the faith and holiness of many believers, Jews and Gentiles, that were at Rome, yet he makes mention of no church there, but only of a little assembly that used to meet at Aquila's house; nor doth St. Paul give any testimony at all to the Roman church in the latter sense of that expression. Is there any thing in his epistle of the pope, cardinals, patriarchs, &c.? any thing of their power and rule over other churches, or Christians not living at Rome? Is there any one word in that epistle about that which the Papists make the principal ingredient in their definition of the church, namely, subjection to the pope? What then is the 'this' that good St. Paul so amply testifies unto, in his Epistle to the Romans? Why this, and this only; that when he wrote this epistle to Rome, there were then living in that city sundry good and holy men, believing in Christ Jesus according to the gospel, and making profession of the faith that is in him; but, that these men should live there to the end of the world, he says not, nor do we find that they do. The acknowledgment of Protestants is next to as little purpose insisted on. They acknowledge a pure and flourishing church to have been once at Rome, as they maintain there was at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Smyrna, Laodicea, Alexandria, Babylon, &c. that in all these places such churches do still continue, they deny, and particularly at Rome. For that church which then was, they deny it to be the same that now is; at least, any more than Argo was the same ship as when first built, after there was not one plank or pin of its first structure remaining. That the church of Rome, in the latter sense, was ever a pure flourishing church, never any Protestant acknowledged; the most of them deny it ever to have been, in that sense, any church at all; and those that grant it, to retain the essential constituting principals of a church, yet aver, that as it is, so it ever was since it had a being, very far from a pure and flourishing church. For aught then, that I can perceive, we are

not at all concerned in the following queries; the supposition they are all built upon, being partly sophistical, and partly false. But yet, because he doth so earnestly request us to ponder them, we shall not give him cause to complain of us, in this particular at least (as he doth in general of all Protestants), that we deal uncivilly; and therefore shall pass through them; after which, if he pleaseth, he may deliver them to his friend of whom they were borrowed.

1. Saith he, 'This church could not cease to be such, but she must fall either by apostacy, heresy, or schism.' But who told him so? Might she not cease to be, and so consequently to be such? Might not the persons of whom it consisted have been destroyed by an earthquake, as it happened to Laodicea? or by the sword, as it befell the church of the Jews? or twenty other ways? Besides, might she not fall by idolatry, or false worship, or by profaneness, or licentiousness of conversation, contrary to the whole rule of Christ? That then he may know what is to be removed by his queries, if he should speak any thing to the purpose, he may do well to take notice, that this is the dogma of Protestants concerning the church of Rome; that the church planted there pure, did by degrees, in a long tract of time, fall by apostacy, idolatry, heresy, schism, and profaneness of life, into that condition wherein now it is. But, says he,

1. 'Not by apostacy; for that is not only a renouncing of the faith of Christ, but the very name and title of Christianity; and no man will say that the church of Rome had ever such a fall, or fell thus.' I tell you truly, sir, your church is very much beholden unto men, if they do not sometimes say very hard things of her fall. Had it been an ordinary slip or so, it might have been passed over; but this falling into the mire, and wallowing in it for so many ages, as she has done, is in truth a very naughty business. For my part, I am resolved to deal as gently with her as possible; and therefore say, that there is a total apostacy from Christianity, which she fell not into, or by; and there is a partial apostacy in Christianity from some of the principles of it, such as St. Paul charged on the Galatians; and the old fathers on very many that yet retained the name and title of Christians, and this, we say plainly, that she fell by; she fell by apostacy from many of the most material princi-

ples of the gospel, both as to faith, life, and worship. And there being no reply made upon this instance, were it not upon the ground of pure civility, we need not proceed any farther with his queries, the business of them being come to an end.

2. But, upon his entreaty, we will follow him a little farther. Supposing that he hath dispatched the business of apostacy, he comes to heresy, and tells us, 'That it is an adhesion to some private or singular opinion or error in faith, contrary to the general approved doctrine of the church.' That which ought to be subsumed is, that the church of Rome did never adhere to any singular opinion or error in faith contrary to the general approved doctrine of the church; but our author, to cover his business, changes the terms in his proceeding into the Christian world; to clear this to us a little, I desire to know of him what church he means, when he speaks of the approved doctrine of the church? I am sure he will say the Roman Catholic church; and if I ask him, What age it is of that church which he intends? he will also say, That age which is present when the opinions mentioned are asserted, contrary to the approved doctrine. We have then obtained his meaning, viz. the Roman church did never at any time adhere to any opinion, but what the Roman church at that time adhered unto; or taught, or approved, no other doctrine, but what it taught and approved. Now, I verily believe this to be true, and he must be somewhat besides uncivil that shall deny it. But from hence to infer, that the Roman church never fell from her first purity by heresy, that is a thing I cannot yet discern how it may be made good. This conclusion ariseth out of that pitiful definition of heresy he gives us, coined merely to serve the Roman interest. The rule of judging heresy is made the approved doctrine of the church; I would know of what church: of this or that particular church, or of the Catholic? Doubtless the Catholic must be pretended. I ask, Of this or that age, or of the first? Of the first certainly. I desire then to know, how we may come to discern infallibly what was the approved doctrine of the Catholic church of old, but only by the Scriptures, which we know it unanimously embraced as given unto it by Christ, for its rule of faith and worship. If we should then grant, that the ap-

proved doctrine of the church were that which a departure from, as such, gives formality unto heresy, yet there is no way to know that doctrine but by the Scripture. But yet neither can or ought this to be granted. The formal reason of heresy, in the usual acceptation of the word, ariseth from its deviation from the Scripture as such, which is the rule of the church's doctrine, and of the opinions that are contrary unto it. Nor yet is every private or singular opinion contrary to the Scripture, or the doctrine of the church, presently a heresy. That is not the sense of the word, either in Scripture or antiquity. So that the foundation of the queries about heresy is not one jot better laid than that was about apostacy, which went before. This is that which I have heard Protestants say, namely, That the church of Rome doth adhere to very many opinions and errors in faith, contrary to the main principles of Christian religion delivered in the Scripture, and so, consequently, the doctrine approved by the Catholic church; and, if this be to fall by heresy, I add, that she is thus fallen also from what she was. But then he asks, 1. 'By what general council was she ever condemned?' 2. 'Which of the fathers ever wrote against her?' 3. 'By what authority was she otherwise reprov'd?' But this is all one, as if a thief arraigned for stealing before a judge, and the goods that he had stolen found upon him, should plead for himself, and say, If ever I stole any thing, then by what lawful judge was I ever condemned? What officer of the peace did ever formally apprehend me? By what authority were writs issued out against me? Were it not easy for the judge to reply, and tell him, Friend, these allegations may prove that you were never before condemned, but they prove not at all that you never stole; which is a matter of fact that you are now upon your trial for. No more will it at all follow, that the church of Rome did never offend, because she is not condemned. These things may be necessary that she may be said to be legally convicted, but not at all to prove that she is really guilty. Besides, the truth is, that many of her doctrines and practices are condemned by general councils, and most of them by the most learned fathers, and all of them by the authority of the Scripture. And whilst her doctrine and worship is so condemned, I see not

well how she can escape ; so that this second way also she is fallen.

3. To apostacy and heresy she hath also added the guilt of schism in a high degree. For, schisms within herself, and her great schism from all the Christian world besides herself, are things well known to all that know her. Her intestine schisms were the shame of Christendom, her schisms in respect of others the ruin of it. And briefly, to answer the triple query we are so earnestly invited to the consideration of, I shall need to instance only in that one particular of making subjection to the pope in all things, the 'tessera' and rule of all church communion, whereby she hath left the company of all the churches of Christ in the world besides herself, is gone forth and departed from all apostolical churches, even that of old Rome itself; and the true church, which she hath forsaken, abides and is preserved in all the societies of Christians throughout the earth, who, attending to the Scripture for their only rule and guide, do believe what is therein revealed, and worship God accordingly. So that notwithstanding any thing here offered to the contrary, it is very possible, that the present church of Rome may be fallen from her primitive condition by apostacy, heresy, and schism, which indeed she is ; and worst of all by idolatry, which our author thought meet to pass over in silence.

IV. It is frequently pleaded by our author (nor is there any thing which he more triumphs in), 'That all things as to religion were quiet and in peace ; all men in union and agreement amongst themselves in the worship of God, before the departure made by our forefathers from the Roman see.' No man that hath once cast an eye upon the defensatives written by the ancient Christians, but knows how this very consideration was managed and improved against them by their Pagan impugnors. That Christians, by their introduction of a new way of worshipping God, which their forefathers knew not, had disturbed the peace of human society, divided the world into seditious factions, broken all the ancient bonds of peace and amity, dissolved the whole harmony of mankind's agreement amongst themselves, was the subject of the declamations of their adversaries. This complaint, their books, their schools, the courts and judi-

catories were filled with; against all which clamours and violences that were stirred up against them by their means, those blessed souls armed themselves with patience, and the testimony of their consciences, that they neither did, nor practised any thing that in its own nature had a tendency to the least of those evils, which they and their way of worshipping God, was reproached with. As they had the opportunity indeed, they let their adversaries know, that that peace and union they boasted of, in their religion, before the entrance of Christianity, was but a conspiracy against God, a consent in error and falsehood, and brought upon the world by the craft of Satan, maintained through the effectual influence of innumerable prejudices upon the innate blindness and darkness of their hearts, that upon the appearance of light, and publishing of the truth, divisions, animosities, troubles, and distractions did arise; they declared to have been no proper or necessary effect of the work, but a consequent, occasional, and accidental, arising from the lusts of men, 'who loved darkness more than light, because their works were evil;' which, that it would ensue, their blessed Master had long before foretold them, and forewarned them.

Though this be enough, yet it is not all that may be replied unto this old pretence and plea, as managed to the purpose of our adversaries. It is part of the motive, which the great historian makes Galgacus, the valiant Britain, use to his countrymen, to cast off the Roman yoke; '*Solitudinem ubi fecerunt, pacem vocant.*' It was their way, when they had by force and cruelty laid all waste before them, to call the remaining solitude and desolation, by the goodly name of peace; neither considered they, whether the residue of men had either satisfaction in their minds, or advantage by their rule. Nor was the peace of the Roman church any other before the reformation. What waste they had, by sword and burnings, made in several parts of Europe, in almost all the chiefest nations of it, of mankind; what desolation they had brought by violence upon those who opposed their rule, or questioned their doctrine; the blood of innumerable poor men, many of them learned, all pious and zealous, whom they called Waldenses, Albigenses, Lollards, Wickliffites, Hussites, Caliptives, Subutraguians, Pi-

cards, or what else they pleased (being indeed the faithful witnesses of the Lord Christ and his truths), will at the last day reveal. Besides, the event declared, how remote the minds of millions were from an acquiescency in that conspiracy in the papal sovereignty, which was grown to be the bond of communion amongst those who called themselves the church, or an approbation of that doctrine and worship which they made profession of. For no sooner was a door of liberty and light opened unto them, but whole nations were at strife who should first enter in at it; which undoubtedly, all the nations of Europe had long since done, had not the holy wise God, in his good providence, suffered in some of them a sword of power and violence to interpose itself against their entrance. For, whatever may be pretended of peace and agreement to this day, take away force and violence, prisons and fagots, and in one day the whole compages of that stupendous fabric of the papacy, will be dissolved; and the life, which will be maintained in it, springing only from secular advantages and inveterate prejudices would, together with them, decay and disappear. Neither can any thing, but a confidence of the ignorance of men in all things that are past, yea, in what was done almost by their own grandsires, give countenance to a man in his own silent thoughts, for such insinuations of quietness in the world before the reformation. The wars, seditions, rebellions, and tumults (to omit private practices), that were either raised, occasioned, and countenanced by the pope's absolving subjects from their allegiance, kings and states from their oaths given mutually for the securing of peace between them, all in the pursuit of their own worldly interests, do fill up a good part of the stories of some ages before the reformation. Whatever then is pretended, things were not so peaceable and quiet in those days, as they are now represented to men that mind only things that are present; nor was their agreement their virtue, but their sin and misery; being centred in blindness and ignorance, and cemented with blood.

V. 'That the first reformers were most of them sorry, contemptible persons, whose errors were propagated by indirect means, and entertained for sinister ends,' is in several places of this book alleged, and consequences pretended

thence to ensue, urged and improved. But the truth is, the more contemptible the persons were that begun the work, the greater glory and lustre is reflected on the work itself; which points out to a higher cause than any appeared outwardly for the carrying of it on. It is no small part of the gospel's glory, that being promulgated by persons whom the world looked on with the greatest contempt and scorn imaginable, as men utterly destitute of whatever was by them esteemed noble or honourable; it prevailed notwithstanding in the minds of men, to eradicate the inveterate prejudices received by tradition from their fathers; to overthrow the ancient and outward glorious worship of the nations; and to bring them into subjection unto Christ. Neither can any thing be written with more contempt and scorn, nor with greater undervaluation of the abilities, or outward condition of the first reformers, than was spoken and written by the greatest and wisest and most learned of men of old, concerning the preachers and planters of Christianity. Should I but repeat the biting sarcasms, contemptuous reproaches, and scorns wherewith, with plausible pretences, the apostles and those that followed them in their work of preaching the gospel were entertained by Celsus, Lucian, Porphyry, Julian, Hierocles, with many more, men learned and wise; I could easily manifest how short our new masters come of them in facetious wit, beguiling eloquence, and fair pretences, when they seek by stories, jestings, calumnies, and false reports, to expose the first reformers to the contempt and scorn of men, who know nothing of them but their names, and those as covered with all the dirt they can possibly cast upon them. But I intend not to tempt the atheistical wits of any, to an approbation of their sin, by that compliance which the vain fancies of such men do usually afford them, in the contemplation of the wit and ingenuity, as they esteem it, of plausible calumnies. The Scripture may be heard; that abundantly testifies, that the character given of the first reformers as men, poor, unlearned, seeking to advantage themselves by the troubling of others, better, greater, and wiser than they, in their religion, was received of the apostles, evangelists, and other Christians, in the first budding of Christianity. But the truth is, all these are but vain pretences; those knew of old,

and these do now, that the persons whom they vilify and scorn, were eminently fitted of God for the work that they were called unto.

The 'receiving of their opinions for sinister ends,' reflects principally on this kingdom of England; and must do so, whilst the surmises of a few interested friars shall be believed by Englishmen, before the solemn protestation of so renowned a king, as he was, who first cashiered the pope's authority in this nation; for, what he being alive avowed on his royal word, and vowed as in the sight of the Almighty God, was an effect of light and conscience in him, they will needs have to be a consequent of his lust and levity. And what honour it is to the royal government of this nation, to have those who swayed the sceptre of it, but a few years ago, publicly traduced and exposed to obloquy by the libellous pens of obscure and unknown persons, wise men may be easily able to judge. This I am sure, there is little probability that they should have any real regard or reverence for the present rulers, farther than they find, or hope that they shall have their countenance and assistance for the furtherance of their private interest, who so revile their predecessors, for acting contrary unto it; and this loyalty the king's majesty may secure himself of, from the most seditious fanatic in the nation; so highly is he beholden to these men, for their duty and obedience.

VI. 'That our departure from Rome hath been the cause of all our evils, and particularly of all those divisions, which are at this day found amongst Protestants, and which have been since the reformation,' is a supposition, that not only insinuates itself into the hidden sophistry of our author's discourse, but is also everywhere spread over the face of it; with as little truth, or advantage to his purpose, as those that went before. So the Pagans judged the primitive Christians, so also did the Jews, and do to this day. Here is no new task lies before us. The answers given of old to them, and yet continued to be given, will suffice to these men also. The truth is, our divisions are not the effect of our leaving Rome; but of our being there. In the apostacy of that church came upon men all that darkness, and all those prejudices, which cause many needless divisions

amongst them. And is it any wonder that men, partly led, partly driven out of the right way, and turned a clean contrary course for sundry generations, should, upon liberty obtained to return to their old paths, somewhat vary in their choice of particular tracts, though they all agree to travel towards the same place, and in general, steer their course accordingly? Besides, let men say what they please, the differences amongst the Protestants that are purely religious, are no other but such as ever were, and, take away external force, ever will be amongst the best of men, whilst they know but in part; however, they may not be managed with that prudence and moderation, which it is our duty to use in and about them. Were not the consequences of our differences, which arise merely from our folly and sin, of more important consideration than our differences themselves, I should very little value the one or the other; knowing that none of them in their own nature are such, as to impeach either our present tranquillity, or future happiness. So that, neither are the divisions that are among Protestants in themselves of any importance, nor were they occasioned by their departure from Rome. That all men are not made perfectly wise, nor do know all things perfectly, is partly a consequence of their condition in this world, partly, a fruit of their own lusts and corruptions; neither to be imputed to the religion which they profess, nor to the rule that they pretend to follow. Had all those who could not continue in the profession of the errors, and practice of the worship of the church of Rome, and were therefore driven out by violence and blood from amongst them, been as happy in attending to the rule that they chose for their guidance and direction, as they were wise in choosing it; they had had no other differences among them than what necessarily follow their concreated different constitutions, complexions, and capacities. It is not the work of religion in this world wholly to dispel men's darkness; nor absolutely to eradicate their distempers; somewhat must be left for heaven: and that more is than ought to be, is the fault of men, and not of the truth they profess. That religion which reveals a sufficient rule to guide men into peace, union, and all necessary truth, is not to be blamed, if men in all things follow not its direction. Nor are the

differences amongst the Protestants, greater than those amongst the members of the Roman church. The imputation of the errors and miscarriages of the Socinians and Quakers unto protestancy, is of no other nature than that of Pagans of old, charging the follies, and abominations of the Gnostics and Valentinians on Christianity. For those that are truly called Protestants, whose concurrence in the same confession of faith, as to all material points, is sufficient to cast them under one denomination, What evils I wonder are to be found amongst them as to divisions, that are not conspicuous to all in the papacy? The princes and nations of their profession are, or have all been engaged in mortal feuds and wars one against another, all the world over. Their divines write as stiffly one against another, as men can do: mutual accusations of pernicious doctrines and practices abound amongst them. I am not able to guess what place will hold the books written about their intestine differences, as our author doth concerning those that are written by Protestants against the papacy; but this I know, all public libraries and private studies of learned men abound with them. Their invectives, apologies, accusations, charges, underminings of one another, are part of the weekly news of these days. Our author knows well enough what I mean. Nor are these the ways and practices of private men, but of whole societies and fraternities; which, if they are in truth, such as they are by each other represented to be; it would be the interest of mankind, to seek the suppression and extermination of some of them. I profess, I wonder, whilst their own house is so visibly on fire, that they can find leisure to scold at others for not quenching theirs. Nor is the remaining agreement that they boast of, one jot better, than either their own dissensions or ours. It is not union or agreement amongst men absolutely, that is to be valued. Simeon and Levi never did worse, than when they agreed best; and 'were brethren in evil.' The grounds and reasons of men's agreement, with the nature of the things wherein they are agreed, are that which make it either commendable or desirable. Should I lay forth what these are in the papacy, our author I fear would count me unmannerly and uncivil; but yet because the matter doth so require, I must needs tell him, that

many wise men do affirm, that ignorance, inveterate prejudice, secular advantages, and external force, are the chief constitutive principles of that union and agreement which remains amongst them. But whatever their evils be, it is pretended, that they have a remedy at hand for them all. But,

VII. 'That we have no remedy of our evils, no means of ending our differences, but by a returnal to the Roman see.' Whether there be any way to end differences among ourselves, as far, and as soon, as there is any need they should be ended, will be afterward inquired into. This I know, that a returnal unto Rome will not do it; unless when we come thither, we can learn to behave ourselves better than those do who are there already; and there is indeed no party of men in the world but can give as good security of ending our differences as the Romanists. If we would all turn Quakers it would end our disputes, and that is all that is provided us if we will turn Papists. This is the language of every party, and for my part I think they believe what they say: Come over to us, and we shall all agree. Only the Romanists are likely to obtain least credit as to this matter among wise men, because they cannot agree among themselves; and are as unfit to umpire the differences of other men as Philip of Macedon was to quiet Greece, whilst he, his wife, and children, were together by the ears at home.

But why have not Protestants a remedy for their evils, a means of ending and making up their differences? They have the word that is left them for that purpose, which the apostles commended unto them, and which the primitive church made use of, and no other. That this will not serve to prevent, or remove any hurtful differences from amongst us, it is not its fault, but ours. And could we prevail with Roman Catholics to blame and reprove us, and not to blame the religion we profess, we should count ourselves beholden to them; and they would have the less to answer for another day. But as things are stated, it is fallen out very unhappily for them; that finding they cannot hurt us, but that their weapons must pass through the Scriptures, that is it which they are forced to direct their blows against. The Scripture 'is dark, obscure, insufficient, cannot be known to be the word of God, nor understood,' is the main of their

plea, when they intend to deal with Protestants. I am persuaded that they are troubled when they are put upon this work. It cannot be acceptable to the minds of men to be engaged in such undervaluations of the word of God. Sure they can have no other mind in this work, than a man would have in pulling down his house to find out his enemy. He that shall read what the Scripture testifies of itself; that is, what God doth of it; and what the ancients speak concerning it, and shall himself have any acquaintance with the nature and excellency of it, must needs shrink extremely when he comes to see the Romanists discourse about it; indeed, against it. For my part, I can truly profess, that no one thing doth so alienate my mind from the present Roman religion, as this treatment of the word of God. I cannot but think that a sad profession of religion, which enforceth men to decry the use and excellency of that, which (let them pretend what they please) is the only infallible revelation of all that truth, by obedience wherunto, we become Christians. I do heartily pity learned and ingenious men, when I see them enforced by a private corrupt interest, to engage in this woful work of undervaluing the work of God; and so much the more, as that I cannot but hope, that it is a very ungrateful work to themselves. Did they delight in it, I should have other thoughts of them, and conclude, that there are more atheists in the world, than those whom our author informs us, to be lately turned so in England. This then is the remedy that Protestants have for their evils; this the means of making up all their differences; which they might do every day, so far as in this world it is possible that that work should be done amongst men, if it were not their own fault. That they do not so, blame them still, blame them soundly, lay on reproofs till I cry, Hold: but let not, I pray, the word of God be blamed any more. Methinks I could beg this of a Catholic, especially of my countrymen, that whatever they say to Protestants, or however they deal with them, they would let the Scripture alone, and not decry its worth and usefulness. It is not Protestants' book, it is God's; who hath only granted them a use of it, in common with the rest of men: and what is spoken in disparagement of it, doth not reflect on them, but on him that made it, and sent it to them. It is no policy, I confess, to discover our

secrets to our adversaries, whereby they may prevent their own disadvantages for the future. But yet because I look not on the Romanists as absolute enemies, I shall let them know for once, that when Protestants come to that head of their disputes or orations, wherein they contend that the Scripture is so and so, obscure and insufficient, they generally take great contentment, to find that their religion cannot be opposed, without casting down the word of God from its excellency, and enthroning somewhat else in the room of it. Let them make what use of this they please, I could not but tell it them for their good, and I know it to be true. For the present it comes too late. For, another main principle of our author's discourse is,

VIII. 'That the Scripture on sundry accounts is insufficient to settle us in the truth of religion, or to bring us to an agreement amongst ourselves; and that, 1. Because it is not to be known to be the word of God, but by the testimony of the Roman church. And then, 2. Cannot be well translated into any vulgar language. And is also, 3. In itself obscure. And, 4. We have no way to determine of what is its proper sense.' 'Atqui hic est nigræ fumus caliginis, hæc est ærugo mera.' I suppose they will not tell a Pagan or a Mahometan this story; at least I heartily wish that men would not suffer themselves to be so far transported by their private interest, as to forget the general concernments of Christianity. We cannot, say they, know the Scripture to be the word of God, but by the authority of the church of Rome: and all men may easily assure themselves, that no man had ever known there was such a thing as a church, much less that it had any authority, but by the Scripture. And whither this tends, is easy to guess. But it will not enter into my head, that we cannot know or believe the Scripture to be the word of God, any otherwise than on the authority of the church of Rome. The greatest part of it was believed to be so, before there was any church at Rome at all; and all of it is so by millions in the world, who make no account of that church at all. Now some say, there is such a church. I wish men would leave persuading us, that we do not believe what we know we do believe, or that we cannot do that which we know we do, and see that millions besides ourselves do so too. There are not many nations in

Europe, wherein there are not thousands who are ready to lay down their lives to give testimony that the Scripture is the word of God, that care not a rush for the authority of the present church of Rome; and what farther evidence they can give that they believe so, I know not. And this they do upon that innate evidence, that the word of God hath in itself, and gives to itself the testimony of Christ and his apostles, and the teaching of the church of God in all ages. I must needs say, there is not any thing for which Protestants are so much beholden to the Roman Catholics as this; That they have with so much importunacy cast upon them the work of proving the Scripture to be of divine original, or to have been given by inspiration from God. It is as good a work as a man can well be employed in; and there is not any thing I should more gladly 'en professo' engage in, if the nature of my present business would bear such a diversion. Our author would quickly see what an easy task it were to remove those his reproaches of a private spirit, of an inward testimony of our own reason, which himself knowing the advantage they afford him amongst vulgar unstudied men, trifles withal. Both Romanists and Protestants, as far as I can learn, do acknowledge, that the grace of the Spirit, is necessary to enable a man to believe savingly the Scripture to be the word of God, upon what testimony or authority soever that faith is founded or resolved into. Now this with Protestants is no private whisper, no enthusiasm, no reason of their own, no particular testimony, but the most open, noble, known that is, or can be in the world; even the voice of God himself, speaking publicly to all, in and by the Scripture, evidencing itself by its own divine innate light and excellency; taught, confirmed, and testified unto, by the church in all ages; especially the first, founded by Christ and his apostles. He that looks for better or other testimony, witness, or foundation to build his faith upon, may search till doomsday without success. He that renounceth this, shakes the very root of Christianity, and opens a door to atheism and paganism. This was the anchor of Christians of old, from which neither the storms of persecution could drive them, nor the subtlety of disputations entice them. For men to come now in the end of the world, and to tell us that we must rest in the authority of the present church of Rome, in

our receiving the Scripture to be the word of God ; and then to tell us, that that church hath all its authority by and from the Scripture ; and to know well enough all the while, that no man can know there is any church authority but by the Scripture, is to speak daggers and swords to us, upon a confidence that we will suffer ourselves to be befooled, that we may have the after pleasure of making others like ourselves.

Of the translation of the Scripture into vulgar tongues, I shall expressly treat afterward, and therefore here pass it over.

3. Its obscurity is another thing insisted on, and highly exaggerated by our author. And this is not another thing that I greatly wonder at; for as wise as these gentlemen would be thought to be, he that has but half an eye, may discern that they consider not with whom they have to do in this matter. The Scripture, I suppose, they will grant to be given by inspiration from God ; if they deny it, we are ready to prove it at any time. I suppose, also, that they will grant that the end why God gave it was, that it might be a revelation of himself, so far as it was needful for us to know him, and his mind and will, so that we may serve him. If this were not the end for which God gave his word unto us, I wish they would acquaint us with some other. I think it was not that it might be put into a cabinet, and locked up in a chest: if this were the end of it, then God intended in it to make a revelation of himself, so far as it was necessary we should know of him, and his mind and will, that we might serve him. For that which is any one end of any thing, or matter, that he intends, which is the author of it. Now if God intended to make such a revelation of himself, his mind and will, in giving of the Scripture, as was said ; he hath either done it plainly, that is, without any such obscurity, as should frustrate him of his end, or he hath not ; and that because either he would not, or he could not. I wish I knew which of these it was that the Roman Catholics do fix upon ; it would spare me the labour of speaking to the other : but seeing I do not, that they may have no evasion, I will consider them both. If they say, it was because he could not make any such plain discovery and revelation of himself ; then this is that they say : That God intending to reveal himself, his mind and will, plainly in the Scripture, to the

sons of men, was not able to do it, and therefore failed in his design. This works but little to the glory of his omnipotency and omniscieny. But to let that pass, wherein men (so they may compass their own ends) seem not to be much concerned: I desire to know, Whether this plain sufficient revelation of God, be made any other way or no? If no otherwise, then, as I confess we are all in the dark; so it is to no purpose to blame the Scripture of obscurity, seeing it is as lightsome as any thing else is, or can be. If this revelation be made some other way, it must be by God himself, or somebody else. That any other should be supposed in good earnest to do that which God cannot (though I know how some canonists have jested about the pope), I think will not be pleaded. If God then hath done this another way, I desire to know the true reason why he could not do it this way; namely, by the Scripture, and therefore desisted from his purpose? But it may be thought God could make a revelation of himself, his mind and will, in and by the Scripture, yet he would not do it plainly, but obscurely: let us then see what we mean by plainly in this business. We intend not, that every text in Scripture is easy to be understood; nor that all the matter of it is easy to be apprehended: we know that there are things in it hard to be understood, things to exercise the minds of the best and wisest of men unto diligence, and when they have done their utmost, unto reverence. But this is that we mean by 'plainly;' the whole will and mind of God, with whatever is needful to be known of him, is revealed in the Scripture, without such ambiguity or obscurity, as should hinder the Scripture from being a revelation of him, his mind and will; to the end, that we may know him, and live unto him. To say that God would not do this, would not make such a revelation (besides the reflection that it casts on his goodness and wisdom), is indeed to say, that he would not do that, which we say he would do. The truth is, all the harangues we meet withal about the obscurity of the Scripture, are direct arraignments of the wisdom and goodness of God. And if I were worthy to advise my Roman Catholic countrymen, I would persuade them to desist from this enterprise; if not in piety, at least in policy: for, I can assure them, as I think I have done already, that all their endeavours for the ex-

tenuation of the worth, excellency, fulness, sufficiency of the Scripture, do exceedingly confirm Protestants in the truth of their present persuasion; which they see cannot be touched, but by such horrible applications as they detest.

4. But yet they say, 'Scripture is not so clear, but that it needs interpretation; and Protestants have none to interpret it, so as to make it a means of ending differences.' I confess, the interpretation of Scripture is a good and necessary work; and I know, that he who was 'dead, and is alive for ever,' continues to give gifts unto men, according to his promise, to enable them to interpret the Scripture, for the edification of his body the church. If there were none of these interpreters among the Protestants, I wonder whence it is come to pass, that his comments on, and interpretations of Scripture, who is most hated by Romanists of all the Protestants that ever were in the world, are so borrowed, and used (that I say not stolen) by so many of them. And that indeed what is praiseworthy in any of their church, in the way of exposition of Scripture, is either borrowed from Protestants, or done in imitation of them. If I am called on for instances in this kind, I shall give them, I am persuaded, to some men's amazement, who are less conversant in these things. But we are besides the matter. 'It is of an infallible interpreter, in whose expositions and determinations of Scripture sense all Christians are obliged to acquiesce, and such a one you have none.' I confess we have not, if it be such a one as you intend; whose expositions and interpretations we must acquiesce in: not because they are true, but because they are his. We have infallible expositions of the Scripture in all necessary truths, as we are assured from the Scripture itself. But an infallible expositor, into whose authority our faith should be resolved, besides the Scripture itself, we have none. Nor do I think they have any at Rome, whatever they talk of to men that were never there; nor, I suppose, do they believe it themselves: for indeed if they do, I know not how they can be freed, from being thought to be strangely distempered, if not stark mad. For, not to talk of the Tower of London, this I am sure of, that we have whole cart-loads of comments and expositions on the Scripture, written by members of the church, men of all orders and degrees; and he that has cast

an eye upon them, knows, that a great part of their large volumes, are spent in confuting the expositions of one another, and those that went before them. Now what a madness is this, or childishness, above that of very children, to lie swaggering and contending one with another, before all the world, with fallible mediums about the sense of Scripture, and giving expositions, which no man is bound to acquiesce in, any farther than he sees reason; whilst all this while they have one amongst them, who can interpret all; and that with such an authority, as all men are bound to rest in, and contend no farther? And the farther mischief of it is, that of all the rest, this man is always silent, as to exposition of Scripture, who alone is able to part the fray. There be two things, which I think verily, if I were a Papist, I should never like in the pope; because methinks they argue a great deal of want of good nature. The one is, that we treat about, that he can see his children so fiercely wrangle about the sense of Scripture, and yet will not give out what is the infallible meaning of every place, at least that is controverted, and so stint the strife amongst them, seeing it seems he can if he would. And the other is, that he suffers so many souls to lie in purgatory, when he may let them forth if he please; and, that I know of, hath received no order to the contrary. But the truth is, that neither the Romanists, nor we, have any infallible living judge, in whose determination of the sense of Scripture, all men should be bound to acquiesce, upon the account of his authority. This is all the difference; we openly profess we have none such, and betake us to that which we have, which is better for us; they pretending they have, yet acting constantly as if they had not, and as indeed they have not; maintain a perpetual inconsistency, and contradiction between their pretensions, and their practice. The Holy Ghost, speaking in and by the Scripture, using the ministry of men furnished by himself, with gifts and abilities, and lawfully called to the work, for the oral declaration, or other expositions of his mind, is that which the Protestants cleave unto, for the interpreting of the Scripture; which itself discovers, when infallible. And if Papists can tell me of a better way, I will quickly embrace it. I suppose I may, upon the considerations we have had of the reasons offered

to prove the insufficiency of Scripture, to settle us in the truth, and to end our differences, conclude their insufficiency to any such purpose. We know the Scripture was given us to settle us in the truth, and to end our differences; we know it is profitable to that end and purpose, and able to make us wise to salvation. If we find not these effects wrought in ourselves, it is our own fault; and I desire that for hereafter, we may bear our own blame, without such reflections on the holy word of the infinitely blessed God.

IX. We are come at length unto the pope, of whom we are told, That 'he is a good man, one that seeks nothing but our good, that never did us harm, but has the care, and inspection of us committed unto him by Christ.' For my part, I am glad to hear such news of him, and should be more glad to find it to be true. Our forefathers and predecessors in the faith we profess, found it otherwise. All the harm that could be done unto them, by ruining their families, destroying their estates, imprisoning, and torturing their persons, and lastly, burning their bodies in fire, they received at his hands. If the alteration pretended, be not from the shortening of his power, but the change of his mind and will, I shall be very glad to hear of it. For the present, I confess, I had rather take it for granted, whilst he is at this distance, than see him trusted with power, for the trial of his will. I never heard of much of his repentance, for the blood of those thousands that hath been shed by his authority, and in his cause; which makes me suspect, he may be somewhat of the same mind still, as he was. Time was, when the very worst of popes exhausted more treasure out of this nation, to spend it abroad to their own ends, than some are willing to grant to the best of kings, to spend at home for their goods. It may be, he is changed, as to this design also, but I do not know it; nor is any proof offered of it by our author. Let us deal plainly one with another, and (without telling us, that 'the pope never did us harm,' which is not the way to make us believe, that he will not; because it makes us suspect, that all we have suffered from him, is thought no harm) let him tell us how he will assure us, that if this good pope get us into his power again, he will not burn us, as he did our forefathers, unless we submit our consciences unto him in all things; that he will not

find out ways to draw the treasure out of the nation, nor absolve subjects from their allegiance, nor excommunicate, or attempt the deposition of our kings, or the giving away of their kingdoms, as he has done in former days? That these things he hath done, we know; that he hath repented of them, and changed his mind thereupon, we know not. To have any thing to do with him, whilst he continues in such distempers, is not only against the principles of religion, but of common prudence also. For my part, I cannot but fear, until I see security tendered of this change in the pope, that all the good words that are given us concerning him, are but baits to inveigle us into his power; and, to tell you the truth, ‘terrent vestigia.’ How the pope employs himself in seeking our good, which our author paints out unto us, I know not; when I see the effects of it, I shall be thankful for it. In the mean time, being so great a stranger to Rome as I am, I must needs say, I know nothing that he does, but seek to destroy us, body and soul. Our author pleads indeed, that ‘the care and inspection of our condition is committed to him by Christ;’ but he attempts not to prove it, which I somewhat marvel at: for having professedly deserted the old way of pleading the Catholic cause and interest (which I presume he did, upon conviction of its insufficiency), whereas he is an ingenious person, he could not but know, that ‘*Pasce oves meas, tu es Petrus, tibi dabo claves,*’ are as weak parts of the old plea as any made use of, belonging nothing at all to the thing whereunto they are applied; it is somewhat strange, that he would substitute no new proofs in their room. But, it seems, it is not every one’s hap, with him of old, to want opinions sometimes, but no arguments. When he has got proofs to his purpose, we will again attend unto him: in the mean time, in this case shall only mind him, that the taking for granted in disputations, that which should principally be proved, has got an ill name amongst learned men, being commonly called begging.

X. The last principle which I have observed, diffusing its influences throughout the whole discourse, is, That ‘the devotion of Catholics, far transcends that of Protestants: their preaching also (which I forgot to mention before) is far to be preferred above that of these: and for their religion and worship, it is liable to no just exception.’ I

desire that our author would but a little call to mind that parable of our Saviour, about the two men that went up into the temple to pray. To me this discourse smells rank of the Pharisee, and I wish that we might all rather strive to grow in faith, love, charity, self-denial, and universal conformity unto our Lord Jesus, than to bristle up and cry, 'Stand farther off, for I am holier than thou.' In the mean time, for the respect I bear him, I entreat our author to speak no more of this matter, lest some angry Protestant, or some fanatic should take occasion to talk of old matters and rip up old sores, or give an account of the present state of things in the church of Rome, all which were a great deal better covered. If he will not take my advice, he must thank himself for that which will assuredly follow. I must also say, by the way, that that devotion which consists so much, as our author makes it to do, in the sweeping of churches and tinkling of bells, in counting of beads and knocking of breasts, is of very little value with Protestants who have obtained an experience of the excellency of spiritual communion with God in Christ Jesus. Now whether these parts of the profession and practice of his church, which he is pleased to undertake, not only the vindication, but the adorning of, be liable to just exception or no, is the last part of our work to consider, and which shall in its proper place be done accordingly.

As I before observed, he that shall but cursorily run through this discourse, will quickly find that these false suppositions, ungrounded presumptions, and unwarrantable pretensions, are things which are disposed of to be the foundations, nerves, and sinews of all the rhetoric that it is covered and wrought withal, and that the bare drawing of them out, leaves all the remaining flourishes in a more scattered condition than the Sibyl's leaves; which no man can gather up and put together to make up any significancy at all as to the design in hand. I might then well spare all farther labour, and here put a period to my progress; and indeed would do so, were I secure I had none to deal with but ingenious and judicious readers, that have some tolerable acquaintance at least with the estate of religion of old and at present in Europe, and with the concernment of their own souls in these things. But that no pretence may be left

unto any, that we avoided any thing material in our author, having passed through his discourse unto the end of it, I shall once more return to the beginning, and pass through its severals, leaving behind in the way such animadversions as are any way needful to rescue such as have not a mind to be deceived from the snares and cobwebs of his oratory.

CHAP. III.

Motive, matter, and method of our author's book.

WHAT remains of our author's preface is spent in the pursuit of an easy task in all the branches of it. To condemn the late miscarriages in these nations, to decry divisions in religion, with their pernicious consequences, to commend my lord chancellor's speech, are things that have little difficulty in them, to exercise the skill of a man pretending so highly as our author doth. He may secure himself, that he will find no opposition about these things from any man in his right wits. No other man certainly can be so forsaken of religion and humanity, as not to deplore the woful undertakings and more woful issues of sundry things, whereunto the concernments of religion have been pleaded to give countenance. The rancour also of men, and wrath against one another on the same accounts, with the fruits which they bring forth all the world over, are doubtless a burden to the minds of all that love truth and peace. To prevent a returnal to the former, and remove or at least allay the latter, how excellently the speech of that great counsellor, and the things proposed in it, are suited; all sober and ingenious men must needs acknowledge. Had this then been the whole design of this preface, I had given his book many an amen, before I had come to the end. But our author having wholly another mark in his eye, another business in hand, I should have thought it a little uncivil in him, to make my lord chancellor's speech seemingly subservient to that which he never intended, never aimed at, which no word or expression in it leads unto; but that I find him afterward so dealing with the words of God himself. His real work in this compass of words, is to set up a blind, or give a false alarm, to arrest and

stay his unwary reader, whilst he prepares him for an entertainment which he thought not of. The pretence he flourisheth over both in the preface and sundry other parts of his discourse, is, the hatefulness of our animosities in and about religion, their dismal effects, with the necessity and excellency of moderation in things of that nature; the real work in hand is, a persuasive unto popery, and, unto that end (not of moderation, or forbearance) are all his arguments directed. Should a man go to him, and say, Sir, I have read your learned book, and find that heats and contests about differences in religion are things full of evil, and such as tend unto farther misery; I am therefore resolved quietly to persist in the way of protestancy wherein I am, without ever attempting the least violence against others for their dissent from me, but only with meekness and quietness defend the truth which I profess; I presume, he will not judge his design half accomplished towards such a man, if at all. Nay, I dare say with some confidence, that in reference to such a one, he would say to himself, '*Operam et oleum peridi.*' And therefore doth he wisely tell us, p. 12. that his matter is perceived by the prefixed general contents of his chapters; his design, which he calls his method, he confesseth that he doth purposely conceal. But the truth is, it is easily discoverable, there being few pages in the book, that do not display it.

The reader then must understand, that the plain English of all his commendations of moderation, and all his exhortations to a relinquishment of those false lights and principles, which have led men to a disturbance of the public peace, and ensuing calamities, is, that popery is the only religion in the world, and that centring therein is the only means to put an end to our differences, heats, and troubles. Unless this be granted, it will be very hard to find one grain of sincerity in the whole discourse: and if it be, no less difficult to find so much of truth. So that whatever may be esteemed suitable to the fancies of any of them whom our author courts in his address, those who know any thing of the holiness of God and the gospel, of that reverence which is due to Christ and his word, and wherewith all the concernments of religion ought to be managed, will scarcely judge that that blessed fountain of light and truth will immix his pure beams and blessings, with such crafty, worldly, sophistical

devices; or such frothy ebullitions of wit and fancy as this discourse is stuffed withal. These are things, that may be fit to entangle unstable spirits, who being regardless of eternity, and steering their course according to every blast of temptation, that fills their lusts and carnal pleasures, are as ready to change their religion (if men can make any change in, or of that which in reality they neither leave nor receive, but only sport themselves to and fro with the cloud and shadow of it) as they are their clothes and fashions. Those who have had experience of the power and efficacy of that religion which they have professed, as to all the ends for which religion is of God revealed, will be little moved with the stories, pretences and diversions of this discourse.

Knowing, therefore, our author's design (and which we shall have occasion to deal with him about, throughout his treatise), which is to take advantage from the late miscarriages amongst us, and the differences that are in the world in religion, to persuade men not indeed and ultimately to mutual moderation and forbearance, but to a general acquiescency in the Roman Catholicism, I shall not here farther speak unto it. The five heads of his matter may be briefly run over as he proposeth them, p. 13. with whose consideration I shall take my leave of his preface.

The first is, 'That there is not any colour of reason, or just title, to move us to quarrel and judge one another, with so much heat about religion.' Indeed there is not, nor can there be; no man was ever so mad as to suppose there could be any reason or just title for men to do evil: to quarrel and judge one another with heats about religion, is of that nature. But, if placing himself to keep a decorum amongst Protestants, he would insinuate, that we have no reason to contend about religion, as having lost all title unto it by our departure from Rome, I must take leave unto this general head, to put in a general demurrer; which I shall afterward plead to, and vindicate.

His second is, 'That all things are so obscure, that no man in prudence can so far presume of his own knowledge, as to set up himself a guide and leader in religion.' I say so too; and suppose the words as they lie, whatever be intended in them, are keenly set against the great papal pretension: whatever he may pretend, we know, the pope sets up himself

to be a guide to all men in religion ; and, if he do it not upon a presumption of his own knowledge, we know not on what better grounds he doth it. And though we wholly condemn men's setting up themselves to be guides and leaders to their neighbours ; yet, if he intend, that all things are so obscure, that we have no means to come to the knowledge of the truth concerning God and his mind, so far as it is our duty to know it ; and therefore, that no man can teach or instruct another in that knowledge ; I say as before, we are not yet of his mind : whether we shall be or no, the process of our discourse will shew.

3. He adds, 'That no sect hath any advantage at all over another, nor all of them together over popery.' Yes ; they that have the truth, wherein they have it, have advantage against all others that have it not. And so protestancy hath advantage over popery. And here the pretext or visor of this Protestant begins to turn aside : in the next head, it quite falls from him.

That is, 4. 'That all the several kinds of religion here in England, are equally innocent to one another ; and popery, as it stands in opposition to them, is absolutely innocent and unblamable to them all.' I am little concerned in the former part of these words, concerning the several kinds of religion in England, having undertaken the defence of one only ; namely, protestancy. Those that are departed from protestancy so far as to constitute another kind of religion ; as to any thing from me, shall plead for themselves. However I wish, that all parties in England were all equally innocent to one another, or that they would not be willing to make themselves equally nocent. But the latter part of the words contain, I promise you, a very high undertaking. 'Popery is innocent, absolutely innocent and unblamable to them all.' I fear we shall scarce find it so, when we come to the trial. I confess I do not like this pretence of absolute innocency and unblamableness. I suppose, they are men that profess popery, and I do know that popery is a religion or profession of men's finding out ; how it should come to be so absolutely innocent on a sudden, I cannot imagine : but we will leave this until we come to the proof of it, taking notice only, that here is a great promise made

unto his noble and ingenuous readers, that cannot advantage his cause, if he be not able to make it good. The close is,

5. 'That as there neither is, nor can be any rational motive for disputes and animosities about matters of religion; so is there an indispensable moral cause, obliging us to moderation,' &c. But this, as I observed before, though upon the first view of the sign hanging up at the door, a man would guess to be the whole work that was doing in the house, is indeed no part of his business; and is therefore thrust out at the postern, in two short leaves, the least part of them in his own words, after the spending of three hundred and sixty-four pages in the pursuit of his proper design. But, seeing we must look over these things again, in the chapters assigned to their adorning, we may take our leave of them at present, and of his preface together.

CHAP. IV.

Contests about religion and reformation, schoolmen, &c.

CHAP. I. The title of this chapter was proposed; the pursuit of it now ensues. The first paragraph is a declamation about sundry things which have not much blameworthy in them. Their common weakness is, that they are common. They tend not to the furtherance of any one thing more than another; but are such as any party may flourish withal, and use to their several ends as they please. That, 'desire of honour and applause in the world,' hath influenced the minds of men to great and strange undertakings, is certain. That it should do so, is not certain, nor true: so, that when we treat of religion, if we renounce not the fundamental principle of it in self-denial, this consideration ought to have no place. What then was done by emperors and philosophers of old, or by the latter schoolmen on this account, we are little concerned in. Nor have I either desire or design to vellicate any thing spoken by our author, that may have an indifferent interpretation put upon it; and be separated from the end which he principally pursues. As there is but very

little spoken in this paragraph, directly tending to the whole end aimed at, so there are but three things, that will any way serve to leaven the mind of his reader, that he may be prepared to be moulded into the form he hath fancied to cast him into, which is the work of all these previous harangues.

The first is his insinuation, That the ‘reformation of religion is a thing pretended by emulous plebeians, not able to hope for that supervisorship in religion which they see intrusted with others.’ How unserviceable this is unto his design as applied to the church of England, all men know; for setting aside the consideration of the influence of sovereign royal authority, the first reformers amongst us were persons, who, as they enjoyed the right of reputation for the excellencies of learning and wisdom; so also were they fixed in those places and conditions in the church, which no reformation could possibly advance them above; and the attempt whereof cost them not only their dignities, but their lives also. Neither were Hezekiah, Josiah, or Ezra of old, ‘emulous plebeians,’ whose lasting glory and renown arose from their reformation of religion. They who fancy men in all great undertakings to be steered by desire of applause and honour, are exceeding incompetent judges of those actions which zeal for the glory of God, love to the truth, sense of their duty to the Lord Jesus Christ, and compassion for the souls of others, do lead men unto, and guide them in; and such will the last day manifest the reformation traduced to have been.

The second, is a gallant commendation of the ingenuity, charity, candour, and sublime science of the schoolmen. I confess, they have deserved good words at his hands. These are the men, who, out of a mixture of philosophy, traditions, and Scripture, all corrupted and perverted, have hammered that faith, which was afterward confirmed under so many anathemas at Trent. So that upon the matter, he is beholden to them for his religion; which I find he loves, and hath therefore reason to be thankful to its contrivers. For my part, I am as far from envying them their commendation, as I have reason to be; which I am sure is far enough. But yet before we admit this testimony, hand over head, I could wish he would take a course to stop the

mouths of some of his own church, and those no small ones neither, who have declared them to the world, to be a pack of egregious sophisters, neither good philosophers, nor any divines at all; men who seem not to have had the least reverence of God, nor much regard to the truth in any of their disputations, but were wholly influenced by a vain reputation of subtlety, desire of conquest, of leading and denominating parties, and that in a barbarous science, barbarously expressed, until they had driven all learning and divinity almost out of the world. But I will not contend about these fathers of contention: let every man esteem of them as he seems good.

There is the same respect, in that bitter reflection which he makes on those, who have managed differences in religion in this last age, the third thing observable. That they are the writers, and writings, that have been published against the papacy which he intends; he doth more than intimate. Their disputes, he tells us, 'are managed with so much unseemly behaviour, such unmannerly expressions, that discreet sobriety cannot but loathe, and abhor to read them;' with very much more to this purpose. I shall not much labour to persuade men not to believe what he says in this matter; for I know full well, that he believes it not himself. He hath seen too many Protestant books, I suppose, to think this censure will suit them all. This was meet to be spoken, for the advantage of the Catholic cause: for what there hath been of real offence in this kind amongst us, we may say, *'Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra;'* Romanists are sinners as well as others. And I suppose himself knows, that the reviling, and defamations used by some of his party, are not to be paralleled in any writings of mankind at this day extant.

About the appellations he shall think meet to make use of, in reference to the persons at variance, we will not contend with him: only I desire to let him know, that the reproach of Galilean from the Pagans, which he appropriates to the Papists, was worn out of the world, before that popery which he pleads for, came into it. As Roman Catholics never tasted of the sufferings wherewith that reproach was attended, so they have no special right to the honour that is in its remembrance. As to the sport he is

pleased to make with his countrymen, in the close of this paragraph, about losing their wits in religious contests, with the evils thence ensuing, I shall no farther reflect upon; but once more to mind the reader, that the many words he is pleased to use in the exaggerating the evils of managing differences in religion with animosities and tumults, so seemingly to persuade men to moderation and peace, I shall wholly pass by, as having discovered, that that is not his business, nor consequently, at present, mine.

It is well observed by him in his second paragraph, that most of the great contests in the world about perishing things, proceed from the unmortified lusts of men. The Scripture abounds in testimonies given hereunto: St. James expressly, ‘From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not,’ chap. iv. 1, 2. Men’s lusts put them on endless irregularities, in unbounded desires, and foolish sinful enterprises for their satisfaction. Neither is Satan, the old enemy of the welfare of mankind, wanting to excite, provoke, and stir up these lusts by mixing himself with them in his temptations, thrusting them on, and entangling them in their pursuit. As to the contests about religion, which I know not with what mind or intention he terms an ‘empty airy business, a ghostly fight, a skirmish of shadows or horsemen in the clouds,’ he knows not what principle, cause, or source, to ascribe them unto; that which he is most inclinable unto is, ‘That there is something invisible above man, stronger and more politic than he, that doth this contumely to mankind, that casts in these apples of contention amongst us, that hisses us to war and battle, as waggish boys do dogs in the street.’ That which is intended in these words, and sundry others of the like quality that follow, is, that this ariseth from the enticements and impulsions of the devil. And none can doubt, but that in these works of darkness, the prince of darkness hath a great hand. The Scripture also assures us, that as the scorpions which vexed the world issued out of the bottomless pit, so also that these unclean spirits do stir up the powers of the earth to make opposition unto the truth of the gospel, and religion of Jesus Christ.

But yet neither doth this hinder, but that even these religious feuds and miscarriages also, proceed principally from the ignorance, darkness, and lusts of men. In them lies the true cause of all dissensions in and about the things of God. The best know but in part, and the most love darkness more than light, because their works are evils. A vain conversation received by tradition from men's fathers, with inveterate prejudices, love of the world, and the customs thereof, do all help on this sad work wherein so many are employed. That some preach the gospel of God ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι with all their strength, in much contention, 'and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints;' as it is their duty, so it is no cause, but only an accidental occasion, of differences amongst men. That the invisible substances our author talks of, should be able to sport themselves with us as children do with dogs in the street, and that with the like impulse from them, as dogs from these, we should rush into our contentions, might pass for a pretty notion, but only that it overthrows all religion in the world, and the whole nature of man. There is evil enough in corrupted nature to produce all these evils which are declaimed against to the end of this section, were there no demons to excite men unto them. The adventitious impressions from them, by temptations and suggestions, doubtless promote them, and make men precipitate above their natural tempers in their productions; but the principal cause of all our evils is still to be looked for at home,

Nec te quæsieris extra.

Sect. 3. page 34. In the next section of this chapter whereunto he prefixes, 'Nullity of Title,' he pursues the persuasive unto peace, moderation, charity, and quietness in our several persuasions, with so many reasonings and good words, that a man would almost think that he began to be in good earnest, and that those were the things which he intended for their own sakes to promote. I presume, it cannot but at the first view seem strange to some, to find a man of the Roman party so ingeniously arguing against the imposition of our senses in religion magisterially and with violence one upon the other; it being notoriously known to all the world, that they are, if not the only, yet the greatest

imposers on the minds and consciences of men that ever lived in the earth ; and which work they cease not the prosecution of, where they have power, until they come to fire and fagot. I dare say, there is not any strength in any of his queries, collections, and arguings, but an indifferent man would think it at the first sight to be pointed against the Roman interest and practice. For what have they been doing for some ages past, but under a pretence of charity to the souls of men, endeavouring to persuade them to their opinions and worship, or to impose them on them whether they will or no? But let old things pass ; it is well if now at last they begin to be otherwise minded. What then, if we should take this gentleman at his word, and cry, A match ; let us strive and contend no more ; keep you your religion at Rome to yourselves, and we will do as well as we can with ours in England ; we will trouble you no more about yours, nor pray do not you meddle with us or ours. Let us pray for one another, wait on God for light and direction, it being told us, that ‘if any one be otherwise minded’ (than according to the truth) ‘God shall reveal that unto him.’ Let us all strive to promote godliness, obedience to the commands of Christ, good works, and peace in the world ; but for this contending about opinions, or endeavouring to impose our several persuasions upon one another, let us give it quite over. I fear he would scarcely close with us, and so wind up all our differences upon the bottom of his own proposals ; especially, if this law should extend itself to all other nations equally concerned with England. He would quickly tell us, that this is our mistake ; he intended not Roman Catholics, and the differences we have with them in this discourse. It is Protestants, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers, that he deals withal, and them only, and that upon this ground, that none of them have any title or pretence of reason to impose on one another, and so ought to be quiet, and let one another alone in matters of religion. But for the Roman Catholics, they are not concerned at all in this harangue, having a sufficient title to impose upon them all. Now, truly, if this be all, I know not what we have to thank you for, ‘*Tantumne est otii tibi abs re tua, aliena ut cures, eaque quæ ad te nihil attinent?*’ There are wise and learned men in England, who are con-

cerned in our differences, and do labour to compose them or suppress them. That this gentleman should come and jostle them aside, and impose himself an umpire upon us without our choice or desire in matters that belong not unto him, how charitable it may seem to be I know not, but it is scarcely civil. Would, he would be persuaded to go home and try his remedies upon the distempers of his own family, before he confidently vend them to us. I know he has no salves about him to heal diversities of opinions, that he can write 'probatum est' upon, from his Roman church. If he have, he is the most uncharitable man in the world to leave them at home brawling and together by the ears; to seek out practice where he is neither desired nor welcome, when he comes without invitation. I confess, I was afraid at the beginning of the section, that I should be forced to change the title before I came to the end, and write over it 'Desinit in piscem.' The sum of this whole paragraph is, that all sorts of Protestants, and others here in England, do ridiculously contend about their several persuasions in religion, and put trouble on one another on that account, whereas it is the pope only that hath title and right to prescribe a religion unto us all; which is not to me unlike the fancy of the poor man in bedlam, who smiled with great contentment at their folly, who imagined themselves either Queen Elizabeth, or King James, seeing he himself was King Henry the Eighth. But, seeing that is the business in hand, let us see what is this title that the pope hath which Protestants can lay no claim unto. It is founded on that of the apostle to the Corinthians, 'Did the word of God come forth from you, or came it unto you only?' This is pretended the only rule to determine with whom the pre-eminence of religion doth remain: now the word came not out originally from Protestants, or Puritans, nor came it to them alone. So that they have no reason to be imposing their conceptions on one another, or own others that differ from them. But our author seems here to have fallen upon a great misadventure; there is not, as I know of, any one single text of Scripture, that doth more fatally cut the throat of papal pretensions than this that he hath stumbled on. It is known that the pope and his adherents claim a pre-eminence in religion, to be the sole judges of all its concerns, and

the imposers of it in all the world. What men receive from them, that is truth; what they are any otherwise instructed in, it is all false and naught. On this pretence it is, that this gentleman pleads nullity of title amongst us as to all our contests; though we know that truth carries its title with it, in whose hands soever it be found. Give me leave then to make so bold (at least at this distance) as to ask the pope and his adherents ‘*An a vobis verbum Dei processit, an ad vos solos pervenit?*’ ‘Did the gospel first come from you, or only unto you,’ that you thus exalt yourselves above your brethren all the world over? Do we not know by whom it first came to you, and from whom? Did it not come to very many parts of the world before you? to the whole world as well as to you? Why do you then boast yourselves as though you had been the first revealers of the gospel, or that it had come unto you in a way or manner peculiar and distinct from that by which it came to other places? Would you make us believe that Christ preached at Rome, or suffered or rose from the dead there, or gave the Holy Ghost first to the apostles there, or first there founded his church, or gave order for the empaling it there, when it was built? Would we never so fain, we cannot believe such prodigious fables. To what purpose then do you talk of title to impose your conceits in religion upon us? Did the gospel first come forth from you, or came it unto you only? Will not Rome, notwithstanding its seven hills, be laid in a level with the rest of the world, by virtue of this rule? The truth is as to the oral dispensation of the gospel, it came forth from Jerusalem, by the personal ministry of the apostles, and came equally to all the world. That spring being long since dried up, it now comes forth to all from the written word; and unto them who receive it in its power and truth doth it come, and unto no other. What may farther be thought necessary to be discussed, as to the matter of of fact, in reference to this rule, the reader may find handled under that consideration of the first supposition, which our author builds his discourse upon.

Sect. 4. p. 48. ‘Heats and Resolution,’ is the title of this section; in which, if our author be found blameless, his charge on others will be the more significant: the impartial reader that will not be imposed on by smooth words, will

easily know what to guess of his temper. In the mean time, though we think it is good to be well resolved in the things that we are to believe and practise in the worship of God; yet all irregular, and irrational heats, in the prosecution, or maintenance of men's different conceptions and apprehensions in religion, we desire sincerely to avoid and explode. Nor is it amiss, that, to further our moderation, we be minded of the temper of the Pagans, who in their opinion-wars (we are told) used no other weapons but only of pen and speech: for our author seems to have forgotten, not only innumerable other instances to the contrary, but also the renowned battle between Ombos and Tentyra. But this forgetfulness was needful, to aggravate the charge on Christians, that are not Romanists, for their heat, fury, and fightings, for the promotion of their opinions; as being in this so much the worse than Pagans, who in religion used another manner of moderation. And who, I pray, is it that manageth this charge? Whence comes this dove, with an olive-branch? this orator of peace? If we may guess from whence he came, by seeing whither he is going, we must say that it was from Rome. This is their plea, this the persuasion of men of the Roman interest; this their charge on Protestants: to this height the confidence of men's ignorance, inadvertency, and fulness of present things amounts. Could ever any one rationally expect, that these gentlemen would be public decriers of fury, wars, and tumults for religion? May not Protestants say to them, '*Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena cruoris?*' Is there any nation under the heavens, whereunto your power extends, wherein our blood hath not given testimony to your wrath and fury? After all your cursings and attempted depositions of kings and princes, translations of title to sovereignty and rule, invasions of nations, secret conspiracies, prisons, racks, swords, fire, and fagot, do you now come and declaim about moderation? We see you not yet cease from killing of men, in the pursuit of your fancies and groundless opinions; any where, but either where you have not power, or can find no more to kill: so that certainly, whatever reproach we deserve to have cast upon us in this matter, you are the unfittest men in the world to be managers of it. But I still find myself in a mistake in this thing: it is only Protestants, and others departed

from the Roman church, that our author treats of: it is they, who are more fierce and disingenuous than the Pagans, in their contests amongst themselves, and against the Romanists, as having the least share of reason of any upon the earth. His good church is not concerned, who as it is not led by such fancies and motives as they are, so it hath right (where it hath power) to deal with its adversaries as seems good unto it. This then, sir, is that which you intend; that we should agree amongst ourselves, and wait for your coming with power to destroy us all. It were well indeed, if we could agree; it is our fault and misery, if we do not, having so absolutely a perfect rule and means of agreement as we have. But yet, whether we agree, or agree not, if there be another party distinct from us all, pretending a right to exterminate us from the earth, it behoves us to look after their proceedings. And this is the true state of all our author's pleas for moderation; which are built upon such principles as tend to the giving us up unarmed and naked to the power and will of his masters.

For the rest of this section, wherein he is pleased to sport himself in the miscarriages of men in their coining and propagating of their opinions, and to gild over the care and success of the church of Rome, in stifling such births of pride and darkness, I shall not insist upon it. For as the first as generally tossed up and down, concerns none in particular, though accompanied with the repetition of such words as ought not to be scoffed at; so the latter is nothing but what violence and ignorance may any where, and in any age produce. There are societies of Christians, not a few, in the east, wherein mere darkness and ignorance of the truth, hath kept men at peace in errors, without the least disturbance by contrary opinions amongst themselves, for above a thousand years; and yet they have wanted the help of outward force to secure their tranquillity. And is it any wonder, that where both these powerful engines are set at work for the same end, if in some measure it be compassed and effected. And if there be such a thing among the Romanists (which I have reason to be difficult in admitting the belief of) as that they can stifle all opinions, as fast as they are conceived, or destroy them as soon as they are brought forth, I know it must be some device or artifice unknown

to the apostles and primitive churches; who notwithstanding all their authority and care for the truth, could not with many compass that end.

Sect. 5. p. 54. The last section of this chapter, contains motives to moderation, three in number; and I suppose, that no man doubts but that many more might be added, every one in weight outdoing all these three. The first is that alone which Protestants are concerned to look unto; not that Protestants oppose any motive under moderation; but knowing that in this discourse, moderation is only the pretence, popery (if I may use the word without incivility) the design and aim, it concerns them to examine, which of these pretended motives, that any way regards their real principle, doth tend unto. Now this motive is, the great ignorance our state and condition is involved in, concerning God, his works, and providence; a great motive to moderation, I wish all men would well consider it. For I must acknowledge, that I cannot but suppose them ignorant of the state and condition of mortality, and so consequently their own, who are ready to destroy and exterminate their neighbours of the same flesh and blood with them, and agreeing in the main principles of religion, that may certainly be known, for lesser differences, and that by such rules as within a few years may possibly reach their nearest relations. Our author also lays so much weight on this motive, that he fears an anticipation, by men saying, 'That the Scripture reveals enough unto us;' which therefore he thinks necessary to remove. For my part, I scarce think he apprehended any real danger, that this would be insisted on as an objection against his motive to moderation. For to prevent his tending on towards that which is indeed his proper end, this obstacle is not unseasonably laid, that under a pretence of the ignorance unavoidably attending our state and condition, he might not prevail upon us to increase and aggravate it, by enticing us to give up ourselves by an implicit faith to the conduct of the Roman church. A man may easily perceive the end he intends, by the objections which he foresees. No man is so mad, I think, as to plead the sufficiency of Scripture revelation against moderation; when in the revelation of the will of God contained in the Scripture, moderation is so much commended unto us, and pressed upon us. But

against the pretended necessity of resigning ourselves to the Romanists, for a relief against the unavoidable ignorance of our state and condition, besides that we know full well such a resignation would yield us no relief at all, this plea of the sufficiency of Scripture revelation is full and unanswerable. This put our author on a work which I have formerly once or twice advised him to meddle no more; being well assured, that it is neither for his reputation, nor his advantage, much less for his soul's health. The pretences which he makes use of, are the same that we have heard of many and many a time; the abuse of it by some, and the want of an infallible interpreter of it as to us all. But the old tale is here anew gilded with an intermixture of other pretty stories, and application of all to the present humours of men; not forgetting to set forth the brave estate of our forefathers, that had not the use of the Scripture; which what it was, we know well enough, and better than the prejudices of this gentleman will give him leave to tell us. But if the lawful and necessary use of any thing may be decried, because of its abuse, we ought not only to labour the abolishing of all Christian religion in general, and every principle of it in particular out of the world, but the blotting out of the sun, and moon, and stars, out of the firmament of heaven, and the destruction of the greatest and most noble parts, at least, of the whole creation: but as the apostles continued in the work of preaching the gospel, though by some the grace they taught 'was turned into lasciviousness;' so shall we abide to plead for the use of the Scripture, whatever abuse of them by the wicked lusts of men can be instanced in. Nor is there any reason in the world, why food should be kept from all men, though some have surfeited, or may yet so do. To have a compendious narration of the story and morality of the Scripture in the room of the whole, which our author allows of, is so jejune, narrow, and empty a conception, so unanswerable to all those divine testimonies given to the excellency of the word of God, with precepts to abide in the meditation and study of it, to grow in the knowledge of it, and the mysteries contained it, the commendations of them that did so, in the Scripture itself, so blasphemously derogatory to the goodness, love, and wisdom of God, in granting

us that inestimable benefit, so contrary to the redoubled exhortations of all the ancient fathers, that I wonder any one who dares pretend to have read it, or to be a Christian, can own and avow such a notion. All the fine stories, allusions, and speculations, about madness, that he is pleased to flourish withal in this matter, are a covering too short and narrow to hide that wretched contempt of the holy word of the great God, which in these notions discovers itself. Men who by corrupt principles have been scared from the study of the Scripture, or by their lusts kept from its serious perusal, or attendance unto it, that value not the authority of God, of Christ, or his apostles, commanding and requiring the diligent study of it, that disregard the glorious mysteries, revealed in it on set purpose that we might all come to an acquaintance with them, and so, consequently, that have had no experience of the excellency or usefulness of it, nor lie under any conviction of their own duty to attend unto it, may perhaps be glad to have their lusts and unbelief so far accommodated, as to suffer themselves to be persuaded, that there is no need that they should any farther regard it, than hitherto they have done. 'But in vain is the net spread before the eye of any thing that hath a wing;' for them who have tasted the sweetness of the good word of God, who have attained any acquaintance with its usefulness and excellency, who have heard the voice of God in it, making the knowledge of his will revealed therein, of indispensable necessity to the salvation of their souls; believe me, sir, all your rhetoric and stories, your pretences and flourishes, will never prevail with them to cast away their Bibles, and resolve for the future to believe only in the pope. Of the interpretation of the Scripture I have spoken before, and shewed sufficiently, that neither are we at any such a loss therein, as to bring us to any uncertainty about the principles of our religion; nor, if we were, have we the least reason to look for any relief from Rome. When I happen upon any of these discourses, I cannot but say to myself, What do these men intend? Do they know what they do, or with whom they have to deal? Have they ever read the Scriptures, or tasted any sweetness in it? If they instruct their disciples unto such mean thoughts of the holy word of God,

they undo them for ever. And if I meet with these bold efforts against the wisdom of God twenty times, I cannot but still thus startle at them.

The two following motives being taken up, as far as I can apprehend, to give our author an advantage to make sport for himself and others, in canvassing some expressions and discourses of our talkative times, and the vulgar brutish management of our differences by some weak unknowing persons, need not detain us. Did I judge it a business worthy of any prudent man's consideration, it were easy to return him for his requital, a collection of the pretty prayers and devotions of his good Catholics, of their kind treatments one of another, or the doughty arguments they make use of amongst themselves and against us; abundantly enough to repay him his kindness, without being beholden to any of those legends, which they formerly accommodated the people withal, in room both of Scripture and preaching; though of late they begin to be ashamed of them.

CHAP. V.

Obscurity of God, &c.

CHAP. II. Unto the ensuing whole chapter, wherein our author expatiates with a most luxuriant oratory throughout; and oftentimes soars with poetical raptures, in setting forth the obscurity and darkness of all things, our ignorance and disability to attain a right and perfect knowledge of them, canting by the way many of those pretty notions, which the philosophical discursive men of our days do use to whet their wits upon over a glass of wine, I have not much to offer: nor should I once reflect upon that discourse, were it not designed to another end than that which it is ushered in by, as the thing aimed to be promoted by it. Forbearance of one another in our several persuasions on a sense of our infirmity and weakness, and the obscurity of those things about which our minds and contemplations are conversant, is flourished at the entrance of this harangue: after a small

progress, the snake begins to hiss in the grass, and in the close openly to shew itself, in an enticement unto an embracing of the Roman religion ; which, it seems, will disentangle our minds out of that maze about the things of God and man, in which, without its guidance, we must of necessity wander for ever. As for his philosophical notions, I suppose they were only vented to shew his skill in the learned talk of this age, and to toll on the gallants whom he hath most hope to inveigle, knowing them to be candidates for the most part, unto that scepticism which is grown the entertainment of tables and taverns. How a man that is conversant in his thoughts about religion, and his choice of, or settlement therein, should come to have any concernment in this discourse I cannot imagine. That God who is infinitely wise; holy, good, who perfectly knows all his own excellencies, hath revealed so much of himself, his mind, and will, in reference to the knowledge which he requires of himself, and obedience unto him as is sufficient to guide us whilst we are here below, to steer our course in our subjection to him, and dependance on him in a manner acceptable unto him, and to bring us to our utmost end and blessedness in the enjoyment of him. This Protestants think sufficient for them, who as they need not, so they desire not to be wise above what is written ; nor to know more of God than he hath so revealed of himself, that they may know it. Those barren, fruitless speculations which some curious serpentine wits, casting off all reverence of the sovereignty and majesty of God, have exercised themselves in and about, even in things too high and hard for them, darkening counsel and wisdom by words of pretended subtlety, but real folly ; are fitter to be exploded out of the world, than fomented and cherished in the minds of men.

Nor doth that discourse about God and his essence, which lies before us, seem to grow on any other roots than ignorance and curiosity ; ignorance of what it is that God requireth us to know of him, and how ; and curiosity in prying into and using words about what we do not understand, nor is it the mind of God that we should. Were poor sinner's thoroughly sensible of their own condition, and what acquaintance with God their concernment doth lie in, they would little value such vain towering imaginations as some

men's minds are exercised withal. Come, sir, let us leave these vain flourishes, and in deepest abasement of soul, pray that we may know how 'the Father, whom no man hath seen at any time, is revealed by the only begotten Son, who is in his bosom.' What he is in his law towards impenitent sinners, what in the covenant of his grace to them that fly for refuge to the hope that is set before them; even that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards them that believe, according to the working of the might, of his power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places; that our hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and by whom alone we may obtain any saving acquaintance with them; who also is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true.

This is the port-haven of Protestants, whatever real darkness may be about them, or whatever mists may be cast on them by the sleights of men that lie in wait to deceive; that they need know no more of God, that they may love him, fear him, believe in him, and come to the enjoyment of him, than what he hath clearly and expressly in Christ revealed of himself by his word. Whether the storms of this gentleman's indignation be able to drive them, or the more pleasant gales of his eloquence to entice them from this harbour, time will shew. In the mean while, that indeed they ought not so to do, nor will do so with any but such as are resolved to steer their course by some secret distempers of their own, a few strictures on the most material passages of this chapter will discover.

It is scarce worth while to remark his mistake in the foundation of his discourse of the 'Obscurity of God,' as he is pleased to state the matter, from that of the prophet, as-

serting, that 'God is a God who hides himself,' or, as he renders it, a 'hidden God.' His own prophet will tell him, that it is not concerning the essence of God, but the dispensation of his love and favour towards his people, that those words were used by the prophet of old, and so are unwillingly pressed to serve in the design he hath in hand. Neither are we more concerned in the ensuing discourse of the 'Soul's cleaving to God by affection,' upon the metaphysical representation of his excellencies and perfections unto it; it being purely Platonical, and no way suited to the revelation made of God in the gospel, which acquaints us not with any such amiableness in God, as to endear the souls of sinners unto him, causing them to reach out the wings of their love after him, but only as he is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to himself; a consideration that hath no place, nor can obtain any in this flourish of words: and the reason is, because they are sinners, and therefore without the revelation of an atonement, can have no other apprehension of the infinitely holy and righteous God, but as of a devouring fire, with whom no sinner can inhabit. Nor yet in the aggravation of the obscurity of God from the restless endeavours of mankind in the disquisition of him, who, as he says, 'shew their love in seeking him, having at their birth an equal right to his favour, which they could nowise demerit before they were born,' being directly contrary to the doctrine of his own church, in the head of original sin.

That which first draws up towards the design he is in pursuit of, is his determination, 'that the issuing of men's perplexities in the investigation of this hidden God, must be by some prophet or teacher, sent from God unto men;' but the uncertainty of coming into any better condition thereby, is so exaggerated by a contempt of those ways and means, that such prophets have fixed on to evidence their coming forth from God, by miracles, visions, prophecies, a shew of sanctity, with a concourse of threats and promises, as that means also is cashiered from yielding us any relief. Neither is there any thing intimated, or offered, to exempt the true prophets of God, nor the Lord Christ himself, from being shuffled into the same bag with false pretenders in the close, that were brought forth to play their game in this pageant. Yea, the difficulty put upon this help of the loss we

are at in the knowledge of God by prophets and prophecies, seems especially to respect those of the Scripture, so to manifest the necessity of a farther evidence to be given unto them, than any they carry about them, or bring with them, that they may be useful to this end and purpose: and this intention is manifest a little after, where the Scripture is expressly reckoned among those things which all men boast of, none can come to certainty or assurance by. Thus are poor unstable souls ventured to the borders of atheism, under a pretence of leading them to the church. Was this the method of Christ or his apostles, in drawing men to the faith of the gospel? this the way of the holy men of old, that laboured in the conversion of souls from gentilism and heresy? Were ever such bold assaults against the immovable principles of Christianity made by any, before religion came to be a matter of carnal interest? Is there no way to exalt the pope, but by questioning the authority of Christ, and truth of the Scripture? Truly, I am sorry that wise and considering men should observe such an irreverence of God and his word to prevail in the spirits of men, as to entertain thoughts of persuading them to desert their religion, by such presumptuous insinuations of the uncertainty of all divine revelation. But all this may be made good on the consideration of the changes of men after their professions of this or that religion; namely, that, notwithstanding their former pretensions, yet indeed they know nothing at all, seeing that from God and the truth no man doth willingly depart; which if it be universally true, I dare say, there is not one word true in the Scripture. How often doth God complain in the Old Testament that his people forsook him for that which was not God? and how many do the apostles shew us in the New, to 'have forsaken the truth?' It is true that under the notion of God, the chiefest good, and of truth the proper object and rest of the understanding, none can willingly and by choice depart; but, that the minds of men might be so corrupted and perverted by their own lusts and temptations of Satan, as willingly and by choice to forsake the one or the other, to embrace that which in their stead presents itself unto them; is no less true, than, that twice two make four. And it is mere weakness and ignorance of the condition of mankind, since the entrance of

sin, to conclude, that, because men may forsake the truth which they have professed, therefore there is no evidence in that truth which they so forsake; as though truth and its evidence were to be measured and judged by the carriage and deportment of corrupt and unstable men towards it. Though the sun continue to shine in the firmament, yet there be a thousand ways whereby men may become blind, and so rendered unable to see it. And there are no fewer ways whereby men either wilfully themselves darken the eyes of their understanding, or suffer them to be put out by others. Shall the truth be thence calumniated, as though it sent forth no beams whereby it may be clearly discerned? Are they not rather justly to be supposed blind themselves, who can entertain such thoughts of it?

We dwell too much on these remote attempts towards the special end aimed at. The rhetoric of this discourse is wound up, p. 76—79. in a persuasive unto popery; the substance whereof is, that the papacy being rejected, there is a necessity that all men must become atheists; which requires a little farther consideration. He says, then, ‘That these dissensions of ours’ (he means of Protestants, one of whom he most indecently personates) ‘about the faith in its branches so hot, so various, so extravagant, are apt to infer a suspicion in its very root. Are not a hundred in our own country become atheists already upon that very notion? and these men supposing substantial change once made in religion, and deliberately admitted, are rather to be commended for their wit, than blamed. For they do but that suddenly, which all the land will come to by degrees.’ This in general, in which entrance into his farther application of what he had largely, and indeed loosely, before discoursed to his present purpose, I wish I could find any thing sound. If dissensions about the faith, however extravagantly managed, are apt to infer a suspicion in its very root, it is most certain, that since the first preaching of it, or within a few years after its first revelation, causes of suspicion have been given, and will be given, and it is the mind of God should be given, who said, there must be heresies, that the approved may be tried. And this very argument did Celsus press against Christianity almost fifteen hundred years ago, which is worthily answered by Origen; nor is there need of adding any

thing to what that excellent man replied unto one of the first coiners of this objection. The truth is, our dissensions are evils; our evils, the evils of men that are engaged in them. And yet it may be, not all out so evil in themselves as is pretended; they are far enough from meriting the title of, 'lo here is Christ,' and, 'lo there is Christ:' Protestants are all of them well enough agreed who is Christ, and where alone he is to be found. If they jump not wholly into the same conceptions, about some few things of less importance in the way and manner of the worship of Christ, it is no more but what hath been the lot of the best of men ever since Christ was preached on the earth, that were not infallibly inspired: such contests ever were; and he that knows what men are, will have little cause given him to suspect the truth of the foundation of that about which they contend. Nor is any ground of such suspicion administered by these differences; men of corrupt minds, may take occasion from them to vent the enmity which is in their hearts against the faith; ground of suspicion none is given unto them. Nay rather, it is a strong evidence of the certainty of the faith in general, that all those who contend about the branches of it, do every one of them charge one another with the failure; and all agree, that the faith itself about which they contend, is certain, sure, and stable. And I hope the gentleman is mistaken in the calculation of the numbers that are become atheists in our country; or if he have brought them to the poll, I do not believe that he hath taken a particular account of the occasions and reasons that cast them on that commendable piece of wit, as he styles it; and so knows not, but that they may have been made witty by some of those ways, whereby, if a learned friar may be believed, there were no less than sixty thousand become atheists, and that not of Protestants, but good Catholics, in one city in our neighbouring nation. But this falls out, saith he, by a supposal 'of a substantial change made in religion, and deliberately admitted.' This, indeed, were something; but whoever supposed so? The religion of Jesus Christ is the same once delivered unto the saints. This is still one and the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever, unalterable as Christ himself. Men indeed, who are liars, are changeable worms; and many, as to their profession in religion, alter, change, turn,

apostatize, with or without deliberation; but he that shall thence conclude, that his best course is speedily to be an atheist, will not deserve much commendation for his wit, less for his wisdom, and for his grace none at all. That the land will come to atheism by degrees, is the prognostication of our author, calculated from the meridian of Rome. For my part, I fear not such kind of prophets. Protestant religion hath, by the blessing of God, retrieved the nation from the doors of atheism, and kept it safe almost these hundred years, notwithstanding the woful miscarriages of some that have professed it; why they must now all by degrees turn atheists, I know no reason to fear, nor presume doth our author, but that he is prompted to like his conjecture, by his love to his countrymen, desiring they may follow them who are so commended for their wit.

But we must proceed with the improvement of this consideration. Page 11. 'If the Papist, or Roman Catholic, who first brought the news of Christ and his Christianity into the land, as all men must needs know, that have either heard or read of Christianity's ingress into England, or other countries and kingdoms (for we do no sooner hear news of Christianity, than popery, and its crucifixes, monasteries, relics, sacrifice, and the like), I say, if the Papist be now become so odious, as we see he is, and if the faith he brought and maintained a thousand years together, be now rent all asunder by sects and factions, which bandy all to the ruin of that mother religion; if all her practical truths, wherein chiefest piety consists, be already abandoned as erroneous; doth not this justify the Pagan whom this Catholic Christian displaced to make way for his own law? And must not this be a certain way and means to introduce atheism, which naturally follows that faith once removed, even as a carcase succeeds a living body once deceased? For, one truth denied, is a fair way to question another, which came by the same hand; and this, a third; till the very authority of the first revealer be at stake, which can no more defend himself than he can his law. For the same axe and instrument, that cut down the branches, can cut up the root too; and if his reverence, for which all the rest was believed, defend not their truth, it must needs at length utterly fail in his own; for all the authority they had

was purely from him, and he fails in them before he falls in himself: οὐδὲν ὑγίης.' That the Papists, or Roman Catholics, first brought Christ and his Christianity into this land, is most untrue; and I wonder how any one that hath read any story of the times that are past, should so often aver what he cannot but know to be untrue. The gospel might have been brought into England by Romans, and yet not by Papists; for I cannot find, nor can this gentleman shew, that the Romans St. Paul wrote unto, were any one of them, in any one point, Papists. But neither was it brought hither by Romans, but came immediately out of the East; from whence also about the same time it came to Rome. Nor is it any jot truer, that we no sooner heard 'news of Christianity, than popery, with its crucifixes, monasteries, relics, sacrifice (that is, the mass), and the like;' 'Apaga nugas!' What, do we talk of t'other-day things, when we speak of the first news of Christianity? The first planting and watering of these things was in after ages, and their growing up to that consistency, wherein they may justly be called popery, a work of many centuries. And yet, I shall grant, that most of them got the start in the world, of that papal sovereignty, whence popery is peculiarly denominated. But the first news we hear of Christianity, is in the gospel; where there is not the least tidings of these trifles, nor was there in some ages that next succeeded the publication of it. If this gentleman give any farther occasion, the particulars shall be evinced to him. For my part, I know not how, nor to whom a 'Papist is become odious,' which nextly he complains of. I can, and do love their persons, pity them in their mistakes, hate only their vices. But yet, certain it is, a Papist may be odious, that is, men may not love those parts of his religion from whence he is so denominated, without the least impeachment of that faith that extirpated gentilism in the world. It is for that faith which ruined gentilism, that we contend against Papists. Let us have that, and no more, and there is an end of all our contests. The things we strive about, sprang up since gentilism was buried, the most of them out of its grave, some from a deeper place, if there be a deeper place. For the 'practical truths of the Papists,' which he complains to be abolished, I was in good hope, he would not

have mentioned them; their speculations are better than their practises, whether he intends their moral divinity, or their 'agenda' in worship; I would desire this gentleman to mention them no more, lest he hear that of them, which I know he is not willing to do. As for the practical truths of the gospel, they are maintained and asserted in the church of England, and by all Protestants; and about others, we are not solicitous. What tendency then, the rejection of popery, which had no hand in supplanting gentilism, and which is no part of the religion of Christ, hath to the leading of men into atheism, is as hard to discover, as the quadrature of a circle, or a subterranean passage into the Indies. But he gives his reasons; 'If one truth be denied, a fair way is made to question another, which came by the same hand; and this a third; till the very authority of the first revealer be at stake, which can no more defend himself than he can his law.' This first revealer, I take to be the Lord Christ; he that grants a thing, or doctrine, to be taught and delivered by him, yet denies it to be true, doth indeed deny his authority: however, he will defend himself and his law, let men do what they please. But, he that denies such a thing to be truth, because it is not revealed by him, nor consistent with what is revealed by him, doing this out of subjection of soul and conscience to his authority, is in no danger of questioning or opposing that authority. Nay, be it, that it be indeed a truth which he denies: being only denied by him, because he is persuaded that it is not of Christ, the first revealer, and therefore not true, there is no fear of the danger threatened. But the matter is, that all that is brought from Christ by the same hand, must be equally received. It is true, if it be brought from Christ by the same hand, it must be so; not because by the same hand, but because from Christ: they that preached Christ, and withal that men must be circumcised, had put men into a sad condition, if, in good sooth, they had been necessitated to embrace all that they taught; the same men teaching Christ to be the Messias, and circumcision to be necessary to life eternal. Amongst those that were converted to the gospel by the Jews that were zealous of the law, how easy had it been for their teachers to have utterly frustrated St. Paul's doctrine of Christian liberty, by

telling them, that they could not forego circumcision, but they must forego Christ also; for all those things they received by the same hand. If, indeed, a man comes and delivers a system of religion upon his own authority and reputation only, he that denies any one point of what he delivers, is in a fair way of averting all that he asserts. But if he come, as sent from another, and affirm, that this other commanded him to declare that which he delivers for truth in his name, and produce for that end his commission, wherein all the truths that he is to deliver are written; if he deliver what he hath not received in commission, that may honestly be rejected, without the least impeachment of any one truth that was really committed unto him, by him that sent him. And this was the way, this the condition of them who planted the gospel in the name of Christ, not being themselves divinely inspired. So that if in the second edition of Christianity, in some parts of this nation by Austin and his associates, any thing was taught or practised, that was not according to the rule and commission given by Christ, it may be rejected, without the least impeachment to the authority of the first revealer; nay, his authority being once received, cannot be preserved entire without such rejection. I confess, I do almost mistrust, that by this revealer of Christianity, and his authority which he discourses about, our author intends the pope; which, if so, what we have discoursed of Christ, is, I confess, to little purpose; and it were easy to turn our reply that way; but because I have not clear evidence for it, I will not charge him with so horrid a presumptuous insinuation: when he declares his mind, he shall hear more of ours.

But he farther specifies his meaning in an enumeration of doctrines that were preached by the first planters of the gospel, in and unto the extirpation of gentilism. 'If,' saith he, 'the institution of monasteries, to the praise and service of God, day and night, be thought as it hath been now these many years a superstitious folly; if Christian priests and sacrifices be things of high idolatry; if the seven sacraments be deemed vain, most of them; if it suffice to salvation, only to believe, whatever life we lead; if there be no value or merit in good works; if God's laws be impossible to be kept; if Christ be not our law-maker and director of doing

well, as well as Redeemer from ill ; if there be no sacramental tribunal for our reconciliation ordained from by Christ on the earth ; if the real body of our Lord be not bequeathed unto his spouse in his last will and testament ; if there be not under Christ a general head of the church, who is chief priest and pastor of all Christians upon earth under God, whose vicegerent he is in spiritual affairs ; all which things are now held forth by us, manifestly against the doctrine of the first preachers of Christianity in this land ; then I say, paganism was unjustly displaced by these doctrines, and atheism must needs succeed ; for if Christ deceived us, upon whom shall we rely ? and if they that brought us the first news of Christ, brought along with it so many grand lies, why may not the very story of Christ be thought a romance ?

I could wish there had been a little more clearness and ingenuity in this enumeration ; the mixing of what he takes to be truths, with some negatives that he condemns in the same series, breeds some confusion in the discourse : and I am also compelled to complain of want of candour and ingenuity in his representation of the Protestant doctrine in every particular, wherein he takes occasion to mention it. Let us then separate the things that have no place of their own in this argument, than what is ambiguously proposed ; after which, what remains may be distinctly considered.

1. What makes that inquiry in our way at this time, ‘ If it suffice to salvation, to believe, whatever life we lead ?’ Whoever said so, taught so, wrote so, in England ? Is this the doctrine of the church of England ? or of the Presbyterians, or Independents ? or whose is it ? or what makes it in this place ? If this be the way of gaining Catholics, let them that please make use of it. Protestants dislike the way as much as the end.

2. What is the meaning of that which follows, ‘ If there be no value or merit in good works ?’ Whoever taught that there is no value in good works ? that they are not commanded of God, that they are not accepted with him, that they are not our duty to be careful in the performance of ; that God is not honoured, the gospel adorned, the church and the world advantaged by them ? Do all these things put

‘no value’ on them? For their ‘merit,’ the expression being ambiguous, unscriptural, and, as commonly interpreted, derogatory to the glory of Christ, and the grace of God, we shall let it pass, as proper to his purpose; and much good may it do him with all that he gains by it.

3. ‘If,’ saith he, ‘God’s laws be impossible to be kept;’ but who said so? Protestants teach indeed, that men in their own strength cannot keep the laws of God; that the grace received in this life extends not to an absolute sinless perfection in their observation, which is inconsistent with the covenant of grace, and men’s walking with God therein: but, that the laws of God were in their own nature ‘impossible’ to be observed by them to whom they were first given, or that they are yet impossible to be kept in that way of their sincere observation which is required in the gospel, Protestants teach not that I know of. He proceeds:

4. ‘If Christ be not our law-maker and director of doing well, as well as our Redeemer from ill.’ This is a little too open and plain: doth he think any man will believe him, that Protestants or Presbyterians teach that ‘Christ is not our law-maker and director of doing well,’ &c. I dare say, he believes not one word of it himself, what confidence soever he hath taken upon him of imposing on the minds of weak and unstable men.

Other things mentioned by him are ambiguous; as, ‘If the seven sacraments be deemed vain, most of them,’ &c. Of the things themselves, which they term sacraments, there is scarce any of them by Protestants esteemed vain; that one of unction, which they judge now useless, they only say, is an unwarrantable imitation of that which was useful: of the rest, which they reject, they reject not the things, but those things from being sacraments; and a practice in religion is not presently condemned as vain, which is not esteemed a sacrament. There is no less ambiguity in that other supposition, ‘If the real body of our Lord be not bequeathed to his spouse in his last will and testament;’ which no Protestant ever questioned, though there be great contests about the manner of the sacramental participation of that real body; the same may be said of some other of his supposals. But I need not go over them in particular; I shall only say in general, that take from

amongst them, what is acknowledged to be the doctrine of the Papists, and, as such, is opposed by the church of England, or by Presbyterians (as papal supremacy, sacrifice of the mass, monasteries of votaries under special and peculiar vows and rules, necessity of auricular confession, transubstantiation, which are the things gilded over by our author), and prove that they were the doctrines, all or any of them, whereby and wherewith the first preachers of Christianity in this nation, or any where else in the old known world, displaced paganism; and, for my part, I will immediately become his proselyte. What then can be bound with this rope of sand? 'The first preachers of Christianity preached the pope's supremacy, the mass, &c. By these doctrines paganism was displaced; if these doctrines now be decried as lies, why may not Christ himself be esteemed a romance?' For neither did the first preachers of Christianity preach these doctrines, nor was paganism displaced by them; nor is there any ground to question the authority and truth of Christ, in case those that do first preach him, do therewithal preach somewhat that is not true, when they bring along with them an authentic conviction of their own mistakes, as was manifested before, and might be made good by innumerable other instances.

I shall not need to follow him in his declamation to the end of this paragraph; the whole foundation of his many flourishes and pretences being totally taken out of the way.

CHAP. VI.

Scripture vindicated.

WITH his three following paragraphs, from page 82. unto 108. which have only a very remote and almost imperceptible tendency unto his purpose in hand, though they take up so long a portion of his discourse (seeming to be inserted, either to manifest his skill and proficiency in philosophical scepticism, or to entertain his readers with such a delightful diversion, as that having taken in it a taste of his ingenuity, they may have an edge given their appetite unto that which is more directly prepared for them), I shall not trouble myself nor detain my reader about. If any one a little skilled in the discourses of these days, have a mind to vie conjectures and notions with him, to vellicate commonly received maxims and vulgar opinions, to expatiate on the events of providence in all ages, he may quickly compose as many learned leaves; only if he would be pleased to take my advice with him, I should wish him not to flourish and gild over things uncertain and unknown, to the disadvantage of things known and certain; nor to vent conjectures about other worlds, and the nature of the heavenly bodies, derogatory to the love of God in sending his Son to be incarnate, and to die for sinners that live on this earthly globe. Neither do I think it well done, to mix St. Paul and his writings in this scepticism, mentioning in one place his fancy, in another his conceit, which he seems to oppose; such is the reverence these men bear to the Scripture and holy penmen thereof; so also that whole scorn which he calls man's dominion over the creatures, reflects principally on the beginning of Genesis, and the eighth Psalm.

An unsearchable abyss in many of God's providential dispensations wherein the infinite sovereignty, wisdom, and righteousness of him who giveth no account of his matters, are to be adored, we readily acknowledge; and yet I dare freely say, that most of the things instanced in by our author, are capable of a clear resolution according to known rules and principles of truth revealed in the Scripture; such are, God's

suffering the Gentiles to wander so long in the dark, not calling them to repentance; with the necessity of Christian religion, and yet the punishment of many of the professors of it by the power of idolaters and pagans, as the church of the Jews was handled of old by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and others. Of this sort also, is his newly inserted story of the Cirubrians, which it may be was added to give us a cast of his skill in the investigation of the original of nations, out of Camden; for if that which himself affirms of them were true, namely, 'That they were devout adoring the crucifix,' which men usually are when they cease to worship aright him who was crucified, (the sin mentioned, Rom. i. 25.) we need not much admire, that God gave them up to be scourged by their pagan adversaries; but not to mention that which is not only uncertain whether it be true, but is most probably false; if our author had ever read the stories of those times, and the lamentations made for the sins of them, by Gildas, Salvianus, and others, he would have found enough to justify God in his proceedings and dealing with his Cirubrians, according to the known rules of his word. The like may be affirmed concerning the Irish; whose decay, like a true Englishman, he dates from the interest of our kings there, and makes the progress of it commensurate to the prevalency of their authority; when it is known to all the world, that by that means alone they were reclaimed from barbarism, and brought into a most flourishing condition, until by their rebellion and unparalleled cruelties they precipitated themselves into confusion and ruin. As for that which is insinuated as the conclusion fit to be made out of all these premises, concerning the obscurity of God's nature, and the works of providence, viz. that we betake ourselves to the infallible determination of the Roman church, I shall only say, that as I know not that as yet the pope hath undertaken pontifically to interpose his definitive sentence, in reference to these philosophical digladiations he glanceth on in the most part of his discourse, so I have but little reason on the resignation required, to expect an illumination from that obscurity about the Deity which he insists on; finding the children, indeed the fathers, of that church, of all men in the earth most to abound in contradictory disputes and endless quarrels about the very nature and properties of God himself.

But his direct improvement of this long oration that he enters on, page 122. may be farther considered. It is, in short, this : That by the Scripture no man can come to 'the knowledge of, and settlement in, an assurance of the truth ; nor is there any hope of relief for us in this sad condition, but that living papal oracle, which if we are wise we will acquiesce in ;' pages 125, 126. To this purpose men are furnished with many exceptions against the authority of the Scripture, from 'the uncertainty of the rise and spring of it, how it came to us, how it was authorized, and by whom, the doubtfulness of its sense and meaning, the contemptible condition of the first penmen of it, seeming a company of men imposing their own fancies as oraculous visions upon us ; of whom how can we know that they were inspired, seeing they say no such thing of themselves, not those especially of the New Testament ; besides the many appearing contradictions, with other human infirmities, seeming unto critics ever and anon to occur in them ; and why may not illiterate men fail as well as,' &c. With much more of the same nature and importance ; unto all which, I shall need to say nothing but that of Job, 'Vain man would be wise, but is like to the wild ass's colt.' Never is the folly of men more eminently displayed, than when confidence of their wisdom makes them bold and daring. I doubt not, but our author thought that he had so acquitted himself in this passage, as that his readers must need resolve to quit the Scripture, and turn Papists ; but there is an evident gulf between these reasonings and popery, whereunto they will certainly carry any that shall give way to their force and efficacy : this is no other but downright atheism ; this the supplying of men with cavils against the Scripture its power and authority do directly lead unto. Our author would have men to believe these suggestions, at least so far as not to seek for rest and satisfaction in the Scriptures, or he would not ; if he would not, to what end doth he mention them, and sport himself in shewing the luxuriancy of his wit and fancy in cavilling at the word of God ? Is not this a ready way to make men atheists, if only by inducing them to an imitation of that, which by his example he commends unto them ? But it will be said, he only shews the uncertainties that are about Scripture, that men may not expect by or from them deliverance from the

darkness and ignorance before spoken of? Suppose then they come to be persuaded of such an uncertainty, what course shall they take? Apply themselves to the Roman church, and they are safe. But seeing the being of a church (much less the Roman church) hath no foundation in the light of nature, and men can never know anything of it, especially of its prerogative, but by and from the Scripture, whose authority you have taught them to question, and made doubtful to them, what remains for rational men but to renounce both Scripture and church, and betake themselves to your commendable piece of witty atheism. This is the old lurry, the Scripture cannot be known, believed, understood, but by the church; the church cannot be proved to have being, constitution, or authority, but by the Scripture; and then if you doubt of the authority of that proof of the church, you must return to the church again; and so on till all faith and reason vanish, or men make shipwreck of their faith, and become brutish in their understanding, pretending to believe they know neither what nor why. And this employment of raising surmises and stirring up jealousies about the word of God, its penmen, and their authority, do men put themselves upon, I will not say to gratify the Roman court, but I will say, in obedience to their prejudices, lusts, and darkness, the saddest drudgery that any of the sons of men can be exercised withal. And if he would be believed, he professeth himself an anti-scripturist, and in that profession which he puts upon himself, an atheist. For my part, I am amazed to think how men are able to hold their pens in their hands, that a horror of the work they have before them doth not make them shake them out, when they are thus traducing the holy word of Christ, and exciting evil surmises about it. Should they deal with a man of any power and authority, they might not expect to escape his indignation; even to publish to all the world that he is indeed an honourable person, but yet, if men will question his honour, truth, honesty, authority, and affirm him to be a cheat, thief, murderer, adulterer, they cannot see how they can be disproved; at least he would have a difficult task in hand, that should endeavour to free him from objections of that nature: yet thus men dare to deal with the Scripture, that word which God hath magnified above all his name. If this be the spirit that breathed

in the apostles, the holy army of martyrs of old, and all the fathers of the primitive church, I am much mistaken; nay, I am greatly so, if with one consent they would not denounce an anathema against such a defence of any religion whatever. But you will say, the same person defends also the Scripture, just as he in the poet did Pelilius:

*Me Capitolinus convictore usus amicoque
A puero est, causaque mea permulta rogatus
Fecit, et incolumis lætor quod vivit in urbe;
Sed tamen admiror quo pacto iudicium illud
Fugerit.*-----

A defence worse and more bitter than a downright accusation. I am not now to observe what prejudice this excuse brings to the cause of our author with all intelligent persons, having noted it once and again before; nor what contentment Protestants take, to see that the truth they profess cannot be shaken without inducing men to question the fundamental principles of Christian religion; and if this course be persisted in, for aught that I can understand, the whole controversy between us and the Romanists, must needs be at last reduced unto this head, whether the Scripture of the Old and New Testament, was given by divine inspiration. For the present, having in the consideration of the general suppositions of this treatise spoken before to this head, I shall not need to answer particular exceptions given in against its authority; nor do I think it incumbent on me so to do, unless our author own them for his sense, which if he be pleased to do, I promise him, if God give me life, to give him a distinct answer to every one of them, and all that is contained in them. Moreover these things will again occur in his fifteenth section, where he expressly takes the Scripture to task, as to its pleas for judging of, and settling men in the truth.

Proceed we to his next section, p. 126.

CHAP. VII.

Use of Reason.

SECT. 11. This section is set apart for the cashiering of reason from having any hand in the business we deal about; and the truth is, if our author can persuade us first to throw away our Bibles, and then to lay aside the use of our reason, I suppose there is no doubt but we shall become Roman Catholics. This work, it seems, cannot be effected, unless men are contented to part with Scripture and reason; all that whereby they are Christians and men. But unless our author have emptied Circe's box of ointment, whereby she transformed men into swine, he will confess it somewhat a difficult task that he hath undertaken. Methinks one of these demands might suffice at once. But he presumes he hath put his countrymen into a good humour, and knowing them free and open-hearted, he plies them whilst they are warm.

We have indeed, in this section, as fair a flourish of words as in any other; but there can be but little reason in the words that men make use of, to plead against reason itself. And yet I am persuaded most readers think as well of this section as any in the book. To whom the unreasonableness of this is evident, that of the others is so also; and those who willingly imbibe the other parts of his discourse, will little strain at this. Nothing is to be trusted unto prejudice; nor if we will learn are we to think strange of any thing. Let us weigh then impartially, what is of reason in this discourse against the use of reason. Whatever he pretends, he knows full well, that he hath no difference with any sort of Protestants about 'finding out a religion by reason,' and adhering only to its dictates in the worship of God. All the world of Protestants profess that they receive their religion wholly by revelation from God, and no otherwise. Nor is it about ascribing a sovereignty to reason to judge of the particulars of religion so revealed, to accept or refuse them, according as that shall judge them suitable or not to its principles and liking. This is the sovereign dictate of

reason, That whatever God reveals to be believed is true, and as such must be embraced, though the bottom of it cannot be sounded by reason's line; and that because the reason of a man is not absolutely reason, but being the reason of a man, is variously limited, bounded, and made defective in its ratiocinations. An objective truth our reason supposes; all that it hath to do is but to judge of what is proposed to it, according to the best principles that it hath, which is all that God in that kind requires of us; unless in that work wherein he intends to make us more than men, that is, Christians, he would have us make ourselves less than men, even as brutes. That in our whole obedience to God we are to use our reason, Protestants say indeed, and moreover, that what is not done reasonably, is not obedience. The Scripture is the rule of all our obedience, grace the principle enabling us to perform it; but the manner of its performance must be rational, or it is not the supposition of rule or principle that will render any act of a man obedience. Religion, say Protestants, is revealed in the Scripture, proposed to the minds and wills of men for its entertainment by the ministry of the church; grace to believe and obey is supernaturally from God; but as to the proposals of religion from Scripture, they aver that men ought to admit and receive them as men, that is, judge of the sense and meaning of them, discover their truth, and finding them revealed, acquiesce in the authority of him by whom they are first revealed. So far as men, in any things of their concernments that have a moral good or evil in them, do refuse, in the choice or refusal of them, to exercise that judging and discerning which is the proper work of reason, they unman themselves, and invert the order of nature; dethroning the τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν of the soul, and causing it to follow the faculties that have no light but what they receive by and from it. It is true, all our carnal reasonings against Scripture mysteries, are to be captivated to the obedience of faith; and this is highly reasonable, making only the less, particular, defective collections of reason give place to the more noble, general, and universal principles of it. Nor is the denying of our reason any where required, as to the sense and meaning of the words of the Scripture, but as to the things and matter signified by them. The former, rea-

son must judge of, if we are men; the latter, if, in conjunction with unbelief and carnal lusts, it tumultuate against it, is to be subdued to the obedience of faith. All that Protestants in the business of religion ascribe unto men, is but this, that in the business of religion they are, and ought to be men; that is, judge of the sense and truth of what is spoken to them according to that rule which they have received for the measure and guide of their understandings in these things. If this may not be allowed, you may make a herd of them, but a church never.

Let us now consider what is offered in this section about reason, wherein the concernment of any Protestants may lie. As the matter is stated, about any 'one's setting up himself to be a new and extraordinary director unto men in religion, upon the account of the irrefutable reason he brings along with him, which is the spring and source of of that religion which he tenders unto them;' I very much question, whether any instance can be given of any such thing from the foundation of the world. Men have so set up indeed sometimes, as that good Catholic Vanine did, not long since, in France, to draw men from all religions; but to give a new religion unto men, that this pretension was ever solely made use of, I much question. As true religion came by inspiration from God, so all authors of that which is false, have pretended to revelation. Such were the pretensions of Minos, Lycurgus, and Numa of old, of Mahomet of late, and generally, of the first founders of religious orders in the Roman church; all in imitation of real divine revelation, and in answer to indelible impressions on the minds of all men, that religion must come from God. To what purpose then, the first part of his discourse about the 'coining of religion from reason,' or the framing of religion by reason is, I know not; unless it be to cast a blind before his unwary reader whilst he steals away from him his treasure, that is, his reason; as to its use in its proper place. Though therefore there be many things spoken unduly, and, because it must be said, untruly also, in this first part of his discourse, until toward the end of page 131. which deserve to be animadverted on; yet, because they are such as no sort of Protestants hath any concernment in, I shall pass them over. That wherein he seems to reflect any thing upon

our principles, is in a supposed reply to what he had before delivered ; whereunto indeed it hath no respect or relation, being the assertion of a principle utterly distant from that imaginary one, which he had timely set up, and stoutly cast down before. It is this, 'That we must take the words from Christ and his gospel ; but the proper sense, which the words of themselves cannot carry with them, our own reason must make out.' If it be the doctrine of Protestants, which he intendeth in these words, it is most disadvantageously and uncandidly represented, which becomes not an ingenious and learned person. This is that which Protestants affirm : religion is revealed in the Scripture ; that revelation is delivered and contained in propositions of truth. Of the sense of those words, that carry their sense with them, reason judgeth and must do so ; or we are brutes ; and that every one's reason, so far as his concernment lies in what is proposed to him.

Neither doth this at all exclude the ministry or authority of the church, both which are entrusted with it by Christ, to propose the rules contained in his word unto rational creatures, that they may understand, believe, love, and obey them. To cast out this use of reason, with pretence of an ancient sense of the words, which yet we know they have not about them, is as vain as any thing in this section, and that is vain enough. If any such ancient sense can be made out or produced, that is a meaning of any text that was known to be so, from their explication who gave that text, it is by reason to be acquiesced in. Neither is this to make a man a bishop, much less a chief bishop, to himself. I never heard that it was the office of a bishop to know, believe, or understand for any man but for himself. It is his office, indeed, to instruct and teach men ; but they are to learn and understand for themselves, and so to use their reason in their learning. Nor doth the variableness of men's thoughts and reasonings infer any variableness in religion to follow ; whose stability and sameness depends on its first revelation, not our manner of reception. Nor doth any thing asserted by Protestants, about the use of reason in the business of religion, interfere with the rule of the apostle about captivating our understandings to the obedience of faith, much less to his assertion, that Christians walk by

faith, and not by sight; seeing that without it we can do neither the one nor the other. For I can neither submit to the truth of things to be believed, nor live upon them, or according unto them, unless I understand the propositions wherein they are expressed; which is the work we assign to reason. For those who would resolve their faith into reason, we confess that they overthrow not only faith, but reason itself; there being nothing more irrational, than that belief should be the product of reason, being properly an assent resolved into authority, which if divine, is so also. I shall then desire no more of our author nor his readers, as to this section, but only this, that they would believe, that no Protestant is at all concerned in it: and so I shall not further interpose, as to any contentment they may find in its review or perusal.

CHAP. VIII.

Jews' objections.

THE title of this third chapter is, that ‘No religion, or sect, or way, hath any advantage over another, nor all of them over popery.’ To this we excepted before in general, that that way which hath the truth with it, hath in that wherein it hath the truth, the advantage against all others. Truth turns the scales in this business, wherever and with whomsoever it be found; and if it lie in any way distant from popery, it gives all the advantage against it that need be desired. And with this only inquiry, With whom the truth abides, is this disquisition, What ways in religion have advantage against others, to be resolved. But this course and procedure, for some reasons which he knows, and we may easily guess at, our author liked not; and it is now too late for us to walk in any path, but what he has trodden before us, though it seem rather a maze, than a way for travellers to walk in, that would all pass on in their journey.

His first section is entitled, ‘Light and Spirit;’ the pre-tence whereof, he treats after his manner, and cashiers

from giving any such advantage as is inquired after. But neither yet are we arrived to any concernment of Protestants. That which they plead as their advantage, is not the empty names of light and spirit; but the truth of Christ revealed in the Scripture. I know there are not a few who have impertinently used these good words, and Scripture expressions, which yet ought no more to be scoffed at by others, than abused by them. But that any have made the plea here pretended as to their settlement in religion, I know not. The truth is, if they have, it is no other upon the matter, but what our author calls them unto; to a naked 'Credo' he would reduce them, and that differs only from what seems to be the mind of them that plead light and spirit, that he would have them resolve their faith irrationally into the authority of the church, they pretend to do it into the Scripture.

But what he aims to bring men unto, he justifies from the examples of Christians in ancient times, 'who had to deal with Jews and pagans, whose disputes were rational and weighty, and puzzled the wisest of the clergy to answer. So that after all their ratiocination ended, whether it sufficed or no, they still concluded with this one word, Credo; which in logic and philosophy, was a weak answer, but in religion, the best and only one to be made.' What could be spoken more untruly, more contumeliously, or more to the reproach of Christian religion, I cannot imagine. It is true indeed, that as to the resolution, satisfaction, and settlement of their own souls, Christians always built their faith, and resolved it into the authority of God in his word; but that they opposed their naked Credo to the disputes of Jews or pagans, or rested in that for a solution of their objections, is heavenly-wide; as far from truth, ὥς οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης. I wonder any man who hath ever seen, or almost heard of the disputes and discourses of Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Theophilus Antiochenus, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Lactantius, Chrysostom, Austin, Theodoret, and innumerable others, proving the faith of the Christian religion against the Jews from Scripture, and the reasonableness of it against the pagans, with the folly and foppery of theirs, could on any account be induced to cast out such a reproach against them. But it seems 'jacta est

alea,' and we must go on; and therefore to carry on the design of bringing us all to a naked 'Credo,' resolved into the authority of the present church, a thing never heard of, spoken of, nor that it appears dreamed of, by any of the ancient Christians. The objections of the Jews against the Christian religion are brought on the stage, and an inquiry made, how they can be satisfactorily answered. His words are page 142. 'In any age of the Christian church a Jew might say thus to the Christians then living; Your Lord and Master was born a Jew, and under the jurisdiction of the high priests; these he opposed, and taught a religion contrary to Moses, (otherwise how comes there to be a faction?) but how could he justly do it? no human power is of force against God's, who spake (as you also grant) by Moses and the prophets; and divine power it could not be, for God is not contrary to himself. And although your Lord might say, as indeed he did, that Moses spake of him as of a prophet to come, greater than himself; yet, who shall judge that such a thing was meant of his person? For since that prophet is neither specified by his name, nor characteristic properties (well said, Jew), who could say it was he more than any other to come? And if there were a greater to come than Moses were, surely born a Jew, he would, being come into the world, rather exalt that law to more ample glory, than diminish it. And if you will farther contest, that such a prophet was to abrogate the first law, and bring in a new one, who shall judge in this case? The whole church of the Hebrews, who never dreamed of any such thing; or one member thereof who was born a subject to their judgments. This, saith he, is the great œcumenical difficulty, and he that in any age of Christianity could either answer it, or find any bulwark to set against it, so that it should do no harm, would easily either salve or prevent all other difficulties,' &c.

The difficulty, as is evident, lay in this, that the authority and judgment of the whole church of the Hebrews, lay against Christ and the gospel. That church when Christ conversed on earth, was a true church of God, the only church on earth, and had been so for two thousand years without interruption in itself, without competition from any other. It had its high priest confessedly instituted

by God himself in an orderly succession to those days. The interpretation of Scripture, it pretended, was trusted with it alone; and traditions they had good store, whose original they pleaded from Moses himself, directing them in that interpretation. Christ and his apostles, whom they looked upon as poor ignorant contemptible persons, came and preached a doctrine, which that church determined utterly contrary to the Scripture and their traditions. What shall now be answered to their authority which was unquestionably all that ever was, or shall be, entrusted with any church on the earth? Our author tells us, that this great 'argument of the Jews could not be any way warded or put by, but by recourse unto the church's infallibility,' p. 146. Which, 'sit verbo venia,' is so ridiculous a pretence, as I wonder how any block in his way could cause him to stumble upon it. What church I pray? the church of Christians? When that argument was first used by the Jews against Christ himself, it was not yet founded; and if an absolute infallibility be supposed in the church, without respect to her adherence to 'the rule of infallibility, I dare boldly pronounce that argument indissoluble; and that all Christian religion must be therein discarded. If the Jewish church, which had at that day as great church power and prerogative as any church hath or can have, were infallible in her judgment, that she made of Christ and his doctrine; there remains nothing but that we renounce both him and it, and turn either Jews or pagans, as we were of old. Here then, by our author's confession, lies a plain judgment and definition of the only church of God in the world, against Christ and his doctrine; and it is certainly incumbent on us to see how it may be waved. And this, I suppose, we cannot better be instructed in, than by considering, what was answered unto it by Christ himself, his apostles, and those that succeeded them in the profession of the faith of the gospel. (1.) For Christ himself; it is certain he pleaded his miracles, the works which he wrought, and the doctrine that he revealed: but withal, as to the Jews with whom he had to do, he pleads the Scriptures, Moses and the prophets, and offers himself and his doctrine to be tried, to stand or fall by their verdict; John v. 39. 46. Matt. xxii. 42. Luke xxiv. 27. I say, besides the testimony of his works

and doctrine, to their authority of the church, he opposeth that of the Scripture, which he knew the other ought to give place unto. And it is most vainly pretended by our author in the behalf of the Jews, that the Messiah, or great prophet to come, was not in the Scripture specified by such characteristical properties, as made it evident that Jesus was the Messiah; all the descriptions given of the one, and they innumerable, undeniably centring in the other. The same course steered the apostle Peter; Acts ii. 3. And expressly in his second epistle, chap. ii. 17—19. And Paul, Acts xiii. 16, 17, &c. And of Apollos, who openly disputed with the Jews upon this argument, it is said, that he mightily ‘convinced the Jews, publicly shewing by the Scripture, that Jesus is the Christ;’ Acts xviii. 28. And ‘Paul persuaded the Jews concerning Jesus at Rome, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning until evening;’ Acts xxviii. 23. Concerning which labour and disputation, the censure of our author, p. 149. is very remarkable. ‘There can be no hope,’ saith he, ‘of satisfying a querent, or convincing an opponent, in any point of Christianity, unless he will submit to the splendour of Christ’s authority in his own person, and the church descended from him: which I take to be the reason why some of the Jews in Rome, when St. Paul laboured so much to persuade Christ out of Moses and the prophets, believed in him, and some did not.’ Both the coherence of the words and design of the preface, and his whole scope manifest his meaning to be, ‘That no more believed on him, or that some disbelieved,’ notwithstanding all the pains he took with them.

And what was the reason of this failure? Why, St. Paul fixed on an unsuitable means of persuading them, namely, Moses and the prophets, when he should have made use of the authority of the church? Vain and bold man, that dares oppose his prejudices to the Spirit and wisdom of Christ in that great and holy apostle, and that in a way and work wherein he had the express pattern and example of his Master! If this be the spirit that rules in the Roman synagogue, that so puffs up men in their fleshly minds, as to make them think themselves wiser than Christ and his apostles, I doubt not but men will every day find cause to rejoice

that it is cast out of them; and be watchful that it returns to possess them no more. But this is that which galls the man; the difficulty which he proposeth as insoluble by any ways but an acquiescing in the authority of the present church, he finds assoiled in Scripture on other principles. This makes him fall foul on St. Paul, whom he finds most frequent in answering it from Scripture; not considering that at the same time he accuseth St. Peter of the like folly, though he pretend for him a greater reverence. However, this may be said in defence of St. Paul, that by his arguments about Christ and the gospel from Moses and the prophets, many thousands of Jews all the world over were converted to the faith; when it is hard to meet with an instance of one in an age, that will any way take notice of the authority of the Roman church. But to return; this was the constant way used by the apostles of answering that great difficulty pleaded by our author from the authority of the Hebrew church. They called the Jews to the Scripture, the plain texts and contexts of Moses and the prophets, opposing them to all their church's real or pretended authority, and all her interpretations pretended to be received by tradition from of old; so fixing this for a perpetual standing rule to all generations, that the doctrine of the church is to be examined by the Scripture; and where it is found contradictory of it, her authority is of no value at all, it being annexed unto her attendance on that rule. But it may be replied, that the church in the days of the apostles was not yet settled, nor made firm enough to bear the weight that now may be laid upon it, as our author affirms, page 149. So that now the great resolve of all doubts must be immediately upon the authority of the present church; after that was once well cleared, the fathers of old pleaded that only in this case, and removed the objections of the Jews by that alone. I am persuaded, though our author be a great admirer of the present church, he is not such a stranger to antiquity as to believe any such thing. Is the authority of the church pleaded by Justin Martyr, in that famous dispute with Trypho the Jew, wherein these very objections instanced by our author are thoroughly canvassed? Doth he not throughout his whole disputation prove out of the Scriptures, and them alone, that Jesus was the Christ, and his doctrine agreeable

unto them? Is any such thing pleaded by Origen, Tertulian, Chrysostom, or any one that had to deal with the Jews? Do they not wholly persist in the way traced for them by Paul, Peter, and Apollos, mightily convincing the Jews out of Scripture? Let him consult their answers, he will not find them such poor empty jejune discourses as that he supposes they might make use of, page 148. and to the proofs whereof, by texts of Scripture, he says, the rabbies could answer by another interpretation of them. He will find another spirit breathing in their writings, another efficacy in their arguments, and other evidence in their testimonies, than it seems he is acquainted with, and such as all the rabbies in the world are not able to withstand. And I know full well that these insinuations, that Christians are not able justifiably to convince, confute, and stop the mouths of Jews from the Scripture, would have been abhorred as the highest piece of blasphemy by the whole ancient church of Christ; and it is meet it should be so still by all Christians.

Is there no way left to deny pretences of light and spirit but by proclaiming, to the great scandal of Christianity, that we cannot answer the exceptions of Jews unto the person and doctrine of our Saviour out of the Scriptures? And hath Rome need of these bold sallies against the vitals of religion? Is she no other way capable of a defence? Better she perished ten thousand times, than that any such reproach should be justly cast on the Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel. But whatever our author thinks of himself, I have very good ground to conjecture that he hath very little acquaintance with Judaical antiquity, learning, or arguments, nor very much with the Scripture; and may possibly deserve on that account some excuse, if he thought those exceptions insoluble, which more learned men than himself know how to answer and remove without any considerable trouble.

This difficulty was fixed on by our author, that upon it there might be stated a certain retreat and assured way of establishment against all of the like nature. This he assigns to be the authority of the present church; Protestants, the Scripture; wherein, as to the instance chosen out as most pressing, we have the concurrent suffrage of Christ, his apostles, and all the ancient Christians; so that we need not any farther to consider the pretended pleas of light and spirit

which he hath made use of, as the orator desired his dialogist would have insisted on the stories of Cerberus and Cocytus, that he might have shewed his skill and activity in their confutation. For what he begs in the way, as to the constitution of St. Peter and his successors in the rule of the church, as he produceth no other proof for it but that doughty one, that, It must needs be so; so, if it were granted him, he may easily perceive by the instance of the Judaical church that himself thought good to insist upon, that it will not avail him in his plea against the final resolution of our faith into the Scripture, as its senses are proposed by the ministry of the church, and rationally conceived or understood.

CHAP. IX.

Protestant pleas.

HIS sect. 13. p. 155. entitled 'Independent and Presbyterians' Pleas,' is a merry one. The whole design of it seems to be, to make himself and others sport with the miscarriages of men in and about religion. Whether it be a good work or no, that day that is coming will discover. The Independents he divides into two parts, Quakers and Anabaptists. Quakers he begins withal, and longer insists upon, being, as he saith, well read in their books, and acquainted with their persons. Some commendation he gives them, so far as it may serve to the disparagement of others, and then falls into a fit of quaking, so expressly imitating them in their discourses, that I fear he will confirm some in their surmises, that such as he both set them on work, and afterward assisted them in it. For my part, having undertaken only the defence of Protestantism and Protestants, I am altogether unconcerned in the entertainment he hath provided for his readers, in this personating of a Quaker, which he hath better done, and kept a better decorum in, than in his personating of a Protestant; a thing in the beginning of his discourse he pretended unto. The Anabaptists, as far as I can perceive, he had not meddled with, unless it had been to get an advantage of venting his petty answer to an argument against infant

baptism: but the truth is, if the Anabaptists had no other objections against infant baptism, nor Protestants no better answers to their objections, than what are mentioned here by our author, it were no great matter what become of the controversy; but it is merriment, not disputation, that he is designing, and I shall leave him to the solace of his own fancies.

No otherwise, in the next place, doth he deal with the Presbyterians; in personating of whom, he pours out a long senseless rhapsody of words, many insignificant expressions, vehement exclamations, and uncouth terms, such, as to do them right, I never heard uttered by them in preaching, though I have heard many of them; nor read written by them, though, I suppose, I have perused at least as many of their books as our author hath done of the Quakers. Any one with half an eye may see what it is that galls the man and his party; which, whether he hath done wisely to discover, his *δέυτεραι φροντίδες* will inform him, that is, the preaching of all sorts of Protestants, that he declares himself to be most perplexed with, and therefore most labours to expose it to reproach and obloquy. And herein he deals with us as in many of their stories their demoniacs do with their exorcists, discover which relic, or which saint's name, or other engine in that bustle most afflicts them; that so they may be paid more to the purpose. Somewhat we may learn from hence, 'Fas est et ab hoste doceri.' But he will make the Presbyterians amends for all the scorn he endeavours to expose them to, by affirming when he hath assigned a senseless harangue of words unto them, that the Protestants are not able to answer their objections. Certainly, if the Presbyterians are such pitiful souls as not to be able any better to defend their cause, than they are represented by him here to do, those Protestants are beneath all consideration who are not able to deal and grapple with them. And this is as it should be; Roman Catholics are wise, learned, holy, angelical, seraphical persons; all others, ignorant dolts, that can scarce say bo to a goose. These things, considered in themselves are unserious trifles, but 'seria ducunt.' We shall see presently, whither all this lurry tends; for the sting of this whole discourse is fixed in the Scripture.

Of the same importance is the next section, page 170.

entitled 'Protestants' Pro and Con,' wherein the differences that are amongst many in these nations are notably exagitated. I presume, in the intention of his mind upon his present design, he forgot that by a new change of name, the same things may be uttered, the same words used, of and concerning Christians in general, ever since almost that name was known in the world. Was there any thing more frequent among the pagans of old, than to object to Christians their differences and endless disputes? I wish our author would but consider that which remains of the discourse of Celsus on this subject; particularly his charge on them, that at their beginnings, and whilst they were few, they agreed well enough; but after they increased, and were dispersed into several nations, they were every where at variance among themselves, whereas all sorts of men were at peace before their pretended reformation of the worship of God; and he will find in it the sum of this and the four following sections to the end of this chapter. And if he will but add so much to his pains as to peruse the excellent answers of Origen, in his third book, he will, if not be persuaded to desist from urging the objections of Celsus, yet discern what is expected from him to reply unto, if he persist in his way. But if we may suppose that he hath not that respect for the honour of the first Christians, methinks the intestine irreconcilable brawls of his own mother's children should somewhat allay his heat and confidence in charging endless differences upon Protestants, of whom only I speak. Yea, but you will say, they have a certain means of ending their controversies, Protestants have none. And have they so? the more shame for them to trouble themselves and others, from one generation unto another, with disputes and controversies, that have such a ready way to end them when they please; and Protestants are the more to be pitied, who perhaps are ready, some of them at least, as far as they are able, to live at peace. But why have not Protestants a sure and safe way to issue all their differences? Why, 'Because every one is judge himself, and they have no umpire in whose decision they are bound to acquiesce.' I pray, who told you so? Is it not the fundamental principle of protestantism, that the Scripture determines all things necessary unto faith and obedience, and

that in that determination ought all men to acquiesce? I know few Roman Catholics have the prudence or the patience to understand what protestancy is. And certain it is, that those who take up their knowledge of it from the discourses and writings of such gentlemen as our author, know very little of it, if any thing at all: and those who do at any time get leave to read the books of Protestants, seem to be so filled with prejudices against them, and to be so biassed by corrupt affections, that they seldom come to a true apprehension of their meanings; for who so blind as he that will not see? Protestants tell them that the Scripture contains all things necessary to be believed and practised in the worship of God; and those proposed with that perspicuity and clearness which became the wisdom of its Author, who intended to instruct men by it in the knowledge of them; and in this word and rule say they, are all men to rest and acquiesce. But, says our author, why then do they not so? why are they at such feuds and differences amongst themselves? Is this in truth his business? Is it Protestants he blames, and not protestancy? men's miscarriages, and not their rule's imperfection? If it be so, I crave his pardon for having troubled him thus far. To defend Protestants for not answering the principles of their profession, is a task too hard for me to undertake, nor do I at all like the business; let him lay on blame still until I say hold. It may be we shall grow wiser, by his reviling, as Monica was cured of her intemperance by the reproach of a servant. But I would fain prevail with these gentlemen, for their own sakes, not to cast that blame which is due to us, upon the holy and perfect word of God. We do not say, nor ever did, that whoever acknowledgeth the Scripture to be a perfect rule, must upon necessity understand perfectly all that is contained in it; that he is presently freed from all darkness, prejudices, corrupt affections, and enabled to judge perfectly and infallibly of every truth contained in it, or deduced from it. These causes of our differences belong to individual persons, not to our common rule: and if, because no men are absolutely perfect, and some are very perverse and froward, we should throw away our rule, the blessed word of God, and run to the pope for rule and guidance; it is all one as if at noontide, because some are blind

and miss their way, and some are drunk and stagger out of it, and others are variously enticed to leave it, we should all conspire to wish the sun out of the firmament, that we might follow a will-with-a-wisp.

I know not what in general needs to be added farther to this section. The mistake of it is palpable; some particular passages may be remarked in it before we proceed: page 173. he pronounceth a heavy doom on the prelate Protestants; making them prevaricators, impostors, reprobates; a hard sentence, but that it is hoped it will prove like the flying bird, and curse causeless! But what is the matter? Why, in dealing with the Presbyterians, 'They are forced to make use of those popish principles which themselves at first rejected, and so building them up again, by the apostle's rule deserve no better terms.' But what I pray are they? Why, the difference betwixt clergy and laity, the efficacy of episcopal ordination and the authority of a visible church, unto which all men are to obey. There are but two things our author needs to prove to make good his charge. First, That these are popish principles. Secondly, That as such they were at any time cast down and destroyed by prelate Protestants. I fear his mind was gone a little astray, or that he had been lately among the Quakers, when he hammered this charge against prelate Protestants. For as these have been their constant principles ever since the beginning of the reformation, so they have as constantly maintained, that in their true and proper sense they are not popish. Nor is the difference about these things between any Protestants whatever any more than verbal. For those terms of clergy and laity, because they had been abused in the papacy, though anciently used, some have objected against them; but for the things signified by them, namely, that in the church there are some teachers, some to be taught, bishops and flocks, pastors and people; no Protestant ever questioned. Our author then doth but cut out work for himself, without order from any Protestant; when he sets up an excuse for this change in them by a relinquishment of their first principles, and reassuming popish ones for their defence against the Presbyterians. He that set him a work may pay him his wages. Protestants only tell him, that what was never done, needs never be excused.

Nor will they give him any more thanks for the plea he interposes in the behalf of episcopacy against Presbyterians and Independents; being interwoven with a plea for the papacy, and managed by such arguments as end in the exaltation of the Roman see; and that partly, because they know that their adversaries will be easily able to disprove the feigned monarchical government of the church under one pope; and to prove that, that fancy really everts the true and only monarchical state of the church in reference to Christ; knowing that monarchy doth not signify two heads but one; and partly, because they have better arguments of their own to plead for episcopacy than those that he suggests here unto them; or than any man in the world can supply them with, who thinks there is no communication of authority from Christ to any on the earth, but by the hands of the pope. So that upon the whole matter they desire him that he would attend his own business, and not immix their cause in the least with his, which tends so much to their weakening and disadvantage. If this may be granted, which is but reasonable; they will not much be troubled about his commendation of the pope, page 178. as the substitute of Christ, our only visible pastor, the chief bishop of the Catholic church, presiding, ruling, and directing, in the place of Christ, and the like eulogiums: being resolved, when he goes about to prove any thing that he says, that they will consider of it. But he must be better known to them than he is, before they will believe him on his bare word in things of such importance; and some suppose that the more he is known, the less he will be believed. But that he may not for the present think himself neglected, we will run over the heads of his plea, pretended for episcopacy, really to assert the papal sovereignty. First, He pleads, 'That the Christian church was first monarchical under one sovereign bishop, when Christ who founded it was upon the earth.' True; and so it is still. There is one sheepfold, one shepherd and bishop of our souls; he that was then bodily present having promised that presence of himself with his church to the end of the world; wherein he continues its one sovereign bishop. And although the apostles after him had an equality of power in the church among themselves, as bishops after them have also, yet this

doth not denominate the government of the church aristocratical, no more than the equality of the lords in parliament can denominate the government of this kingdom to be so. The denomination of any rule is from him or them, in whom the sovereignty doth reside, not from any subordinate rulers. So is the rule of the church monarchical. The subversion of this episcopacy, we acknowledge subverts the whole polity of the church, and so all her laws and rule, with the guilt whereof Protestants charge the Romanists. He adds, 'It will not suffice to say, that the church is still under its head Christ, who being in heaven, hath his spiritual influences over it.' It will not indeed; but yet we suppose that his presence with it by his Spirit and laws will suffice? Why should it not? 'Because the true church of Christ must have the very same head she had at first, or else she cannot be the same body.' Very good, and so she hath; the very same Christ that was crucified for her, and not another. 'But that head was Man-God personally present in both his natures here on earth.' But is he not, I pray, the same Man-God still? the same Christ, though the manner of his presence be altered? This is strange, that being the same as he was, and being present still, one circumstance of the manner of his presence should hinder him from being the same head. I cannot understand the logic, reason, nor policy of this inference. Suppose we should on these trifling instances exclude Jesus Christ, 'who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' from being the same head of his church as he was; will the pope supply his room? Is he the same head that Christ was? Is he God-man bodily present? or what would you have us to conclude? 'A visible head or bishop if the church hath not now over her as at first she had, she is not the same she was, and consequently in the way to ruin.' This too much alters the question: at first it was, [that she must have the same head she had at first, or she is not the same; now, that she must have another head that is not the same; or she is not the same. For the pope is not Jesus Christ. These arguings hang together like a rope of sand; and what is built on this foundation (which indeed is so weak, that I am ashamed farther to contend with it) will of its own accord fall to the ground.

CHAP. X.

Scripture ; and new principles.

THE next paragraph, page 182. is a naughty one. A business it is spent in and about, that I have now often advised our author to meddle with no more : if he will not for the future take advice I cannot help it ; I have shewed my good will towards him : it is his debasing of the Scripture and its authority which I intend. This, with the intertexture of some other gentle suppositions, is the subject of this and the following section. And because I will not tire myself and reader, in tracing what seems of concernment in this discourse, backward and forward, up and down, as it is by him dispersed and disposed to his best advantage in dealing with unwary men ; I shall draw out the principles of it, that he may know them wherever he meets them, though never so much masked and disguised, or never so lightly touched on, and also what judgment to pass upon them. Their foundation being so taken away, these sections, if I mistake not, will sink of themselves.

Some of these principles are coincident with those general ones insisted on in the entrance of our discourse ; others of them are peculiar to the design of these paragraphs. The first I shall only point unto, the latter briefly discuss.

1. It is supposed in the whole discourse of these sections, that ‘ from the Roman church so stated, as now it is, or from the pope, we here in England first received the gospel, which is the Romanists own religion, and theirs by donation from them whom they have here pleased to accommodate with it.’ This animates the whole, and is besides the special life of almost every sentence. A lifeless life ; for that there is not a syllable of truth in it, hath been declared before ; nor were it so, that by the ministry of the Roman church of old, the faith was first planted in these nations, would that one inch promote our author’s pretensions, unless he could prove that they did not afterward lose or corrupt at least, that which they communicated unto us ; which he knows to be the thing in question, and not to

be granted upon request, though made in never so handsome words. To say then, 'That the gospel is the Romanists' own religion, from them you had it, you contend about that which is none of your own; hear them whose it is, from whom you had it, who have the precedency before you;' is but to set up scarecrows to fright fools and children. Men who have any understanding of things past, know that all this bluster and noise comes from emptiness of any solid matter or substance to be used in the case.

2. It is also doughtily supposed, 'That whatever is spoken of the church in the Scripture, belongs to the Roman church, and that alone;' the privileges, the authority, the glory of the church, are all theirs; as the madman at Athens thought all the ships to be his, that came into the harbour. I suppose he will not contend, but that if you deny him this, all that he hath said besides is to little purpose. And I believe he cannot but take it ill, that any of his readers should call him to an account, in that which he everywhere puts out of question. But this he knew well enough, that all Protestants deny; that they grant no one privilege of the catholic church, as such, to belong to the Roman. All that any of them will allow her, is but to be a putrid corrupt member of it; some say cut off, dead, and rotten. But yet that the catholic church, and the Roman are the same, must be believed, or you spoil all his market. The church is before the gospel, gives testimony unto it, none could know it but by her authority, nothing can be accepted as such, but what she sets her seals unto; so that to destroy the church, is to destroy the gospel? What then, I pray? Suppose all this and all the rest of his assertions about the church, pp. 199, 200, &c. to be true, as some of them are most blasphemously false; yet, what is all this to his purpose? Why this is the Roman church, of which all these things are spoken. It may be the Roman church indeed, of which much of it is spoken, even all that is sinfully derogatory to the glory of Christ and his apostles, upon whom and whose authority the church is built, and not their authority on it; Eph. ii. 18—20. But what is truly spoken in the Scripture of the church, doth no more belong to the Roman, than to the least assembly of believers under heaven; wherein the essence of a true church is preserved; if it belongs unto it

at all. And yet this rude pretence, and palpable artifice, is the main engine in this section, applied to the removal of men from the basis of the Scripture. The church, the church! the Roman church, the Roman church! and these, forsooth, are supposed to be one and the same; and the pope to have monopolized all the privileges of the church, contrary to express statute-law of the gospel. Hence he pretends, that if to go out from the catholic be evil, then not to come into the Roman is evil; when indeed the most ready way to go out of the catholic, is to go into the Roman.

3. Moreover, it is taken for granted, 'That the Roman church is every way what it was, when first planted.' Indeed, if it were so, it would deserve as much particular respect as any church of any city in the world, and that would be all: as it is, the case is altered. But its unalteredness being added to the former supposition of its oneliness and catholicism, it is easy to see what sweet work a witty man as our author is, may make with this church among good company. Many and many a time have the Romanists attempted to prove these things; but failing in their attempt, they think it now reasonable to take them for granted. The religion they now profess must be that which first entered England; 'and there,' saith our author, 'it continued in peace for a thousand years;' when the truth is, after the entrance of their religion, that is, the corruption of Christianity by papal usurpations, these nations never passed one age without tumults, turmoils, contentions, disorders; nor many without wars, blood, and devastations; and those arising from the principles of their religion.

4. To this is added, 'that the Bible is the pope's own book, which none can lay claim to, but by and from him.' This will be found to be a doubtful assertion, and it will be difficult to conclude aright concerning it. He that shall consider, what a worthy person the pope is represented to be by our author, especially, in his just dealing and mercifulness, so 'that he never did any man wrong;' and shall take notice how many he hath caused to be burned to death for having and using the Bible without his consent, must need suppose, that it is his book. For surely, his heavenly mind would not have admitted of a provocation to such severity, unless they had stolen his goods out of his posses-

sion. But, on the other side, he that shall weigh aright his vilifying and undervaluing of it, his preferring himself and church before and above it; seeing we are all apt to set a high price upon that which is our own, may be ready to question whether indeed he have such a property in it as is pretended. Having somewhat else to do, I shall not interpose myself in this difference, nor attempt to determine this difficulty, but leave it as I find it, free for every man to think as he seeth cause.

5. But that which is the chief ingredient of these sections, is the plea, that 'we know not the Scripture to be the word of God but by the church, that is, the present church of Rome;' which he manageth by urging sundry objections against it, and difficulties which men meet withal in their inquiry, whether it be so or no. Nor content with that plea alone, he interweaves in his discourse many expressions and comparisons, tending directly to the slighting and contempt, both of its penmen and matter, which is said to be 'laws, poems, sermons, histories, letters, visions, several fancies in a diversity of composure; the whole, a book whereby men may as well prove their negative in denying the immortality of the soul, heaven, or hell, or any other thing, which, by reason of many intricacies, are very difficult, if not impossible at all to be understood;' see pp. 190—192, &c. Concerning all which, I desire to know, whether our author be in good earnest or no; or, whether he thinks as he writes; or, whether he would only have others to believe what he writes, that he may serve his turn upon their credulity. If he be in good earnest, indeed, he calls us to an easy, welcome employment; namely, to defend the holy word of God, and the wisdom of God in it, from such slight and trivial exceptions as those he lays against them. This path is so trodden for us by the ancients, in their answers to the more weighty objections of his predecessors in this work, the pagans, that we cannot well err or faint in it: if we are called to this task, namely, to prove that we can know and believe the Scripture to be the word of God, without any respect to the authority or testimony of the present church of Rome; that no man can believe it to be so, with faith divine and supernatural upon that testimony alone; that the whole counsel of God in all things to be believed or done in order to our last end, is clearly delivered

in it; and that the composure of it is a work of infinite wisdom, suited to the end designed to be accomplished by it; that no difficulties in the interpretation of particular places, hinder the whole from being a complete and perfect rule of faith and obedience,—we shall most willingly undertake it, as knowing it to be as honourable a service and employment as any of the sons of men can in this world be called unto. If, indeed, himself be otherwise minded, and believes not what he says, but only intends to entangle men by his sophistry, so to render them pliable unto his farther intention, I must yet once more persuade him to desist from this course. It doth not become an ingenuous man, much less a Christian, and one that boasts of so much mortification as he doth, to juggle thus with the things of God. In the mean time his reader may take notice, that so long as he is able to defend the authority, excellency, and usefulness of the Scripture, this man had nothing to say to him, as to the change of his religion from protestancy to popery. And when men will be persuaded to let that go as a thing uncertain, dubious, useless, it matters not much where they go themselves. And for our author, methinks, if not for reverence to Christ, whose book we know the Scriptures to be; yet, for the devotion he bears the pope, whose book he says it is, he might learn to treat it with a little more respect, or at least prevail with him to send out a book not liable to so many exceptions, as this is pretended to be. However, this I know, that though his pretence be to make men Papists, the course he takes is the readiest in the world to make them atheists; and whether that will serve his turn or no, as well as the other, I know not.

6. We have not yet done with the Scripture. ‘That the taking it for the only rule of faith, the only determiner of differences, is the only cause of all our differences, and which keeps us in a condition of having them endless;’ is also pretended and pleaded. But how shall we know this to be so? Christ and his apostles were absolutely of another mind, and so were Moses and the prophets before them. The ancient fathers of the primitive church walked in their steps, and unpierced all differences in religion by the Scriptures; opposing, confuting, and condemning errors and heresies by them; preserving, through their guidance, the unity of the Spirit in

the bond of peace. In these latter days of the world, which surely are none of the best, we have a few unknown persons come from Rome would persuade us, that the Scripture, and the use of it, is the cause of all our differences, and the means of making them endless. But why so, I pray? Doth it teach us to differ and contend? Doth it speak contradictions, and set us at variance? Is there any spirit of dissension breathing in it? Doth it not deliver what it commands us to understand so as it may be understood? Is there any thing needful for us to know, in the things of God, but what it reveals? Who can tell us what that is? But do we not see, 'de facto,' what differences there are amongst you who pretend, all of you, to be guided by Scripture? Yea, and we see also what surfeitings and drunkenness there is in the world, but yet do not think bread, meat, and drink to be the causes of them, and yet they are to the full as much so, as the Scriptures are of our differences. Pray, sir, do not think that sober men will cast away their food and starve themselves, because you tell them that some continually abuse and surfeit on that very kind of food which they use. Nor will some men's abuse of it prevail with others to cast away the food of their souls, if they have any design to live eternally.

7. The great 'safety and security that there is in committing ourselves, as to all the concerns of religion, unto the guidance, rule, and conduct of the pope,' is another great principle of this discourse. And here our author falls into a deep admiration of the pope's 'dexterity in keeping all his subjects in peace and unity, and subjection to him, there being no danger to any one for forsaking him, but only that of excommunication.' The contest is between the Scripture and the pope. Protestants say, the safest way for men, in reference to their eternal condition, is to believe the Scripture, and rest therein; the Romanists say the same of the pope. Which will prove the best course, methinks, should not be hard to determine. All Christians in the world ever did agree, that the Scripture is the certain infallible word of God, given him on purpose to reveal his mind and will unto us. About the pope there were great contests ever since he was first taken notice of in the world. Nothing, I confess, little or low, is spoken of him. Some say he is the head and

spouse of the church, the vicar of Christ, the successor of Peter, the supreme moderator of Christians, the infallible judge of controversies, and the like; others, again, that he is antichrist, the man of sin, a cruel tyrant and persecutor, the evil servant characterized, Matt. xxiv. 48—51. But all, as far as I can gather, agree that he is a man; I mean, that almost all popes have been so; for about every individual, there is not the like consent. Now the question is, whether we shall rest in the authority and word of God, or in the authority and word of a man, as the pope is confessed to be? and whether is like to yield us more security in our affiance? This being such another difficult matter and case as that before mentioned, about the Bible being the pope's book, shall not be by me decided, but left to the judgment of wiser men. In the mean time, for his feat of government, it is partly known what it is; as also what an influence into the effects of peace mentioned that gentle means of excommunication hath had. I know one that used in the late times to say of the excommunication in Scotland, 'he would not care for their devil, were it not for his horn;' and I suppose, had not papal excommunication been always attended with wars, blood, seditions, conspiracies, depositions and murders of kings, fire and fagot, according to the extent of their power, it would have been less effectual than our author pretends it to have been. Sir, do but give Christians the liberty that Christ hath purchased for them, lay down your carnal weapons, your whips, racks, prisons, halters, swords, fagots, with your unchristian subtleties, slanders, and fleshly machinations, and we and you shall quickly see what will become of your papal peace and power.

These are the goodly principles, the honest suppositions, of the discourse which our author ends his third book withal. It could not but have been a tedious thing, to take them up by pieces, as they lay scattered up and down like the limbs of Media's brother, cast in the way to retard her pursuers. The reader may now take a view of them together, and thence of all that is offered to persuade him to a relinquishment of his present profession and religion. For the stories, comparisons, jests, sarcasms, that are intermixed with them, I suppose he will know how to turn them to another use.

Some very few particulars need only to be remarked. As,

1. 'No man can say what ill popery did in the world until Henry the Eighth's days.' Strange! when it is not only openly accused, but proved guilty of almost all the evil that was in the Christian world, in those days; particularly of corrupting the doctrine and worship of the gospel, and debauching the lives of Christians.

2. 'With the Roman Catholics unity ever dwelt.' Never; the very name of Roman Catholic, appropriating catholicism to Romanism, is destructive of all gospel unity.

3. 'Some Protestants say, they love the persons of the Romanists, but hate their religion; the reason is plain, they know the one and not the other.' No, they know them both; and the pretence that people are kept with, as from knowing what the religion of the Romanists is, is vain, untrue; and, as to what colour can possibly be given unto it, such an infant in comparison of that vast giant, which of the same kind lives in the Romish territories, that it deserves not to be mentioned.

4. 'Protestants are beholden to the Catholics (that is, Romanists) for their universities, benefices, books, pulpits, gospel.' For some of them, not all; for the rest, as the Israelites were to the Egyptians for the tabernacle they built in the wilderness.

5. 'The pope was anciently believed sole judge and general pastor over all.' Prove it; ask the ancient fathers and councils, whether they ever heard of any such thing? they will universally return their answer in the negative.

6. 'The Scripture you received from the pope.' Not at all, as hath been proved; but from Christ himself, by the ministry of the first planters of Christianity.

7. 'You cannot believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, but upon the authority of the church.' We can and do, upon the authority of God himself; and the influence of the church's ministry or authority into our believing, concerns not the church of Rome.

8. 'You account them that brought you the Scriptures, as liars.' No otherwise than as the Scripture affirms every man to be so; not in their ministry, wherein they brought the word unto us.

9. 'The gospel, separate from the church, can prove

nothing. Yes, itself to be sent of God ; and so doing, is the foundation of the church. Sundry other passages of the like nature might be remarked, if I could imagine any man would judge them worthy of consideration.

CHAP. XI.

Story of religion.

THE fourth and last part of our author's discourse, is spent in two stories : one of religion ; the other of himself. His first, of religion, is but a summary of what was diffused through the other parts of his treatise, being insinuated piecemeal, as he thought he could make any advantage of it to his purpose. Two things he aims to make his readers believe by it ; first, That we in these nations had our religion from Rome ; and, secondly, That it was the same which is there now professed. Those whom he tells his tale unto, are, as he professeth, such as are 'ignorant of the coming into, and progress of religion amongst us ;' wherein he deals wisely, and as became him ; seeing he might easily assure himself, that those who are acquainted, before his information, with the true state of these things, would give little credit to what he nakedly avers upon his own authority. For my part, I shall readily acknowledge, that for ought appears in this book, he is a better historian than a disputant ; and hath more reason to trust to his faculty of telling a tale, than managing of an argument. I confess also, that a slight and superficial view of antiquity, especially, as flourished over by some Roman legendaries, is the best advantage our adversaries have to work on ; as a thorough judicious search of it, is fatal to their pretensions. He, that from the Scriptures, and the writings extant of the first centuries, shall frame a true idea of the state and doctrine of the first churches, and then observe the adventitious accessions made to religion in the following ages, partly by men's own inventions, but chiefly by their borrowing from, or imitation of, the Jews and pagans, will need very little light or help from artificial arguments, to discover

the defections of the Roman party, and the true means whereby that church arrived unto its present condition. To pursue this at large is not a work to be undertaken in this scrambling chase. It hath been done by others, and those, who are not unwilling to be at the cost and pains in the disquisition of the truth, which it is really worth, may easily know where to find it. Our present task is, but to observe our author's motions, and to consider whether what he offers, hath any efficacy towards that he aims at.

A triple conversion he assigns to this nation. The first by Joseph of Arimathea; about which, as to matter of fact, we have no contest with him. That the gospel was preached here in the apostles' days, either by him, or some other evangelist, is certain, and taken for granted on all hands; nor can our author pretend that it came hither from Rome; but grants it to have come immediately from Palestine. Whether this doth not overthrow the main of his plea in his whole discourse, concerning our dependance upon Rome for our religion, I leave to prudent men to judge. Thus far then we are equal. As the gospel came to Rome, so it came to England; to both from the same place, and by the same authority, the same ministry. All the question is, Whether religion they brought with them? that now professed in England, or that of Rome? If this be determined, the business is at an issue; we are persuaded Joseph brought no other religion with him, than what was taught by Peter and Paul, and the rest of the apostles and evangelists, in other parts of the world. What religion men taught 'viva voce' in any age, is best known by their writings, if they left any behind them. No other way have the Romanists themselves, nor other do they use, in judging what was the doctrine of the fathers in the following ages. The writings of the apostles are still extant; by them alone can we judge of the doctrine that they preached. That doctrine then unquestionably taught Joseph in Britain; and that doctrine (blessed be God) is still owned and professed amongst us. All, and only what is contained in their writings, is received with us as necessary to salvation. This conversion was wholly ours. 'Quod antiquissimum id verissimum.' Being the first, it was certainly the best. Our author indeed tells us of crosses, shrines, oratories, altars, monasteries, vigils, em-

bers, honouring of saints (you must suppose all in the Roman mode), making oblations and orisons for the dead, and that this was the religion in those days planted amongst us. If this be so, I wonder what we do to keep the Bible, which speaks not one word of that religion, which the apostles and apostolical men preached. Strange! that in all their writings they should not once mention the main parts and duties of the doctrines and worship, which they taught and propagated; that Paul, in none of his epistles, should in the least give the churches any direction in, or concerning, the things and ways wherein their worship principally consisted and their devotion was chiefly exercised! But how comes our author to know, that these things, in the Roman mode, were brought into England at the first entrance of Christianity? Would he would give us a little information from what writings or monuments of those times he acquired his knowledge. I know it is unreasonable to put an historian to his oath; but yet, unless he can plead, that he received his acquaintance with things that are so long past by inspiration, as Moses wrote the story of the creation and ages before the flood, being destitute of any other monuments or testimony that might give evidence to what he says, I hope he will not be offended, if we suspend our belief. ‘*Solus enim hoc Ithacus nullo sub teste canebat.*’ This first conversion then, as was said, is wholly ours, it neither came from Rome, nor knew any thing of that which is the present religion of Rome, wherein they differ from us.

That which is termed our second conversion, is the preaching of Damianus and Fugatius, sent hither by Eleutherius bishop of Rome, in the days of king Lucius, in the year 190. as our author saith, Beda 156. Naclerus, Baronius, 178. Henricus de Erfordia, 169. in the days of Aurelius, or Commodus. I have many reasons to question this whole story. And sundry parts of it, as those about the epistles of Lucius and Eleutherius are palpably fictitious. But let us grant, that about those days, Fugatius and Damianus came hither from Rome, and furthered the preaching of the gospel, which had taken footing here so long before, and was no doubt preserved amongst many; we know God in his providence used many various ways for the propagating

of his gospel ; sometimes he did it by merchants, sometimes by soldiers, sometimes by captives ; as a poor maid gave occasion to the conversion of a whole province. What will hence ensue to the advantage of the pretensions of the Romanists ? The religion they planted here was, doubtless, that (and no other), which was then professed at Rome, and in most other places in the world, with some small differences in outward observances, wherein each church took liberty to follow traditions or prudential reasonings of its own. When our author, or any for him, can make it appear, that any thing material in that which we call popery, was in those days taught, believed, preached, or known among the churches of Christ, they will do somewhat to the purpose ; but the present flourish about the catholic faith, planted here, which no man ever denied, is to none at all. It was the old catholic faith we at first received, and therefore not the present Romish.

After those days, wherein this propagation of Christianity by the ministry of Fugatius and Damianus in this province, is supposed to have fallen out, a sad decay in faith and holiness of life, befell professors, not only in this nation, but, for the most part, all the world over ; which especially took place after God had graciously, in the conversion of the emperors to the faith, intrusted them with outward peace and prosperity. I desire not to make naked their miscarriages, whom I doubt not but in mercy, God hath long since pardoned ; but it cannot be denied, that the stories of those days are full of nothing more than the oppressions, luxury, and sloth of rulers, the pride, ambition, and unseemly scandalous contests for pre-eminence of sees, and extent of jurisdiction among bishops, the sensuality and ignorance of the most of men. In this season it was that the bishop of Rome, advantaged by the prerogative of the city, the ancient seat and spring of the empire, began gradually to attempt a superintendency over his brethren, according as any advantages for that end (which could not be wanting in the intestine tumults and seditions wherewith Christians were turmoiled) offered themselves unto him. Wherever an opportunity could be spied, he was still interposing his umpirage and authority amongst them, and that sometimes not without sinful artifices and down-

right forgeries, wherein he was always accepted or refused, according as the interest of them required with whom he had to do. What the lives of priests and people, what their knowledge and profession of the gospel, of the poor Britains, especially in those days were, our own countryman Gildas doth sufficiently testify and bewail. Salvianus doth the same for other parts of the world. And generally, all the pious men of those ages; whilst the priests strove for sovereignty and power, the people perished through ignorance and sensuality. Neither can we possibly have a more full conviction of what was the state of Christians and Christianity in those days in the world, than may be seen and read in the horrible judgments of God wherewith he punished their wickedness and ingratitude. When he could no longer bear the provocations of his people, he stirred up those swarms of northern nations, Goths, Vandals, Huns, Franks, Longobards, Alans, Saxons, &c. Some few of them Arians, the most pagans, and poured them out upon the western empire, to the utter ruin of it, and the division of the provinces amongst themselves. After a while, these fierce, cruel, and barbarous nations, having executed the judgments of God against the ungodliness of men, seating themselves in the warmer climates of those whom they had in part subdued, in part extirpated, as is the manner of all persons in transmigration from one country to another, began to unlearn their ancient barbarism, and to incline to the manners, fashions, and religion of the people, to whom they were come, and with whom, after their heats were over and lusts satisfied, they began to incorporate and coalesce; together, I say, with their manners, they took up, by various ways and means, the religion which they did profess. And the bishop of Rome having kept his outward station in that famous city during all those turmoils, becoming venerable unto them, unto him were many applications made, and his authority was first signally advanced by this new race of Christians. The religion they thus took up, was not a little degenerated from its primitive apostolical purity and splendour. And they were among the first who felt the effects of their former barbarous inhumanity, in their sedulous endeavour to destroy all books and learning out of the world, which brought that darkness upon man-

kind wherewith they wrestled for many succeeding generations. For having themselves made an intercision of the current and progress of studies and learning, they were forced to make use in their entertainment of Christianity, of men meanly skilled in the knowledge of God or themselves, who, some of them, knew little more of the gospel, than what they had learned in the outward observances and practices of the places where they had been educated. Towards the beginning of this hurry of the world, this shuffling of the nations, was the province of Britain, not long before, exhausted of it stores of men and arms, and defeated by the Romans, invaded by the Saxons, Picts, Angles, and others out of Germany, who, accomplishing the will of God, extirpated the greatest part of the British nation, and drove the remainders of them to shelter themselves in the western mountainous parts of this island. These new inhabitants, after they were somewhat civilized by the vicinity of the provincials, and had got a little breathing from their own intestine feuds, by fixing the limits of their leaders' dominions, which they called kingdoms, began to be in some preparedness to receive impressions of religion, above that rude paganism which they had before served Satan in. These were they to whom came Austin from Rome; a man, as far as appears by the story, little acquainted with the mystery of the gospel; yet one whom it pleased God graciously to use to bring the Scripture amongst them, that inexhaustible fountain of light and truth; and by which those to whom he preached might be infallibly freed from any mixture of mistakes, that he might offer to them. That he brought with him a doctrine of observances, not formerly known in Britain, is notorious, from the famous story of those many professors of Christianity, which he caused to be murdered by pagans, for not submitting to his power, and refusing to practise according to his traditions; whose unwillingness to be slain, if they could have otherwise chosen, is that which, I suppose, our author calls their 'disturbing good St. Austin in his pious work.' But yet neither will this conversion of the Saxons, began by Austin the monk, at all advantage our author as to his pretensions. The religion he taught here, as well as he could, was doubtless no other than that which

at those days was professed at Rome; mixtures of human traditions, worldly policies, observances trenching upon the superstitions of the Gentiles, in many things it had then revived; but however it was far enough from the present Romanism, if the writers and chief bishops of those days knew what was their religion; papal supremacy, and infallibility, transubstantiation, religious veneration of images in churches, with innumerable other prime fundamentals of popery, were as great strangers at Rome in the days of Gregory the Great, as they are at this day to the church of England.

After these times, the world continuing still in troubles, religion began more and more to decline, and fall off from its pristine purity. At first, by degrees insensible and almost imperceptible, in the broaching of new opinions and inventing new practices in the worship of God. At length, by open presumptuous transgressions of its whole rule and genius in the usurpation of the pope of Rome, and impositions of his authority on the necks of emperors, kings, princes, and people of all sorts. By what means this work was carried on, what advantages were taken for, what instruments used in it, what opposition by kings and learned men was made unto it, what testimony was given against it by the blood of thousands of martyrs, others have at large declared; nor will my present design admit me to insist on particulars. What contests, debates, tumults, wars, were by papal pretensions raised in these nations, what shameful entreating of some of the greatest of our kings, what absolutions of subjects from their allegiance, with such like effluxes of an abundant apostolical piety, this nation in particular was exercised with from Rome, all our historians sufficiently testify. '*Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem!*' The truth is, when once Romanism began to be enthroned and had driven catholicism out of the world, we had very few kings that passed their days in peace and quietness from contests with the pope, or such as acted for him, or were stirred up by him. The face in the mean time of Christianity was sad and deplorable. The body of the people being grown dark and profane, or else superstitious, the generality of the priests and votaries ignorant and vicious in their conversations, the oppressions of the Hilde-

brandine faction intolerable, religion dethroned, from a free generous obedience according to the rule of the gospel, and thrust into cells, orders, self-invented devotions and forms of worship, superstitious, and unknown to Scripture and antiquity, the whole world groaned under the apostacy it was fallen into, when it was almost too late; the yoke was so fastened to their necks, and prejudices so fixed in the minds of the multitude. Kings began to repine, princes to remonstrate their grievances, whole nations to murmur, some learned men to write and preach against the superstitions and oppressions of the church of Rome. Against all which complaints and attempts, what means the popes used for the safe-guarding their authority, and opinions subservient to their carnal worldly interests, deposing some, causing others to be murdered that were in supreme power, bandying princes and great men one against another, exterminating others with fire and sword, is also known unto all who take any care to know such things, whatever our author pretends to the contrary. This was the state, this the peace, this the condition of most nations in Europe, and these in particular where we live; when occasion was administered in the providence of God, unto that reformation which in the next place he gives us the story of. Little cause had he to mind us of this story; little to boast of the primitive catholic faith; little to pretend the Romish religion to have been that which was first planted in these nations; his concerns lie not in those things, but only in that tyrannical usurpation of the popes, and irregular devotions of some votaries, which latter ages produced.

CHAP. XII.

Reformation.

THE story of the reformation of religion he distributes into three parts, and allots to each a particular paragraph; the first is of its occasion and rise in general, the second of its entrance into England, the third of its progress amongst us. Of the first he gives us this account: 'The pastor of Christianity, upon some solicitation of Christian princes, for a general compliance to their design, sent forth in the year 1517. a plenary indulgence in favour of the Cruciata against the Turk. Albertus, the archbishop of Mentz, being delegated by the pope to see it executed, committed the promulgation of it to the Dominican friars; which the hermits of St. Augustin in the same place took ill, especially Martin Luther, &c. who, vexed that he was neglected and undervalued, fell a writing and preaching first against indulgencies, then against the pope,' &c. He that had no other acquaintance with Christian religion, but what the Scriptures and ancient fathers will afford him, could not but be amazed at the canting language of this story; it being impossible for him to understand any thing of it aright. He would admire who this 'pastor of Christianity' should be, what this 'plenary indulgence' should mean, what was the 'preaching of plenary indulgence by Dominicans,' and what all this would avail against the Turk. I cannot but pity such a poor man, to think what a loss he would be at, like one taken from home and carried blindfold into the midst of a wilderness, where, when he opens his eyes, every thing scares him, nothing gives him guidance or direction. Let him turn again to his Bible, and fathers of the first four or five hundred years, and I will undertake he shall come off from them as wise as to the true understanding of this story, as he went unto them. The scene in religion is plainly changed, and this appearance of a 'universal pastor, plenary indulgences, Dominicans and Cruciata's,' all marching against the Turk, must needs affright a man accustomed only to the Scripture notions of religion, and those embraced by

the primitive church. And I do know, that if such a man could get together two or three of the wisest Romanists in the world, which were the likeliest way for him to be resolved in the signification of these hard names, they would never well agree to tell him what this 'plenary indulgence' is. But for the present, as to our concernment, let us take these things according to the best understanding, which their framers and founders have been pleased to give us of them; the story intended to be told, was indeed neither so, nor so. There was no such solicitation of the pope by Christian princes at that time, as is pretended; no Cruciata against the Turk undertaken; no attempt of that nature ensued, not a penny of indulgence-money, laid out to any such purpose. But the short of the matter is, that the church of Mentz, being not able to pay for the archiepiscopal pall of Albertus from Rome, having been much exhausted by the purchase of one or two for other bishops that died suddenly before, the pope grants to Albert a number of pardons, of, to say the truth, I know not what, to be sold in Germany, agreeing with him, that one half of the gain he would have in his own right, and the other for the pall. Now the pope's merchants that used to sell pardons for him in former days were the preaching friars, who, upon holydays and festivals, were wont to let out their ware to the people, and in plain terms to cheat them of their money; and well had it been, if that had been all. What share in the dividend came to the venders, well I know not: probably they had a proportion according to the commodity that they put off; which stirred up their zeal to be earnest and diligent in their work. Among the rest, one friar Tecel was so warm in his employment, and so intent upon the main end that they had all in their eye, that preaching in or about Wittenberg, it sufficed him not in general, to make an offer of the pardon of all sins that any had committed, but to take all scruples from their consciences, coming to particular instances, carried them up to a cursed blasphemous supposition of ravishing the blessed Virgin; so cocksure he made of the forgiveness of any thing beneath it, provided the price were paid that was set upon the pardon. Sober men being much amazed and grieved at

these horrible impieties, one Martin Luther, a professor of divinity at Wittenberg, an honest, warm, zealous soul, set himself to oppose the friar's blasphemies; wherein his zeal was commended by all, his discretion by few, it being the joint opinion of most, that the pope would quickly have stopped his mouth by breaking his neck. But God, as it afterward appeared, had another work to bring about, and the time of entering upon it was now fully come. At the same time that Luther set himself to oppose the pardons in Germany, Zuinglius did the same in Switzerland. And both of them, taking occasion from the work they first engaged in to search the Scriptures, so to find out the truth of religion, which they discovered to be horribly abused by the pope and his agents, proceeded farther in their discovery, than at first they were aware of. Many nations, princes, and people, multitudes of learned and pious men, up and down the world, that had long groaned under the bondage of the papal yoke, and grieved for the horrible abuse of the worship of God, which they were forced to see and endure, hearing that God had stirred up some learned men seriously to oppose those corruptions in religion, which they saw and mourned under, speedily either countenanced them, or joined themselves with them. It fell out, indeed; as it was morally impossible it should be otherwise, that multitudes of learned men, undertaking, without advising or consulting one with another, in several far distant nations, the discovery of the papal errors, and the reformation of religion, some of them had different apprehensions and persuasions in and about some points of doctrine, and parts of worship of no great weight and importance. And he that shall seriously consider, what was the state of things when they began their work, who they were, how educated, what prejudices they had to wrestle with, and remember withal, that they were all men; will have ten thousand times more cause to admire at their agreement in all fundamentals, than at their difference about some lesser things. However, whatever were their personal failings and infirmities, God was pleased to give testimony to the uprightness and integrity of their hearts; and to bless their endeavours with such success, as answered, in some measure, the primitive work of

planting and propagating the gospel. The small sallies of our author upon them in some legends about what Luther should say or do, deserve not the least notice from men, who will seriously contemplate the hand, power, and wisdom of God in the work accomplished by them.

The next thing undertaken by our author, is the ingress of protestancy into England, and its progress there. The old story of the love of King Henry the Eighth to Anne Bullen, with the divorce of Queen Katharine, told over and over long ago by men of the same principle and design with himself, is that which he chooseth to flourish withal. I shall say no more to the story, but that Englishmen were not wont to believe the whispers of an unknown friar or two, before the open redoubled protestation of one of the most famous kings that ever swayed the sceptre of this land, before the union of the crowns of England and Scotland. These men, whatever they pretend, shew what reverence they have to our present sovereign, by their unworthy defamation of his royal predecessors. But let men suppose the worst they please of that great heroic person, what are his miscarriages unto Protestant religion; for neither was he the head, leader, or author of that religion; nor did he ever receive it, profess it, or embrace it; but caused men to be burned to death for its profession. Should I, by way of retaliation, return unto our author, the lives and practices of some, of many, not of the great or leading men of his church, but of the popes themselves, the head, sum, and, in a manner, whole of their religion, at least so far (that without him) they will not acknowledge any, he knows well enough what double measure shaken together, pressed down, and running over, may be returned unto him. A work this would be, I confess, no way pleasing unto myself; for who can delight in raking into such a sink of filth, as the lives of many of them have been; yet, because he seems to talk with a confidence of willingness to revive the memory of such ulcers of Christianity, if he proceed in the course he hath began, it will be necessary to mind him of not boxing up his eyes when he looks towards his own home. That poisonings, adulteries, incests, conjurations, perjuries, atheism, have been no strangers to that see; if he knows not, he shall be acquainted from stories, that he hath no colour to except against. For

the present, I shall only mind him and his friend of the comedian's advice :

*Dehinc ut quiescant. porro monco, et desinant
Maledicere, malefacta ne noscant sua.*

The declaration made in the days of that king, that he was the head of the church of England, intended no more, but that there was no other person in the world from whom any jurisdiction to be exercised in this church over his subjects might be derived, the supreme authority for all exterior government being vested in him alone; that this should be so, the word of God, the nature of the kingly office, and the ancient laws of this realm, do require. And I challenge our author to produce any one testimony of Scripture, or any one word out of any general council, or any one catholic father or writer, to give the least countenance to his assertion of two heads of the church in his sense; 'a head of influence, which is Jesus himself; and a head of government, which is the pope, in whom all the sacred hierarchy ends.' This taking of one half of Christ's rule and headship out of his hand, and giving it to the pope, will not be salved, by that expression thrust in by the way, 'under him;' for the headship of interest is distinctly ascribed unto Christ, and that of government to the pope; which evidently asserts, that he is not in the same manner, head unto his church in both these senses; but he in one, and the pope in another.

But whatever was the cause or occasion of the dissention between King Henry and the pope, it is certain, protestancy came into England by the same way and means that Christianity came into the world; the painful, pious professors and teachers of it, sealed its truth with their blood; and what more honourable entrance it could make, I neither know, nor can it be declared. Nor did England receive this doctrine from others; in the days of King Henry it did but revive that light which sprung up amongst us long before, and by the fury of the pope and his adherents, had been awhile suppressed. And it was with the blood of Englishmen, dying patiently and gloriously in the flames, that the truth was sealed in the days of that king, who lived and died himself, as was said, in the profession of the Roman faith. The truth flourished yet more in the days of his pious and hopeful son. Some stop, our author tells us, was put to it in the days of Queen Mary.

But what stop? of what kind? of no other than that put to Christianity by Trajan, Dioclesian, Julian; a stop by fire and sword, and all exquisite cruelties, which was broken through by the constant death, and invincible patience and prayers, of bishops, ministers, and people numberless; a stop that Rome hath cause to blush in the remembrance of, and all Protestants to rejoice, having their faith tried in the fire, and coming forth more precious than gold. Nor did Queen Elizabeth, as is falsely pretended, endeavour to continue that stop, but cordially, from the beginning of her reign, embraced that faith, wherein she had before been instructed. And in the maintenance of it, did God preserve her from all the plots, conspiracies, and rebellions of the Papists; curses and depositions of the popes; with invasion of her kingdoms by his instigation, as also her renowned successor, with his whole regal posterity from their contrivance for their martyrdom and ruin. During the reign of those royal and magnificent princes, had the power and polity of the papal world been able to accomplish what the men of this innocent and quiet religion professedly designed, they had not the advantage of the late miscarriages of some professing the Protestant religion, in reference to our late king, of glorious memory, to triumph in; though they had obtained that which would have been very desirable to them, and which we have but sorry evidence that they do not yet aim at and hope for. As for what he declares in the end of his nineteenth paragraph, about the reformation here, that it followed wholly neither Luther nor Calvin, which he intermixes with many unseemly taunts and reflections on our laws, government, and governors, is, as far as it is true, the glory of it. It was not Luther, nor Calvin, but the word of God, and the practice of the primitive church, that England proposed for her rule and pattern in her reformation; and, where any of the reformers forsook them, she counted it her duty, without reflections on them, or their ways, to walk in that safe one she had chosen out for herself.

Nor shall I insist on his next paragraph, destined to the advancement of his interest, by a proclamation of the late tumults, seditions, and rebellions in these nations, which he ascribes to the Puritans. He hath got an advantage, and it is not equal we should persuade him to forego it; only I

desire prudent men to consider what the importance of it is, as to this case in hand; for, as to other considerations of the same things, they fall not within the compass of our present discourse. It is not of professions, but of persons that he treats. The crimes that he insists on, attend not any avowed principles, but the men that have professed them. And if a rule of choosing or leaving religion, may from thence be gathered, I know not any in the world, that any can embrace, much less can they rest in none at all. Professors of all religions have, in their seasons, sinfully miscarried themselves, and troubled the world with their lusts; and those who have possessed none, most of all. And of all that is called religion, that of the Romanists might by this rule be first cashiered. The abominable bestial lives of very many of their chief guides, in whom they believe; the tumults, seditions, rebellions, they have raised in the world; the treasons, murders, conspiracies, they have countenanced, encouraged, and commended, would take up not a single paragraph of a little treatise, but innumerable volumes, should they be but briefly reported; they do so already; and which renders them abominable, whilst there is any in the world, that see reason not to submit themselves unto the papal sovereignty, their professed principles led them to the same courses; and when men are brought to all the bestial subjection aimed at, yet pretences will not be wanting to set on foot such practices. They were not in former days, when they had obtained an uncontrollable omnipotency. If our author supposeth this a rational way for the handling of differences in religion, that leaving the consideration of the doctrines and principles, we should insist on the vices and crimes of those who have professed them, I can assure him he must expect the least advantage by it to his party, of any in the world; nor need we choose any other scene than England to try out our contests by this rule; I hope, when he writes next, he will have better considered this matter, and not flatter himself that the crimes of any Protestants, do enable him to conclude as he doth, that the only way for peace is the extermination of protestancy; and so his tale about religion is ended; he next brings himself on the stage.

CHAP. XIII.

Popish contradictions.

THIS is our last task ; our author's own story of himself, and rare observations in the Roman religion, make up the close of his discourse, and merit in his thoughts the title of discovery. The design of the whole is to manifest his Catholic religion to be absolutely unblameable, by wiping off some spots and blemishes that are cast upon it ; indeed by gilding over, with fair and plausible words, some parts of their profession and worship, which he knew to be most liable to the exceptions of them with whom he intends to deal. His way of managing this design, that he may seem to do something new, is, by telling a fair tale of himself, and his observations, with the effects they had upon him ; which is but the putting of a new tune to an old song, that hath been chanted at our doors these hundred years ; and some he hopes are so simple, as to like the new tune, though they were sick of the old song. His entrance is a blessing of the world with some knowledge of himself, his parentage, birth, and education, and proficiency in his studies ; as not doubting, but that great inquiry must needs be made after the meanest concernments of such a hero, as by his achievements and travels he hath manifested himself to be. And, indeed, he hath so handsomely and delightfully given us the romance of himself and popery, that it was pity he should so unhappily stumble at the threshold, as he hath done, and fall upon a misadventure that to some men will render the design of his discourse suspected. For whereas he doth elsewhere most confidently aver, that no trouble ever was raised amongst us by the Romanists ; here at unawares he informs us, that his own grandfather lost both his life and his estate, in a rebellion raised in the north on the account of that religion. Just as before, attempting to prove that we received Christianity originally from Rome, he tells us, that the first planters of it came directly from Palestina. It is in vain for him to persuade us, that what hath been, can never be again, unless he manifest the principles which

formerly gave it life and being, to be vanished out of the world; which as to those of the Romanists, tending to the disturbance of these kingdoms, I fear he is not able to do.

There is not any thing else which Protestants are universally bound to observe in the course of his life, before he went beyond the seas, but only the offence he took at men's preaching at London against popery; not that he was then troubled, if we may believe him, that popery was ill reported of, but the miscarriage of the preachers in bringing in the papal church hand over head in their sermons, speaking all evil and no good of it, and charging it with contradictions, was that which gave him distaste. He knows himself best what it was that troubled him, nor shall I set up conjectures against his assertions. The triple evil mentioned, so far as it is evil, I hope he finds now remedied. For my part, I never liked of men's importune diversions from their texts, to deal with, or confute Papists, which is the first part of the evil complained of. I know a far more effectual way to preserve men from popery, namely, a solid instruction of them in the principles of truth, with an endeavour to plant in their hearts the power of those principles, that they may have experience of their worth and usefulness. That nothing but evil was spoken of popery by Protestants, when they spake of it, I cannot wonder; they account nothing evil in the religion of the Romanists but popery; which is the name of the evil of that religion. No Protestants ever denied, but that the Romanists retained many good things in the religion which they profess; but those good things, they say, are no part of popery; so that our author should not by right, have been so offended, that men spake no good of that, which is the expression of the evil of that which in itself is good, as popery is of the Papist's Christianity. The last parcel of that which was the matter of his trouble and offence, he displays by sundry of the contradictions, which Protestants charged popery withal. To little purpose; for, either the things he mentions are not by any charged on popery, or not in that manner he expresseth, or the contradiction between them consists not in the assertions themselves, but in some additional terms supplied by himself, to make them appear contradictions. For instance (to take those given by himself), if one say, the

Papists worship stocks and stones, another say, they worship a piece of bread, here is no contradiction. Again, if one charge them with having their consciences affrighted with purgatory and doomsday, and penances for their sins, that they never live a quiet life; another, that they carry their top and top-gallant so high, that they will go to heaven without Christ, or (as we in the country phrase it), trust not to his merits and righteousness alone for salvation, here may be no contradiction: for all Papists are not, we know it well enough, of the same mould and form. Some may more imbibe some principles of religion tending in appearance to mortification, some those that lead to pride and presumption, and so be liable to several charges. But neither are these things inconsistent in themselves. Men in their greatest consternation of spirit from sense of punishment, real or imaginary, wherewith they are disquieted, may yet proudly reject the righteousness of Christ; and if our author knows not this to be true, he knows nothing of the gospel. The next instance is of the same nature. One, he saith, affirms, that murders, adulteries, lies, blasphemies, and all sin make up the bulk of popery; another, that Papists are so wholly given to good works, that they place in them excessive confidence. I scarce believe, that he ever heard any thus crudely charging them with either part of the imagined contradictory proposition, taking popery, as the Protestants do, for the exorbitancy of the religion, which the Romanists profess; and considering the product of it in the most of mankind, it may be some, by a usual hyperbole, have used the words first mentioned; but, if we should charge the Papists for being 'wholly given to good works,' we should much wrong both them and ourselves, seeing we perfectly know the contrary. The sum of both these things brought into one, is but this, That many Papists, in the course of a scandalously sinful life, do place much of their confidence in good works; which is indeed a strange contradiction in principles, between their speculation and practice; but we know well enough, there is none in the charge. Let us consider one more; one affirmed, that the pope and all his Papists fall down to pictures, and commit idolatry with them; another, that the pope is so far from falling down to any thing, that he exalts himself above all

that is called God, and is very antichrist. If one had said, he falls down to images, another, that he falls not down to images, there had been a contradiction indeed; but our author by his own testimony being a civil logician, knows well enough that the falling down in the first proposition, and that in the second are things of a diverse nature, and so are no contradiction. A man may fall down to images, and yet refuse to submit himself to the power that God hath set over him. And those of whom he speaks, would have told him, that a great part of the pope's exalting himself against God, consists in his falling down to images, wherein he exalts his own will and tradition, against the will and express commands of God. The same may be shewed of all the following instances, nor can he give any one that shall manifest popery to be charged by sober Protestants with any other contradictions, than what appears to every eye in the inconsistency of some of their principles one with another, and of most of them with their practice. In the particulars by himself enumerated, there is no other shew of the charge of contradictory evils in popery, than what by his additions and wresting expressions is put upon them.

Weary of such preaching in England, our author addressed himself to travel beyond the seas, where what he met withal, what he observed, the weight and strength of his own conversion being laid in pretence upon it (indeed an apology for the more generally excepted against parts of his Roman practice and worship, being intended and pursued), must be particularly considered and debated.

CHAP. XIV.

Mass.

SECT. 22. The title our author gives to his first head of observation, is 'Messach,' on what account I know not; unless it be with respect to a ridiculous Hebrew etymology of the word 'missa;' as though it should be the same with מִסָּח a word quite of another signification. If this be that which his title intends, I wish him better success in his next etymologizing, for this attempt hath utterly failed him. 'Missa' never came out of the east, nor hath any affinity with those tongues; being a word utterly unknown to the Syrians; and Grecians also, by whom all Hebrew words that are used in religion came into Europe. He that will trouble himself to trace the pedigree of 'missa,' shall find it of no such ancient stock, but a word that, with many others, came into use in the destruction of the Roman empire, and the corruption of the Latin tongue. But as it is likely our author having not been accustomed to feed much upon Hebrew roots, might not perceive the insipidness of this pretended traduction of the word 'missa,' so also on the other side, it is not improbable, but that he might only by an uncouth word think to startle his poor countrymen, at the entrance of the story of his travels, that they might look upon him as no small person who hath the 'Messach,' and such other hard names, at his fingers' ends; as the Gnostics heightened their disciples into an admiration of them by 'Paldabaoth, Astaphæum,' and other names of the like hideous noise and sound.

Of the discourse upon this 'Messach' whatever it is, there are sundry parts. That he begins with, is a preference of the devotion of the Romanists incomparably above that of the Protestants. This was the entrance of his discovery. Catholics' bells ring oftener than ours, their churches are swept cleaner than ours; yea, ours in comparison of theirs are like stables to a princely palace; their people are longer upon their knees than ours, and upon the whole matter they are excellent every way in their worship of God, we every

way blameworthy and contemptible : unto all which, I shall only mind him of that good old advice ; ‘ Let thy neighbour praise thee, and not thine own mouth.’ And as for us, I hope we are not so bad, but that we should rejoice truly to hear that others were better. Only we could desire, that we might find their excellency to consist in things not either indifferent wholly in themselves, or else disapproved by God, which are the ways that hypocrisy usually vents itself in, and then boast of what it hath done. Knowledge of God and his will, as revealed in the gospel, real mortification, abiding in spiritual supplications, diligent in universal obedience, and fruitfulness in good works, be, as I suppose, the things which render our profession beautiful, and according to the mind of God. If our author be able to make a right judgment of these things, and find them really abounding amongst his party, I hope we shall rejoice with him, though we knew the spring of them is not their popery, but their Christianity. For the outside-shews he hath as yet instanced in, they ought not in the least to have influenced his judgment in that disquisition of the truth, wherein he pretends he was engaged. He could not of old have come amongst the professors and ‘mystæ’ of those false religions, which, by the light and power of the gospel, are now banished out of the world, where he should not have met with the same wizards and appearances of devotion, so that hitherto we find no great discoveries in his ‘Messach.’

From the worship of the parties compared, he comes to their preaching, and finds them as differing as their devotion. The preaching of Protestants of all sorts, is sorry pitiful stuff. Inconsequent words, senseless notions, or at least rhetorical flourishes, make it up ; the Catholics grave and pithy. Still all this belongs to persons, not things. Protestants preach as well as they can, and if they cannot preach so well as his wiser Romanists, it is their unhappiness, not their fault. But yet I have a little reason to think, that our author is not altogether of the mind that here he pretends to be of, but that he more hates and fears, than despises the preaching of Protestants. He knows well enough what mischief it hath wrought his party, though prejudice will not suffer him to see what good it hath done the world ; and therefore doubting, as I suppose, lest he

should not be able to prevail with his readers to believe him in that, which he would fain, it may be, but cannot believe himself, about the excellency of the preaching of his Catholics above that of Protestants, he decries the whole work as of little or no use or concernment in Christian religion. This it had been fair for him to have openly pleaded, and not to have made a flourish with that which he knew he could make no better work of. Nor is the preaching of the Protestants, as is pretended, unlike that of the ancients. The best and most famous preacher of the ancient church, whose sermons are preserved, was Chrysostom. We know, the way of his proceeding in that work was to open the words and meaning of his text; to declare the truth contained and taught in it, to vindicate it from objections, to confirm it by other testimonies of Scripture, and to apply all unto practice in the close. And as far as I can observe, this, in general, is that method used by Protestants, being that indeed, which the very nature of the work dictates unto them; wherefore mistrusting lest he should not be able to bring men out of love with the preaching of Protestants, in comparison of the endeavours of his party in the same kind, he turns himself another way, and labours to persuade us, as I said, that preaching itself is of little or no use in Christian religion; for so he may serve his own design, he cares not, it seems, openly to contradict the practice of the church of God, ever since there was a church in the world. To avoid that charge he tells us, 'That the apostles and apostolical churches had no sermons, but all their preaching was merely for the conversion of men to the faith, and when this was done, there was an end of their preaching,' and for this he instanceth in the sermons mentioned in the Acts, chap. ii. iii. v. vii. viii. x. xiii. xiv. xvi. xviii.—xx. xxii. xxiv. xxvi. xxviii. I wonder what he thinks of Christ himself, whether he preached or no in the temple, or in the synagogues of the Jews; and whether the Judaical church, to whose members he preached, were not then a true, yea, the only church in the world; and whether Christ was not anointed and sent to preach the gospel to them? If he know not this, he is very ignorant; if he doth know it, he is somewhat that deserves a worse name: to labour to exterminate that out of the religion of Christ, which was one of the chief

works of Christ (for we do not read that he went up and down singing mass, though I have heard of a friar, that conceived that to be his employment), is a work unbecoming any man, that would count himself wronged not to be esteemed a Christian. But whatever Christ did, it may be, it matters not; the apostles and apostolical churches had no sermons, but only such as they preached to infidels and Jews to convert them; that is, they did not labour to instruct men in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel, to build them up in their faith, to teach them more and more the good knowledge of God, revealing unto them the whole counsel of his will. And is it possible that any man who hath ever read over the New Testament, or any one of Paul's epistles, should be so blinded by prejudices, and made so confident in his assertions, as to dare in the face of the sun, whilst the Bible is in every one's hand, to utter a matter so devoid of truth and all colour or pretence of probability? Methinks men should think it enough to sacrifice their consciences to their Moloch, without casting wholly away their reputation to be consumed in the same flames. It is true, the design of the story of the Acts, being to deliver unto us the progress of the Christian faith, by the ministry of the apostles, insists principally on those sermons which God in an especial manner blessed to the conversion of souls, and increase of the church thereby; but, is there therefore no mention made of preaching in it, to the edification of their converts? or, is there no mention of preaching, unless it be said, that such a one preached at such a time, so long, on such a text? When the people abode in the apostle's doctrine, Acts ii. 42. I think the apostle taught them. And the ministry of the word, which they gave themselves unto, was principally in reference unto the church; chap. vii. 4. So Peter and John preached the word to those whom Philip had converted at Samaria; chap. xviii. 25. A whole year together Paul and Barnabas assembled themselves together with the church of Antioch, and taught much people; chap. xi. 26. At Troas Paul preached unto them who came together to break bread (that is, the church), until midnight, chap. xx. 7. 9. which, why our author calls a dispute, or, what need of a dispute there was, when only the church was assembled, neither I nor he do know. And, ver. 20. 27.

he declares, that his main work and employment was constant preaching to the disciples and churches ; giving commands to the elders of the churches to do the same. And what his practice was, during his imprisonment at Rome, the close of that book declares. And these not footsteps, but express examples of, and precepts concerning, preaching to the churches themselves, and their disciples, we have in that book, purposely designed to declare their first calling and planting, not their progress and edification. Should I trace the commands given for this work, the commendation of it, the qualifications and gifts for it bestowed on men by Christ, and his requiring of their exercise, recorded in the epistles, the work would be endless, and a good part of most of them must be transcribed. In brief, if the Lord Christ continue to bestow ministerial gifts upon any, or to call them to the office of the ministry ; if they are bound to labour in the word and doctrine, to be instant in season, and out of season in preaching the word to those committed to their charge ; if that be one of the directions given them, that they may know how to behave themselves in the church, the house of God ; if they are bound to trade with the talents their master intrusts them with, to attend unto doctrine with all diligence ; if it be the duty of Christians to labour to grow and increase in the knowledge of God and his will, and that of indispensable necessity unto salvation, according to the measure of the means God is pleased to afford unto them ; if their perishing through ignorance will be assuredly charged on them who are called to the care, and freedom, and instructing of them ; this business of preaching, is an indispensable duty among Christians. If these things be not so indeed, for ought I know, we may do what our adversary desires us ; even burn our bibles, and that as books that have no truth in them. Our author's denial of the practice of antiquity, conformable to this of the apostles, is of the same nature. But, that it would prove too long a diversion from my present work, I could as easily trace down the constant sedulous performance of this duty from the days of the apostles, until it gave place to that ignorance which the world was beholden to the papal apostacy for, as I can possibly write so much paper, as the story of it would take up. But to what purpose should I do it ? Our author,

I presume, knows it well enough ; and others, I hope, will not be too forward in believing his affirmations of what he believes not himself.

The main design of this discourse is, to cry up the sacrifice that the Catholics have in their churches, but not the Protestants. This sacrifice he tells us, was 'the sum of all apostolical devotion, which Protestants have abolished.' Strange! that in all the writings of the apostles, there should not one word be mentioned of that which was the sum of their devotion. Things, surely, judged by our author of less importance, are at large handled in them. That they should not directly, nor indirectly, once intimate that which, it seems, was the sum of their devotion, is, I confess, to me somewhat strange. They must make this concealment, either by design or oversight. How consistent the first is with their goodness, holiness, love to the church ; the latter with their wisdom and infallibility, either with their office and duty, is easy to judge. Our author tells us, 'They have a sacrifice after the order of Melchisedec.' Paul tells us, indeed, that we have a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec ; but, as I remember, this is the first time that ever I heard of a sacrifice after the order of Melchisedec ; though I have read somewhat that Roman Catholics say about Melchisedec's sacrifice. Our priest after the order of Melchisedec, offered a sacrifice, that none ever had done before, nor can do after him, even himself. If the Romanists think to offer him, they must kill him. The species of bread and wine are but a thin sacrifice, next door to nothing, yea, somewhat worse than nothing, a figment of a thing impossible, or the shadow of a dream, nor will they say they are any. It is true, which our author pleads in justification of the sacrifice of his church, that there were sacrifices among the Jews, yea, from the beginning of the world, after the entrance of sin, and promise of Christ to come, made to sinners. For in the state of innocency, there was no sacrifice appointed, because there was no need of an atonement. But all these sacrifices, properly so called, had no other use in religion, than to prefigure and represent the great sacrifice of himself to be made, by the Son of God, in the fulness of time. That being once performed, all other sacrifices were to cease ; I mean, properly so called ; for we

have still sacrifices metaphorical, called so by analogy, being parts of God's worship tendered unto him, and accepted with him, as were the sacrifices of old. Nor is it at all necessary that we should have proper sacrifices, that we may have metaphorical. It is enough, that such there have been, and that of God's own appointment. And we have still that only one real sacrifice, which was the life and soul of all them that went before. The substance being come, the light shadowing of it, that was before under the law, is vanished. The apostle doth expressly place the opposition that is between the sacrifice of the Christian church, and that of the Judaical in this, that they were often repeated, this was performed once for all, and is a living abiding sacrifice, constant in the church for ever; Heb. x. 1, 2. So that, by this rule, the repetition of the same, or any other sacrifice in the Christian church, can have no other foundation, but an apprehension of the imperfection of the sacrifice of Christ; for, saith he, where the sacrifice is perfect, and makes them perfect that come to God by it, there must be no more sacrifice. This then seems to be the real difference between Protestants and Roman Catholics in this business of sacrifice. Protestants believing the sacrifice of Christ to be absolutely perfect, so that there is no need of any other, and that it is ὁδὸς πρόσφατος καὶ ζῶσα, 'a fresh and living way' of going to God continually, with whom, by it, obtaining remission of sin, they know there is no more offering for sin; they content themselves with that sacrifice of his, continually in its virtue and efficacy residing in the church. Romanists looking on that as imperfect, judge it necessary to institute a new sacrifice of their own, to be repeated every day, and that without any the least colour or warrant from the word of God, or example of the apostles. But our author puts in an exception, and tells us those words of Luke, Acts xiii. 2. λατουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ Κυρίῳ, are well and truly rendered by Erasmus, 'sacrificantibus illis Domino:': which one text, saith he, gives double testimony to apostolical sacrifice and priestly ordination; and he strengthens the authority of Erasmus with reason also, for the 'word can import nothing but sacrifice, since it was made τῷ Κυρίῳ: for other inferior ministeries of the word and sacraments are not made to God,

but the people; but the apostles were λειτουργοῦντες τῷ Κυρίῳ, administering, liturgying, sacrificing to our Lord.' For what he adds of ordination, it belongs not unto this discourse. Authority and reason are pleaded to prove, I know not what, sacrifice to be intended in these words. Erasmus is first pleaded, to whose interpretation, mentioned by our author, I shall only add his own annotations in the explication of his meaning; λειτουργούμενος, saith he, 'Quod proprium est operantium sacris, nullum autem sacrificium Deo gratius, quam impartiri doctrinam evangelicam.' So that it seems the preaching of the gospel, or taking care about it, was the sacrifice that Erasmus thought of in his translation and exposition: yea, but the word is truly translated 'sacrificantibus.' But who, I pray, told our author so? The original of the word is of a much larger signification. Its common use is, to minister in any kind; it is so translated and expounded by all learned impartial men, and is never used in the whole New Testament to denote sacrificing. Nor is כָּבַד ever rendered in the Old Testament by the LXX. λειτουργία or λειτουργέω, but θυσία, θυσίασμα, θῦμα, θυμίαμα, ὀλοκαύτωμα, σφάγιον, θύω, &c. Nor is that word used absolutely in any author, profane or ecclesiastical, to signify, precisely, sacrificing. And I know well enough what it is that makes our author say, it is properly translated 'sacrificing;' and I know as well that he cannot prove what he says; but he gives a reason for what he says, it is said 'to be made to the Lord, whereas other inferior ministerial acts are made to the people.' I wish heartily he would once leave this scurvy trick of cogging in words, to deceive his poor unwary reader; for what, I pray, makes his 'made' here? What is it that is said to be made to the Lord? It is, 'when they were ministering to the Lord,' so the words are rendered; not when they were making, or making sacrifice, or when they made sacrificing unto the Lord. This wild gourd, 'made,' puts death into his pot. And we think here in England, that in all ministerial acts, though performed towards the people, and for their good, yet men administer to the Lord in them, because performing them by his appointment, as a part of that worship which he requires at their hands. In the close of our author's discourse, he complains of the persecutions of Catholics;

which whatever they are, or have been, for my part I neither approve nor justify; and do heartily wish they had never shewed the world those ways of dealing with them, who dissented from them in things concerning religion, whereof themselves now complain; how justly, I know not. But if it be for the mass that any of them have felt, or do fear suffering, which I pray God avert from them, I hope they will at length come to understand how remote it is from having any affinity with the devotion of the apostolical churches, and so free themselves, if not from suffering, yet at least from suffering for that which being not accepted with God, will yield them no solid gospel consolation in what they may endure or undergo.

CHAP. XV.

Blessed Virgin.

SECT. 23. p. 267. The twenty-second paragraph concerning the blessed Virgin, is absolutely the weakest and most disingenuous in his whole discourse. The work he hath in hand is to take off offence from the Roman doctrine and practice, in reference unto her. Finding that this could not be handsomely gilded over, being so rotten and corrupt, as not to bear a new varnish, he turns his pen to the bespattering of Protestants, for contempt of her, without the least respect to truth or common honesty. Of them it is that he says, 'That they vilify and blaspheme her, and cast gibes upon her,' which he sets off with a pretty tale of 'a Protestant bishop and a Catholic boy;' and lest this should not suffice to render them odious, he would have some of them thought to 'taunt at Christ himself;' one 'of them for ignorance, passion, and too much haste for his breakfast.' Boldly to calumniate, that something may cleave, is a principle that too many have observed in their dealings with others in the world. But as it contains a renunciation of the religion of Jesus Christ, so it hath not always well succeeded. The horrid and incredible reproaches that were cast by the pagans on the primitive Christians, occasioned

sundry ingenuous persons to search more into their way, than otherwise they would have done; and thereby, their conversion. And I am persuaded this rude charge on Protestants, as remote from truth as any thing that was cast on the first Christians by their adversaries, would have the same effects on Roman Catholics, might they meet with the same ingenuity and candour. That any Protestant should be moved or shaken in his principles by such calumnies, is impossible. Every one that is so, knows, that as the Protestants believe every thing that is spoken of the blessed Virgin in the Scripture, or creed, or whatever may be lawfully deduced from what is so spoken, so they have all that honour and respect for her, which God will allow to be given to any creature. Surely a confident accusation of incivility and blasphemy, for not doing that which they know they do, and profess to all the world they do, is more like to move men in their patience towards their accusers, than to prevail with them to join in the same charge against others, whom they know to be innocent as themselves. Neither will it relieve our author in point of ingenuity and truth, that, it may be, he hath heard it reported of one or two brainsick or frantic persons in England, that they have cast out blasphemous reproaches against the blessed mother of God. It is credibly testified, that pope Leo should, before witnesses, profess his rejoicing at the advantages they had at Rome, by the fable of Christ. Were it handsome now in a Protestant to charge this blasphemy upon all Papists, though uttered by their head and guide; and to dispute against them from the confession of the Jews, who acknowledge the story of his death and suffering to be true; and of the Turks, who have a great honour and veneration for him unto this day. Well may men be counted Catholics, who walk in such paths, but I see no ground or reason why we should esteem them Christians. Had our author spoken to the purpose, he should have proved the lawfulness; or if he had spoken to his own purpose, with any candour of mind, or consistency of purpose, in the pursuit of his design, have gilded over the practice of giving divine honour to the holy Virgin; or worshipping her with adoration, as Protestants say, due to God alone; of ascribing all the titles of Christ unto her, turning Lord, in the

psalms, in most places, into Lady; praying to her, not only to entreat, yea, to command her Son to help and save them, but to save them herself, as she to whom her Son hath committed the administration of mercy, keeping that of justice to himself; with many other the like horrid blasphemies, which he shall hear more of, if he desire it. But instead of this difficult task, he takes up one, which, it seems, he looked on as far easier, falsely to accuse Protestants of blaspheming her. We usually smile in England at a short answer that one is said to have given Bellarmine's works; I hope I may say without offence, that if it were not uncivil, it might suffice for an answer to this paragraph. But though most men will suppose that our author hath overshoot himself, and gone too far in his charge, he himself thinks he hath not gone far enough; as well knowing there are some bounds, which when men have passed, their only course is to set a good face upon the matter, and to dare on still. Wherefore, to convince us of the truth of what he had delivered concerning Protestants reviling and blaspheming the blessed Virgin, he tells us, that it is no wonder, seeing some of them in foreign parts, have uttered words against the very honour of Jesus Christ himself. To make this good, Calvin is placed in the van, who is said, 'to taunt at his ignorance and passion, and too much haste for his breakfast, when he cursed the fig-tree, who if, as is pretended, he had studied Catholic divines, they would have taught him a more modest and pious interpretation.' It is quite beside my purpose and nature of the present discourse, to recite the words of private men, and to contend about their sense and meaning. I shall therefore only desire the reader, that thinks himself concerned in this report, to consult the place in Calvin pointed unto; and if he finds any such taunts, as our author mentions, or any thing delivered concerning our Lord Christ, but what may be confirmed by the judgment of all the ancient fathers, and many learned Romanists, I will be content to lose my reputation with him, for any skill in judging at the meaning of an author. But what thoughts he will think meet to retain for this informer, I leave to himself. What Catholic divines Calvin studied, I know not; but I am sure, if some of those whom his adviser accounts so, had not studied him,

they had never stole so much out of his comments on the Scripture, as they have done. The next primitive Protestants that are brought in, to make good this charge, are Servetus, Gibraldus, Lismaninus, and some other antitrinitarian heretics; in opposition to whose errors, both in their first rise, and after progress, under the management of Faustus Socinus, and his followers, Protestants all Europe over, have laboured far more abundantly, and with far greater success, than all his Roman Catholics. It seems they must now all pass for primitive Protestants, because the interest of the Catholic cause requires it should be so. This is a communicable branch of papal omnipotency, to make things and persons to be, what they never were. From them, a return is made again to Luther, Brentius, Calvin, Zuinglius, who are said to nibble at arianism, and shoot secret darts at the trinity; though all impartial men must needs confess, that they have asserted and proved the doctrine of it, far more solidly than all the schoolmen in the world were able to do. But the main weight of the discourse of this paragraph lies upon the pretty tale in the close of it, about a Protestant bishop and a Catholic boy; which he must be a very Cato that can read without smiling. It is a little too long to transcribe, and I cannot tell it over again without spoiling of it, having never had that faculty in gilding of little stories, wherein our author excelleth. The sum is, that the boy being reproved by the bishop for saying a prayer to her, boggled at the repetition of her name when he came to repeat his creed, and cried, 'My Lord, here she is again, what shall I do with her now?' To whom the bishop replied, 'You may let her pass in your creed, but not in your prayers.' Whereupon our author subjoins, 'as though we might have faith, but neither hope nor charity for her.' Certainly, I suppose, my countrymen cannot but take it ill, that any man should suppose them such stupid blockheads as to be imposed on with sophistry, that they may feel through a pair of mittens; 'Tam vacui capitis populum Phæaca putasti?' For my part, I can scarce think it worth the while to relieve men that will stoop to so naked a lure. But that I may pass on, I will cast away one word, which nothing but gross stupidity can countenance from needlessness. The blessed Virgin is mentioned in the

creed, as the person of whom our Saviour was born: and we have therefore faith for her; that is, we believe that Christ was born of her; but do we therefore believe in her? Certainly no more than we do in Pontius Pilate, concerning whom we believe that Christ was crucified under him: a bare mention in the creed, with reference to somewhat else believed in, is a thing in itself indifferent; and we see occasionally befell the best of women, and one of the worst of men; and what hope and charity should we thence conclude that we ought to have for her? We are past charitable hopes that she is for ever blessed in heaven, having full assurance of it. But if by hope for her, he means the placing of our hope, trust, and confidence in her, so as to pray unto her, as his meaning must be, how well this follows from the place she hath in the creed, he is not a man who is not able to judge.

CHAP. XVI.

Images.

SECT. 24. The next excellency of the Roman church, which so exceedingly delighted our author in his travels, is their images. It was well for him that he travelled not in the days of the apostles, nor for four or five hundred years after their decease. Had he done so, and, in his choice of a religion, would have been influenced by images and pictures, he had undoubtedly turned pagan (or else a Gnostic; for those pretended Christians, indeed wretches worse than pagans, as Epiphanius informs us, had got images of Christ, which they said were made in the days of Pontius Pilate, if not by him). Their temples being richly furnished and adorned with them, whilst Christian oratories were utterly destitute of them. To forward also his inclination, he would have found them not the representations of ordinary men, but of famous heros, renowned throughout the whole world for their noble achievements and inventions of things necessary to human life; and those pourtrayed to the life, in the performance of those actions which were so useful to

mankind, and by which they had stirred up just admiration of their virtue in all men. Moreover, he would have found their learned men, profound philosophers, devout priests and virgins, contemning the Christians for want of those helps to devotion towards God, which in those images they enjoyed; and objecting to them their rashness, fury, and ignorance in demolishing of them. As far as I can perceive by his good inclination to this excellency of religion (the imagery of it), had he lived in those days, he would have as easily bid adieu to Christianity, as he did in these to protestantism.

But the excellent thoughts he tells us that such pictures and images are apt to cast into the minds of men, makes them come to our mount Zion, the city of the living God, to celestial Jerusalem and society of angels, and so onward, as his translation somewhat uncouthly and improperly renders that place of the apostle, Heb. xii. A man indeed distraught of his wits, might possibly entertain some such fancies upon his entering of a house full of fine pictures and images; but that a sober man should do so is very unlikely. It is a sign how well men understand the apostle's words, when they suppose themselves furthered in their meditation on them by images and pictures; and yet it were well if this abuse were all the use of them in the Romish church: I wish our author would inform us truly, whether many of those whom he tells us he saw so devout in their churches, did not lay out a good part of their devotion upon the fine pictures and images he saw them fall down before. Images began first in being ignorant people's books, but they ended in being their gods or idols: alas, poor souls! they know little of those many curious windings and turnings of mind, through the meanders of various distinctions, which their masters prescribe to preserve them from idolatry, in that veneration of images which they teach them; when it is easy for them to know, that all they do in this kind is contrary to the express will and command of God. But that our author may charge home upon his countrymen for removing of images out of churches, he tells us, that it is the judgment of all men, that the violation of an image redounds to the prototype. True, provided it be an image rightly and duly destined to represent him that is intended

to be injured. But suppose any man, against the express command of a king, should make an image of him, on purpose to represent him deformed and ridiculous to the people, would he interpret it an injury or dishonour done unto him, if any one, out of allegiance, should break or tear such an image in pieces? I suppose a wise and just king would look on such an action as a rewardable piece of service, and would in time take care for the punishment of him that made it. The hanging of traitors in effigy, is not to cast a dishonour upon the person represented, but a declaration of what he doth deserve and is adjudged unto. The psalmist indeed complains, that they broke down the פתחות, or carved works, in the walls and ceiling of the temple; but that those ‘apertiones,’ or ‘incisuræ,’ were not pictures and images for the people to adore and venerate, or were appointed for their instruction, if our author knows not, he knows whither to repair to be instructed, viz. to any comment old or new, extant on that psalm. And it is no small confidence to use Scripture out of the Old Testament, for the religious use of images, of men’s finding out and constitution, whereas they may find as many testimonies for more gods; enough indeed, wherein the one are denied, and the other forbidden.

Nor will the ensuing contemplation of the means whereby we come to learn things we know not, namely, by our senses, whence images are suited to do that by the eye, which sermons do by the ear, and that more effectually, yield him any relief in his devotion for them. There is this small difference between them, that the one means of instruction is appointed by God himself; the other, that is pretended to be so, absolutely forbidden by him.

And these fine discourses of the actuosity of the eye above the ear, and its faculty of administering to the fancy, are but pitiful weak attempts for men that have no less work in hand, than to set up their own wisdom in the room of, and above, the wisdom of God.

And our author is utterly mistaken, if he think the sole end of preaching the cross and death of Christ is to work out such representations to the mind, as oratory may effect for the moving of corresponding affections. This may be the end of some men’s rhetorical declamations about it. If

he will a little attentively read over the epistles of Paul, he will discern other ends in his preaching Christ, and him crucified, which the fancies he speaks of have morally little affinity withal.

But what if Catholics having nothing to say for their practice in the adoration of images, seeing the Protestants have nothing but simple pretences for their removal out of churches; these simple pretences are express reiterate commands of God: which what value they are of with the Romanists, when they lay against their ways and practice, is evident. The arguments of Protestants when they deal with the Romanists, are not directed against this or that part of their doctrine or practice about images, but the whole; that is, the making of them, some of God himself, the placing of them in churches, and giving them religious adoration; not to speak of the abominable miscarriages of many of their devotionists in teaching, or of their people in committing with them as gross idolatry as ever any of the ancient heathens did; which shall at large be proved, if our author desires it. Against this principle and whole practice, one of the Protestant's pretences, as they are called, lays in the second commandment, wherein the making of all images for any such purpose is expressly forbidden: but the 'same God,' say they, 'commanded cherubims to be made, and placed over the ark.' He did so; but I desire to know, what the cherubs were images of; and that they would shew he ever appointed them to be adored, or to be the immediate objects of any veneration, or to be so much as historical means of instruction, being always shut up from the view of the people, and representing nothing that ever had a real subsistence 'in rerum natura.' Besides, who appointed them to be made? As I take it, it was God himself, who did therein no more contradict himself, than he did when he commanded his people to spoil the Egyptians, having yet forbid all men to steal. His own special dispensation of a law, constitutes no general rule. So that (whoever are blind or fools) it is certain, that the making of images for religious veneration is expressly forbidden of God unto the sons of men. But, alas! 'they were foreign images, the ugly faces of Moloch, Dagon, Ashtaroth; he forbade not his own.' Yea, but they are images or likenesses of himself,

that in the first place, and principally, he forbids them to make, and he enforceth his command upon them from hence, that when he spake unto them in Horeb, they saw no manner of similitude; Deut. v. 15. which surely concerned not the ugly face of Moloch. And it is a very pretty fancy of our author, and inferior to none of the like kind that we have met with, that they have in their Catholic churches both, 'Thou shalt not make graven images,' and 'Thou shalt make graven images;' because they have the image of St. Peter, not of Simon Magus; of St. Benedict, or good St. Francis, not of Luther and Calvin. I desire to know where they got that command, 'Thou shalt make images?' In the original and all the translations, lately published in the *Biblia Polyglotta*, it is, 'Thou shalt not.' So it is in the writings of all the ancients; as for this new command, 'Thou shalt make graven images,' I cannot guess from whence it comes; and so shall say no more about it. Only I shall ask him one question in good earnest, desiring his resolution the next time he shall think fit to make the world merry with his witty discourses; and 'it is this: Suppose the Jews had not made the images of Jannes and Jambres, their Simon Magus's, but of Moses and Aaron, and had placed them in the temple and worshipped them as Papists do the images of Peter or the blessed Virgin, whether he thinks it would have been approved of God or no? I fear, he will be at a stand. But I shall not discourage him by telling him beforehand what will befall him, on what side soever he determines the question.

He will not yet have done, but tells us, the precept lies in this, That 'men shall not make to themselves:' as if he had said, 'When you come into the land among the Gentiles, let none of you make to himself any of the images he shall see there set up by the inhabitants contrary to the law of Moses, and the practice of the synagogue, which doth so honour her cherubims, that she abominates all idols and their sculpture; and thus if any Catholic should make to himself contrary to what is allowed, any peculiar image of the planets,' &c. But that 'Nil admirari' relieves me, I should be at a great loss in reading these things; for truly a man would think, that he that talks at this rate had read the Bible no otherwise than he would have our people to

do it, that is, not at all. I would I could prevail with him for once to read over the book of Deuteronomy. I am persuaded he will not repent him of his pains, if he be a lover of truth as he pretends he is. At least, he could not miss of the advantage of being delivered from troubling himself and others hereafter with such gross mistakes. If he will believe the author of the Pentateuch, it was the image of the true God that was principally intended in the prohibition of all images whatever, to be made objects of divine adoration, and that without any respect unto the cherubims over the ark, everlastingly secluded from the sight of the people. And the images of the false gods are but in a second place forbidden; the gods themselves being renounced in the first commandment. And it is this making unto a man's self any image whatever, without the appointment of God, that is the very substance of the command. And I desire to know of our author, how any image made in his church comes to represent him to whom it is assigned, or to have any religious relation to him; for instance, to St. Peter, rather than to Simon Magus or Judas, so that the honour done unto it, should redound to the one, rather than to the other? It is not from any appointment of God, nor from the nature of the thing itself; for the carved piece of wood is as fit to represent Judas as Peter; not from any influence of virtue and efficacy from Peter into the statua, as the heathens pleaded for their image-worship of old. I think the whole relation between the image and the pretended prototype, depends solely on the imagination of him that made it, or him that reverenceth it. This creative faculty in the imagination, is that which is forbidden to all the sons of men in the '*Non facies tibi*,' '*Thou shalt not make to thyself*;' and when all is done, the relation supposed, which is the pretended ground of adoration, is but imaginary and fantastic. A sorry basis for the building erected on it. This whimsical termination of the worship in the prototype, by virtue of the imagination's creation of a relation between it and the image, will not free the Papists from downright idolatry in their abuse of images; much less will the pretence that it is the true God they intend to worship, that true God having declared all images of himself set up without his command, to be abominable idols.

CHAP. XVII.

Latin service.

SECT. 25. p. 250. The next thing he gilds over in the Roman practice is, that which he calls their Latin service; that is, their keeping of the word of God and whole worship of the church (in which two all the general concernments of Christians do lie) from their understanding, in an unknown tongue. We find it true, by continual experience, that great successes and confidence in their own abilities, do encourage men to strange attempts; what else could make them persuade themselves, that they should prevail with poor simple mortals to believe that they have nothing to do with that wherein, indeed, all their chiefest concernments do lie; and that contrary to express direction of Scripture, universal practice of the churches of old, common sense, and the broadest light of that reason, whereby they are men, they need not at all understand the things wherein their communion with God doth consist, the means whereby they must come to know his will and way wherein they must worship him? Nor doth it suffice these gentlemen to suppose, that they are able to flourish over their own practice with such pretences as may free it from blame; but they think to render it so desirable, as either to get it embraced willingly by others, or countenance themselves in imposing it upon them whether they will or no. But as they come short of those advantages, whereby this matter in former days was brought about, or rather come to pass; so to think at once to cast those shackles on men now they are awake, which were insensibly put upon them when they were asleep, and rejected on the first beam of gospel light that shined about them, is, I hope, but a pleasing dream. Certain I am, there must be other manner of reasonings, than are insisted upon by our author, or have been by his masters as yet, that must prevail on any who are not on the account of other things willing to be deluded in this. That the most of Christians need never to read the Scripture, which they are commanded by God to meditate in day and night, to read, study, and

grow in the knowledge of, and which by all the ancient fathers of the church they are exhorted unto; that they need not understand those prayers which they are commanded to pray with understanding, and wherein lies a principal exercise of their faith and love towards God, 'are the things which are here recommended unto us;' let us view the arguments, wherewith, first, the 'general custom of the western empire, in keeping the mass and Bible in an unknown tongue is pleaded.' But what is a general custom of the western empire, in opposition to the command of God, and the evidence of all that reason that lies against it? Have we not an express command, not to follow a multitude to do evil? Besides, what is, or ever was, the western empire unto the catholicism of the church of Christ spread over the whole world? Within a hundred years after Christ, the gospel was spread to nations, and in places whither the Roman power never extended itself, '*Romanis inaccessa loca*;' much less that branch of it, which he calls the western empire? But neither yet was it the custom of the western empire to keep the Bible in an unknown tongue, or to perform the worship of the church in such a language. Whilst the Latin tongue was only used by them, it was generally used in other things, and was the vulgar tongue of all the nations belonging unto it. Little was there remaining of those tongues in use, that were the languages of the provinces of it before they became so. So that though they had their Bible in the Latin tongue, they had it not in an unknown; no more than the Grecians had, who used it in Greek. And when any people received the faith of Christ, who had not before received the language of the Romans, good men translated the Bible into their own; as Jerome did for the Dalmatians. Whatever then may be said of the Latin, there is no pretence of the use of an unknown tongue in the worship of the church in the western empire, until it was overrun, destroyed, and broken in pieces by the northern nations, and possessed by them (most of them pagans), who brought in several distinct languages into the provinces where they seated themselves. After those tumults ceased, and the conquerors began to take up the religion of the people, into whose countries they were come, still retaining with some mixtures their old dialect; that the Scripture was not in all

places (for in many it was) translated for their use, was the sin and negligence of some, who had other faults besides. The primitive use of the Latin tongue in the worship of God, and translation of the Bible into it in the western empire, whilst that language was usually spoken and read, as the Greek in the Grecian, is an undeniable argument of the judgment of the ancient church, for the use of the Scripture and church liturgies in a known tongue. What ensued on; what was occasioned by that inundation of barbarous nations, that buried the world for some ages in darkness and ignorance, cannot reasonably be proposed for our imitation. I hope we shall not easily be induced either to return unto, or embrace the effects of barbarism. But, saith our author, secondly, ‘ Catholics have the sum of Scripture, both for history and dogma, delivered them in their own language, so much as may make for their salvation; good orders being set and instituted for their proficiency therein; and what needs any more? or why should they be farther permitted, either to satisfy curiosity, or to raise doubts, or to wrest words and examples there recorded unto their own ruin, as we see now by experience men are apt to do?’ What Catholics have, or have not, is not our present dispute. Whether what they have of story and dogma in their own language, be that which Paul calls the whole counsel of God, which he declared at Ephesus, I much doubt. But the question is, whether they have what God allows them, and what he commands them to make use of? We suppose God himself, Christ and his apostles, the ancient fathers of the church, any of these, or at least when they all agree, may be esteemed as wise as our present masters at Rome. Their sense is, ‘ That all Scripture given by inspiration from God, is profitable for doctrine;’ it seems these judge not so, and therefore they afford them so much of it as may tend to their good. For my part I know whom I am resolved to adhere to, let others do as seems good unto them. Nor where God hath commanded and commended the use of all, do I believe the Romanists are able to make a distribution, that so much of it makes for the salvation of men, the rest only ‘ serves to satisfy curiosity, to raise doubts, and to occasion men to wrest words and examples.’ Nor, I am sure, are they able to satisfy me, why any one part of the Scrip-

ture should be apt to do this more than others. Nor will they say this at all of any part of their mass. Nor is it just to charge the fruits of the lusts and darkness of men, on the good word of God. Nor is it the taking away from men of that alone, which is able to make them good and wise, a meet remedy to cure their evils and follies. But these declamations against the use and study of the Scripture, I hope come too late. Men have found too much spiritual advantage by it, to be easily driven from it. Itself gives light to know its excellency and defend its use by. 'But the book is sacred,' he says, 'and therefore not to be sullied by every hand; what God hath sanctified, let not man make common.' It seems then those parts of the Scripture, which they afford to the people, are more useful, but less sacred, than those that they keep away. These reasons juggle one another unhandsomely. Our author should have made more room for them; for they will never lie quietly together. But what is it he means by the book? the paper, ink, letters, and covering? His master of the schools will tell him these are not sacred; if they are, the printers dedicate them. And it is a pretty pleasant sophism that he adds, 'That God having sanctified the book, we should not make it common.' To what end, I pray, hath God sanctified it? Is it that it may be laid up, and be hid from that people which Christ hath prayed might be sanctified by it? Is it any otherwise sanctified, but as it is appointed for the use of the church of all that believe? Is this to make it common, to apply it unto that use whereunto of God it is segregated? Doth the sanctification of the Scripture consist in the laying up of the book of the Bible, from our profane utensils? Is this that, which is intended by the author? Would it do him any good to have it granted, or further his purpose? Doth the mysteriousness of it lie in the books being locked up? I suppose he understands this sophistry well enough, which makes it the worse.

But we have other things, yet pleaded as the 'example of the Hebrew church, who neither in the time of Moses nor after, translated the Scripture into the Syriac; yea, the book was privately kept in the ark or tabernacle, not touched or looked on by the people, but brought forth at times to the priest, who might upon the sabbath day read some part

of it to the people, and put them in mind of their laws, religion and duty.'

I confess, in this passage, I am compelled to suspect more of ignorance than fraud; notwithstanding the flourishing made in the distribution of the Old Testament, into the law, prophets, and hagiography. For first, as to the translation of the Scripture by the Jews into the Syriac tongue, to what purpose doth he suppose should this be done? it could possibly be for no other than that, for which his masters keep the Bible in Latin. I suppose he knows that at least until the captivity, when most of the Scripture was written, the Hebrew, and not the Syriac, was the vulgar language of that people. It is true, indeed, that some of the able and chief men that had the transaction of affairs with the neighbour nations, had learned the Syriac language towards the end of their monarchy; but the body of the people were all ignorant of it, as is expressly declared, 2 Kings xviii. 26. To what end then should they translate the Scripture into that language, which they knew not, out of that which alone they were accustomed to from their infancy, wherein it was written? Had they done so, indeed, it would have been a good argument for the Romanists to have kept it in Latin, which their people understand almost as well as the Jews did Syriac. I thought it would never have been questioned, but that the Judaical church had enjoyed the Scripture of the Old Testament in their own vulgar language, and that without the help of a translation. But we must not be confident of any thing for the future. For the present this I know, that not only the whole Scripture that was given the church for its use before the captivity, was written in the tongue that they all spake and understood, but that the Lord sufficiently manifests, that what he speaks unto any, he would have it delivered unto them in their own language; and therefore appointing the Jews what they should say unto the Chaldean idolaters, he expresseth his mind in the Chaldee tongue, Jer. x. 11. where alone, in the Scripture, there is any use made of a dialect, distinct from that in vulgar use; and that because the words were to be spoken unto them, to whom that dialect was vulgar. And when, after the captivity, the people had learned the Chaldee language, some parts of some books then written, are therein

expressed to shew that it is not this or that language, which on its own account is to confine the compass of holy writ; but that that, or those, are to be used, which the people, who are concerned in it, do understand. But what language soever it was in, 'it was kept privately in the ark or tabernacle, not touched, not looked upon by the people, but brought forth at times to the priest:' ὃ τῶν ποιῶν σε ἐπὶ δός. What book was kept in the ark? the law, prophets, and hagiography? Who told you so? A copy of the law, indeed, or Pentateuch, was by God's command put in the side of the ark, Deut. xxxi. 26. That the prophets, or hagiography, were ever placed there, is a great mistake of our author, but not so great as that that follows; that the book placed in the side of the ark, 'was brought forth for the priest to read in on the sabbath days;' when, as all men know, the ark was placed in the 'sanctum sanctorum' of the tabernacle and temple, which only the high-priest entered, and that once a year, and that without liberty of bringing any thing out which was in it, for any use whatever. And his mistake is grossest of all, in imagining that they had no other copies of the law or Scripture, but what was so laid up in the side of the ark. The whole people being commanded to study in it continually, and the king in special, to write out a copy of it with his own hand, Deut. xvii. 18. out of an authentic copy; yea, they were to take sentences out of it; to write them on their fringes, and posts of their doors and houses, and on their gates; all to bind them to a constant use of them. So that this instance, on very many accounts, was unhappily stumbled on by our author, who, as it seems, knows very little of these things. He was then evidently in haste, or wanted better provision, when on this vain surmise, he proceeds to the encomiums of his Catholic mother's indulgence to her children, in leaving of the Scripture in the hands of all that understand Greek and Latin (how little a portion of her family, and to a declamation against), the preaching and disputing of men about it, with a commendation of that reverential ignorance, which will arise in men from whom the means of their better instruction is kept at a distance.

Another discourse we have annexed to prove, that 'the Bible cannot be well translated, and that it loseth much of

its grace and sweetness, arising from a peculiarity of spirit in its writers, by any translation whatever.' I do, for my part, acknowledge, that no translation is able in all things universally to exhibit that fulness of sense, and secret virtue, to intimate the truth it expresseth to the mind of a believer, which is in many passages of Scripture in its original languages; but how this will further the Romanists' pretensions, who have enthroned a translation for the use of their whole church, and that none of the best neither, but in many things corrupt and barbarous, I know not: those who look on the tongues wherein the Scripture was originally written as their fountains, if at any time they find the streams not so clear, or not to give so sweet a relish as they expected, are at liberty, if able, to repair to the fountains themselves. But those who reject the fountains, and betake themselves to one only stream, for ought I know, must abide by their own inconveniencies without complaining. To say the Bible cannot be well translated, and yet to make use, principally at least, of a translation, with an undervaluing of the originals, argues no great consistency of judgment, or a prevalency of interest. That which our author in this matter sets off with a handsome flourish of words, and some very unhandsome similitudes, considering what he treats of, he sums up, p. 283. in these words; 'I would by all say thus much, The Bible translated out of its own sacred phrase into a profane and common one, loseth both its propriety and amplitude of meaning, and is likewise divested of its peculiar majesty, holiness, and spirit; which is reason enough, if no other, why it should be kept inviolate in its own style and speech.' So doth our author advance his wisdom and judgment above the wisdom and judgment of all churches and nations that ever embraced the faith of Christ for a thousand years; all which, notwithstanding what there is of truth in any of his insinuations, judged it their duty to translate the Scripture into their mother tongues, very many of which translations are extant even to this day. Besides, he concludes with us in general ambiguous terms, as all along in other things his practice hath been.

What means he by 'the Bible's own sacred phrase,' opposed to a profane and common one? Would not any man

think, that he intended the originals wherein it was written? But I dare say, if any one will ask him privately, he will give them another account; and let them know, that it is a translation which he adorns with those titles; so that upon the matter, he tells us, that seeing the Bible cannot be without all the inconveniences mentioned, it is good for us to lay aside the originals, and make use only of a translation, or at least prefer a translation before them. What shall we do with those men that speak such swords and daggers, and are well neither full nor fasting, that like the Scripture neither with a translation, nor without it? Moreover, I fear, he knows not well, what he means by its 'own sacred phrase,' and a 'profane common one;' Is it the syllables and words of this or that language, that he intends? How comes one to be sacred, another profane and common? The languages wherein the Scriptures were originally written, have been put to as bad uses as any under heaven; nor is any language profane or common, so as that the worship of God performed in it, should not be accepted with him. That there is a frequent loss of propriety and amplitude of meaning in translations, we grant. That the Scriptures by translations, if good, true, and significant, according to the capacity and expressiveness of the languages whereinto they are translated, are divested of the majesty, holiness, and spirit, is most untrue. The majesty, holiness, and spirit of the Scriptures, lie not in words and syllables, but in the truths themselves expressed in them: and whilst these are incorruptedly declared in any language, the majesty of the word is continued. It is much that men, preferring a translation before the originals, should be otherwise minded; especially, that translation being in some parts, but the translation of a translation, and that the most corrupt in those parts, which I know extant. And this, with many fine words, pretty allusions, and similitudes, is the sum of what is pleaded by our author, to persuade men to forego the greatest privilege, which from heaven they are made partakers of, and the most necessary radical duty that in their whole lives is incumbent on them. It is certain, that the giving out of the holy Scripture from God, is an effect of infinite love and mercy; I suppose it no less certain that the end for which he gave it, was, that men by it might be

instructed in the knowledge of his will, and their obedience that they owe unto him, that so at length they may come to the enjoyment of him. This itself declares to be its end. I think also, that to know God, his mind and will, to yield him the obedience that he requires, is the bounden duty of every man; as well as to enjoy him is their blessedness. And, can they take it kindly of those who would shut up this gift of God from them whether they will or no? or be well pleased with them that go about to persuade them that it is best for them to have it kept by others for them; without their once looking into it? If I know them aright, this gentleman will not find his countrymen willing to part with their bibles on such easy terms.

From the Scripture, concerning which he affirmeth, 'That it lawfully may, and in reason ought, and in practice ever hath been, segregated in a language not common to vulgar ears,' all which things are most unduly affirmed, and, because we must speak plainly, falsely; he proceeds to the worship of the church, and pleads that that also ought to be performed in such a language. It were a long and tedious business, to follow him in his gilding over this practice of his church; we may make short work with him. As he will not pretend that this practice hath the least countenance from Scripture; so, if he can instance in any church in the world, that for five hundred years, at least, after it, set out in the use of a worship, the language whereof the people did not understand; I will cease this contest. What he affirms of the Hebrew church keeping her rites in a language differing from the vulgar, whether he intend before or after the captivity, is so untrue, as that I suppose, no ingenuous man would affirm it, were he not utterly ignorant of all Judaical antiquity, which I had cause to suspect before, that our author is. From the days of Moses to the captivity of Babylon, there was no language in vulgar use among the people, but only that wherein the Scripture was written, and their whole worship celebrated. After the captivity, though insensibly they admitted corruptions in their language, yet they all generally understood the Hebrew, unless it were the Hellenists, for whose sakes they translated the Scripture into Greek; and, for the use of the residue of their people, who began to take in a mixture of the Syro-

Chaldean language with their own, the Targum were found out. Besides, to the very utmost period of that church, the solemn worship performed in the temple, as to all the interest of words in it, was understood by the whole people, attending on God therein. And in that language did the Bible lie open in their synagogues, as is evident from the offer made by them to our Saviour of their books to read in, at his first entrance into one at Capernaum.

These flourishes then of our orator, being not likely to have the least effect upon any who mind the apostolical advice of taking heed lest they be beguiled with enticing words, we shall not need much to insist upon them. This custom of performing the worship of God in the congregation in a tongue unknown to the assembly, 'renders,' he tells us, 'that great act more majestic and venerable;' but why, he declares not. A blind veneration of what men understand not, because they understand it not, is neither any duty of the gospel, nor any part of its worship. St. Paul tells us, he would pray 'with the Spirit, and pray with the understanding also;' of this majestic shew, and blind veneration of our author, Scripture, reason, experience of the saints of God, custom of the ancient churches, know nothing. Neither is it possible to preserve in men a perpetual veneration of they know not what, nor, if it could be preserved, is it a thing that any way belongs to Christian religion. Nor can any rational man conceive, wherein consists the majesty of a man's pronouncing words, in matters wherein his concernment lies, in a tongue that he understands not. And I know not wherein this device for procuring veneration in men, exceeds that of the Gnostics, who fraught their sacred administrations with strange uncouth names and terms, intended, as far as appears, for no other end but to astonish their disciples. But then the church, he saith, as 'opposite to Babel, had one language all the world over, the Latin tongue being stretched as large and as wide as the catholic church, and so any priest may serve in several countries administering presently in a place by himself or others converted, which are conveniencies attending this custom and practice.' Pretty things to persuade men to worship God they know not how; or to leave that unto others to do for them, which is their own duty to perform;

and yet neither are they true. The church by this means is made rather like to Babel, than opposite unto it: the fatal ruining event of the division of the tongues at Babel was, that by that means they could not understand one another in what they said, and so were forced to give over that design which before they unanimously carried on. And this is the true event of some men's performing the worship of God in the Latin tongue, which others understand not. Their languages are divided as to any use of language whatever. I believe on this, as well as on other accounts, our author now he is warned, will take heed how he mentions Babel any more. Besides, this is not one to give one lip, one language, to the whole church, but in some things to confine some of the church unto one language, which incomparably the greatest part of it do not understand. This is confusion, not union. Still Babel returns in it. The use of a language that the greatest part of men do not understand, who are engaged in the same work, whereabout it is employed, is right old Babel. Nor can any thing be more vain than the pretence, that this 'one is stretched as large and as wide as the catholic church;' far the greatest part of it know nothing of this tongue, nor did ever use a word of it in their church service; so that the making of the use of one tongue necessary in the service of the church is perfectly schismatical, and renders the avowers of that principle, schismatics, from the greatest part of the churches of Christ in the world, which are, or ever were in it, since the day of his resurrection from the dead. And as for the conveniency of priests; there where God is pleased to plant churches, he will provide those who shall administer in his name unto them, according to his mind. And those who have not the language of other places, as far as I know, may stay at home, where they may be understood, rather than undertake a pilgrimage to cant before strangers, who know not what they mean.

After an annumeration of these conveniences, he mentions that only inconvenience, which, as he says, attends the solemnization of the church's worship in a tongue unknown, 'namely, that the vulgar people understand not what is said.' But as this is not the only inconvenience that attends it, so it is one; if it must be called an inconveni-

ence, and not rather a mischievous device to render the worship of God useless, that hath a womb full of many others, more than can easily be numbered ; but we must tie ourselves to what our author pleaseth to take notice of. I desire then to know, What are these vulgar people, of whom he talks? Are they not such as have souls to save? Are they not incomparably the greatest part of Christians? Are they not such as God commands to worship him? Are they not such, for whose sakes, benefit, and advantages, all the worship of the church is ordained, and all the administration of it appointed? Are they not those, whose good, welfare, growth in grace and knowledge, and salvation, the priests in their whole offices, are bound to seek and regard? Are they not those that Christ hath purchased with his blood; whose miscarriages he will require severely at the hands of those who undertake to be their guides, if sinning through a neglect of duty in them? Are they not the church of God, the temple of the Holy Ghost? called to be saints? Or, who or what is it you mean by this vulgar people? If they be those described, certainly their understanding of what is done in the public worship of God, is a matter of importance; and your driving them from it, seems to me to give a 'supersedeas' to the whole work itself, as to any acceptance with God. For my part, I cannot as yet discern what that makes in the church of God, which this vulgar people must not understand; 'but this,' saith he, 'is of no moment.' Why so, I pray? to me it seems of great weight. No, it is 'of no moment, for three reasons.' Which be they? 1. 'They have the scope of all set down in their prayer-books, &c. whereby they may, if they please, as equally conspire, and go along with the priest, as if he spoke in their own tongue.' But I pray, sir, tell me why, if this be good, that they should know something, and give a guess at more; is it not better that they should distinctly know and understand it all? This reason plainly cuts the throat, not only of some other that went before, about the venerable majesty of that which is not understood, but of the whole cause itself. If to know what is spoken be good, the clearer men understand it, I think, the better. This being the tendency of this reason, we shall find the last of the three, justling it as useless, quite out of doors. Nor yet is there

truth in this pretence ; not one of a thousand of the people, do understand one word that the priest speaks distinctly in their whole service ; so that this is but an empty flourish. He tells us, 2. ‘ Catholic people come together, not for other business at the mass, but only with fervour of devotion, to adore Christ crucified ; in that rite he is there prefigured as crucified before them, and by the mediation of that sacred blood, to pour forth their supplications for themselves and others ; which being done, and their good purpose of serving and pleasing that holy Lord, that shed his blood for us, renewed, they depart in peace : this is the general purpose of the mass ; so that eyes and hands to lift up, knees to bow, and heart to melt, are there of more use than ears to hear.’ For his Catholic people’s business at mass, I shall not much trouble myself. Christ I know is adored by faith and love ; that faith and love, in the public worship of the church, is exercised by prayer and thanksgiving. For the ‘ lifting up of the eyes and hands,’ and bowing, and cringing, they are things indifferent, that may be used, as they are animated by that faith and love, and no otherwise. And I desire to know, ‘ What supplications they come to pour forth for themselves and others.’ Their private devotions ? They may do that at home ; the doing of it in the church, is contrary to the apostle’s rule. Are they the public prayers of the church ? Alas, the trumpet to them, and of them, gives an uncertain sound. They know not how to prepare themselves to the work. Nor can they rightly say Amen, when they understand not what is said. So that, for my part, I understand not what is the business of Catholics at mass ; or how they can perform any part of their duty to God in it, or at it. But what if they understand of it nothing at all ? He adds, 3. ‘ There is no need at all for the people to hear or understand the priest, when he speaks, or prays, and sacrifices to God, on their behalf. Sermons to the people must be made in the people’s language ; but prayers that are made to God for them, if they be made in a language that God understands, it is well enough.’ This reason renders the others useless, and especially shuts the first out of doors. For certainly it is nothing to the purpose that the people understand somewhat ; if it be no matter whether they understand any thing at all or no. But I de-

sire to know, what prayers of the priest they are, which it matters not whether the people hear or understand? Are they his private devotions for them in his closet or cell, which may be made for them, as well when they are absent, as present, and in some respect better too? These doubtless are not intended. Are they any prayers that concern the priest alone, which he is to repeat, though the people be present? No, nor these neither; at least not only these. But they are the prayers of the church, wherein the whole assembly ought to cry jointly unto Almighty God; part of that worship, wherein all things are to be done to edification; which they are in this, and the Quakers' silent meetings, much alike. Strange! that there is no need that men should know or understand that which is their duty to perform; and which if they do it not, is not that which it pretends to be; the worship of the church. Again, if the people neither need hear, nor understand what is spoken, I wonder what they make there. Can our author find any tradition (for, I am sure, Scripture he cannot) for the setting up of a dumb show in the church, to edify men by signs and gestures, and words insignificant? These are gallant attempts. I suppose he doth not think it was so of old; for, sure I am, that all the sermons which we have of any of the ancients, were preached in that very language wherein they celebrated all divine worship; so that if the people understood the sermons, as he says, 'they must be made to them in a language they understand.' I am sure they both heard and understood the worship of the church also: but 'tempora mutantur;' and if it be enough that God understands the language used in the church, we full well know there is no need to use any language in it at all.

But to evidence the fertility of his invention, our author offers two things to confirm this wild assertion. 1. 'That the Jews neither heard, nor saw when their priest went into the *'sanctum sanctorum,'* to offer prayers for them; as we may learn from the gospel, where the people stood without, whilst Zacharias was praying at the altar.' 2. 'St. Paul at Corinth desired the prayers of the Romans for him at that distance, who also then used a language that was not used at Corinth.' These reasons, it seems, are thought of moment; let us a little poize them. For the first, our author is still

the same in his discovery of skill in the rites and customs of the Judaical church; and, being so great, as I imagine it is, I shall desire him in his next, to inform us who told him that Zacharias entered into the 'sanctum sanctorum' to pray, when the people were without: but let that pass. By the institution and appointment of God himself, the priests in their courses, were to burn incense on the altar of incense, in a place separated from the people, it being no part of the worship of the people, but a typical representation of the intercession of Christ in heaven, confined to the performance of the priests by God himself; 'ergo' under the gospel, there is no need that the people should either learn or understand those prayers, which God requires by them and amongst them. This is civil logic. Besides, I suppose our author had forgot that the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, doth purposely declare how those Mosaical distances are now removed by Christ, a free access being granted to believers with their worship, to the throne of grace. But there is scarce a prettier fancy in his whole discourse, than his application of St. Paul's desiring the Romans to pray for him when he was at Corinth, and so consequently the praying of all or any of the people of God, for their absent friends, or the whole church, to the business in hand; especially as it is attended with the enforcement in the close, that they used a language not understood at Corinth. But because I write not to men who care not whether they hear or understand, what is their duty in the greatest concerns of their souls, I shall not remove it out of the way, nor hinder the reader from partaking in the entertainment it will afford him.

But our author foreseeing that even those with whom he intends chiefly to deal, might possibly remember, that St. Paul had long ago stated this case in 1 Cor. xiv. he finds it necessary to cast a blind before them, that if they will but fix their eyes upon it, and not be at the pains to turn to their bibles, as it may be some will not, he may escape that sword which he knows is in the way ready drawn against him; and therefore tells us, that 'if any yet will be obstinate,' and which after so many good words spent in this business, he seems to marvel that they should, 'and object what the apostle there writes against praying and prophesying in an unknown

tongue,' he hath three answers in readiness for him, whereof the first is that doubtful one last mentioned; namely, 'That the prayers which the apostle, when he was at Corinth, requested of the Romans for him, was to be in an unknown tongue to them that lived at Corinth; when the only question is, whether they were in an unknown tongue to them that lived in Rome, who were desired to join in those supplications. Surely this argument, that because we may pray for a man when and where he knows not, and in a tongue which he understands not, that therefore the worship of a church, all assembled together in one place, all to join together in it unto the edification of that whole society, may be performed in a language unknown to them so assembled, is not of such cogency, as so suddenly to be called over again. Wherefore letting, that pass, he tells us, the design of the apostle in that place is, 'to prevent the abuse of spiritual gifts, which in those days men had received, and especially that of tongues, which he lets them know, was liable to greater inconveniences than the rest there mentioned by him.' But what, I pray, if this be the design of the apostle, doth it follow that in the pursuit of this design he teaches nothing concerning the use of an unknown tongue in the worship of God? Could I promise myself, that every reader did either retain in his memory what is there delivered by the apostle, or would be at the pains on this occasion to read over the chapter, I should have no need to add one word in this case more. For, what are the words of a poor weak man to those of the Holy Ghost speaking directly to the same purpose? But this being not from all to be expected, I shall only mind them of some few things there determined by the apostle; which, if it do but occasion him to consider the text itself, I shall obtain my purpose. The gift of speaking with strange tongues, being bestowed on the church of Corinth, that they might be a sign unto them that did not believe, of the power and presence of God amongst them; ver. 22. divers of them finding, it seems, that the use of these tongues gave them esteem and reputation in the church, did usually exercise that gift in the assembly, and that with contempt and undervaluation of prophesying in a known tongue to the edification of the whole church. To prevent this abuse, the apostle lays down this for a standing rule, that 'all things

are to be done in the church unto edifying;’ and that this, all men, as to gifts, were to seek for, that they might excel to the edifying of the church; that is, the instructing of others in knowledge, and the exciting of the grace of God in them. And thereupon he shews them, that whatever is spoken in an unknown tongue, whether it be in a way of prayer, or prophesying in the assemblies, indeed tends nothing at all to this purpose; unless it be so, that after a man hath spoken in a tongue unknown, he doth interpret what he hath so spoken, in that language which they do understand. For, saith he, distribute the church into two parts, he that speaks with a tongue (whether he pray or preach), and those that hear; he that so prays and preaches, edifies and benefits himself; but he doth not benefit them that hear him; and that because they understand not what he says, nor know what he means. For, saith he, such words as are not understood, are of no more use than the indistinct noise of harps, or the confused noise of trumpets. The words, it is true, have a signification in themselves; but what is that, saith he, to them that hear them and understand them not? They can never join with him in what he speaks, nor say Amen, or give an intelligent assent to what he hath spoken. And therefore he tells them, that, for his part, he had rather speak five words, that being understood, might be for their profit, than a thousand in an unknown tongue; which though they would manifest the excellency of his gift, yet would not at all profit the church, whether he prayed or prophesied; with much more to the same purpose. It is hence evident to any impartial reader, that the whole strength of the apostle’s discourse, and reasoning in this case, lies in this, that praying or prophesying in the church in a tongue unknown, not understood by the whole church, though known and understood by him that useth it, is of no use, nor any way tends to the benefit of the church; but is a mere confusion to be cast out from among them. The case is no other that lies before us. The priest says his prayers in a tongue that, it may be, is known to himself, which is no great gift; the people understand nothing of what he says. This, if the apostle may be believed, is a thing of no use, practised to no purpose, wherewith the people that understand not cannot join, whereby they are not at all profited, nor can they say

Amen, or give a rational assent to what he speaks. Now, saith our author, what is all this to the service of the church? I say, so much to that service which he pleads for, as that it is condemned by it, as altogether useless, unprofitable, and not to be longer insisted on; yea, and this is so much worse than the case proposed by the apostles, inasmuch as those who prayed and prophesied with tongues, received the gift and ability of so doing, in a miraculous manner from the Holy Ghost; and therefore might with much colour of reason plead for the free liberty of the exercise of those gifts, which they had so received; but our readers of the service, do with much labour and pains get to read it in Latin, doing it by choice, without any intimation for such a practice from any gift, that above others they have received.

If all this will not do, there is that which brings up the rear, that shall make all plain. Namely, 'that whatever is pretended, yet indeed Latin is no unknown tongue, being the proper language of Christians, united to the Christian faith, as a garment to a body;' which he proves by many fine illustrations and similitudes; telling us withal, that 'this one language is not spoken in a corner, but runs quite through the earth, and is common to all, as they be ranked in the series of Christianity, wherein they are trained up by the father of the family, and which, in reference to religion, he only speaks himself.' But because, I hope, there is none of my countrymen so stupid as not to have the wit of the cynic, who when a crafty companion would prove by syllogisms, that there is no such thing as motion, returned him no other answer, but by rising up and walking; and will be able at least to say, that notwithstanding all these fine words, I know that Latin to the most of Christians is an unknown tongue; I shall not much trouble myself to return any answer unto this discourse. That there is an abstraction of Christian religion, from the persons professing it, which hath a language peculiar unto it; that the Latin tongue hath a special relation to religion above any other; that it is any other way the trade-language of religion amongst learned men, but as religion comes under the notion of the things about which some men communicate their minds one to another; that it is any way understood by the thousandth part of Christians in the world, that constantly attend the worship of God; and

so that it is not absolutely as unknown a tongue to them, when it is used in the service of the church, as any other in the world whatever, are such monstrous presumptions, as I wonder a rational man would make himself guilty of, by giving countenance unto them. For him, whom he calls the father of the family of Christians; if it be God he intends, the only Father of the family, all men know he never, to any of the sons of men immediately, nor by any prophet by him inspired, communicated his mind in Latin. If it be the pope of Rome, whom he ascribeth that title unto, I am sorry for the man; not knowing how well he could make himself guilty of a higher blasphemy.

CHAP. XVIII.

Communion.

SECT. 26. In the next section, entitled 'Table,' our author seems to have lost more of the moderation than he pretends unto, and to have put a keener edge upon his spirit, than in any of those foregoing; and thence it is, that he falls out into some more open revilings, and flourishes of a kind of a dispute, than elsewhere. In the entrance of his discourse, speaking of the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper by Protestants, wherein the laity are also made partakers of the blessed cup, according to the institution of our Saviour, the practice of the apostles, and the universal primitive church; this civil gentleman, who complains of unhand-some and unmannerly dealings of others in their writings, compares it to a treatment at my lord mayor's feast, adding scornfully enough, 'For who would not have drink to their meat? and what reason can be given that they should not? or that a feast with wine should not' 'cæteris paribus,' 'be better than without?' If he suppose he shall be able to scoff the institutions of Christ out of the world, and to laugh men out of their obedience unto him, I hope he will find himself mistaken, which is all I shall at present say unto him; only I would advise him to leave for the future such unseemly taunts, lest he should provoke some angry men to return ex-

pressions of the like contempt and scorn, upon the transubstantiated host, which he not only fancies, but adores.

From hence he pretends to proceed unto disputing; but being accustomed to a loose rhetorical sophistry, he is not able to take one smooth step towards the true stating of the matter he is to speak unto, though he says, he will argue in his 'plain manner,' that is, a manner plainly his, loose, inconcluding, sophistical. The plain story is this, Christ instituting his blessed supper, appointed bread and wine to be blessed and delivered unto them that he invites and admits unto it. Of the effects of the blessing of these elements of bread and wine, whether it be a transubstantiation of them into the body and blood of Christ, to be corporeally eaten; or a consecration of them into such signs and symbols, as in and by the use thereof, we are made partakers of the body and blood of Christ, feeding really on him by faith, is not at all now under dispute. Of the bread and cup so blessed, according to the appointment of Christ, the priests with the Romanists only do partake, the people of the bread only. This exclusion of the people from a participation of the cup, Protestants aver to be contrary to the institution of Christ, practice of the apostles, nature of the sacrament, constant usage of them in the primitive church, and so consequently highly injurious to the sheep of Christ, whom he hath bought with the price of his blood, exhibited in that cup unto them. Instead of arguing plainly, as he promised to do, in justification of this practice of the church of Rome, he tells us of the wine they give their people after they have received the body; which he knows to be in their own esteem a little common drink to wash their mouths, that no crumbs of their wafer should stick by the way. What he adds, of Protestants not believing that the consecrated wine is transubstantiated into the blood of Christ (which is not the matter by himself proposed to debate), of the priest's using both bread and wine in the sacrifice (though he communicates not both unto the people), when the priest's delivering of the cup is no part of the sacrifice, but of the communion (besides he knows, that he speaks to Protestants), and so should not have pleaded his fictitious sacrifice, which, as distinct from the communion, Paul speaks of,

1 Cor. xi. neither do they acknowledge, nor can he prove it very vain, yet with these empty flourishes, it is incredible how he triumphs over Protestants for charging the Romanists with excluding the people from the use of the cup in the sacrament; when yet it is certain, they do so, nor can he deny it. Yea, but Protestants should not say so, seeing they believe not in transubstantiation. They believe every word that Christ or his apostles have delivered, concerning the nature and use of the sacrament, and all that the primitive church taught about it; if this will not enable them to say that the Romanists do that, which all the world knows they do, and which they will not deny but that they do, unless they believe in transubstantiation also; they are dealt withal on more severe terms than I think our author is authorized to put upon them. But it seems, the advantage lies so much in this matter on the Roman Catholics' side, that the Protestants may be for ever silent about it; and why so? Why Catholics do really partake of the 'animated and living body of their Redeemer; this ought to be done, to the end we may have life in us, and yet Protestants do it not.' Who told you so? Protestants partake of his body and his blood too, which Papists do not; and that really and truly. Again, 'Catholics have it continually sacrificed before their eyes, and the very death and effusion of their Lord's blood prefigured and set before them for faith to feed upon; this Protestants have not.' I think the man is mistaken; and that he intended to say the Catholics have not, and to place Protestants in the beginning of the sentence; for it is certain, that this is the very doctrine of the Protestants concerning this sacrament. They have in it the sacrifice of Christ before their eyes, and the death and effusion of his blood, figured (for how that should be prefigured which is past, I know not) and set forth for faith to feed upon; this they say, this they teach and believe. When I know not how Catholics can have any thing figured unto them, nothing being the sign of itself; nor is it the feeding of faith, but of the mouth, that they are solicitous about. 'But this,' saith he, 'they do not;' though he had not spoken of any doing before, which is an old last that we have been now well used to; and 'yet this,' saith he, 'ought to be done; for so our Lord commanded, when he said to his apostles,

‘hoc facite;’ This do ye, which you have seen me to do, and in that manner you see me do it; exercising before your eye my priestly function according to the order of Melchisedec, with which power I do also invest you, and appoint you to do the like, even unto the consummation of the world, in commemoration of my death and passion, exhibiting and shewing forth your Lord’s death until he come. This Protestants do not, and we are mad-angry that the Papist does what his Redeemer enjoined him.’ I fear his readers, which shall consider this odd medley, will begin to think, that they are not only Protestants who use to be mad-angry. This kind of writing argues, I will not say both madness and anger, but one of them it doth seem plainly to do. For, setting aside a far-fetched false notion or two about Melchisedec, and the doctrine of the sacrament here expressed, is that which the pope with fire and sword hath laboured to exterminate out of the world, burning hundreds (I think) in England for believing that our Lord, instituting his blessed supper, commanded his apostles to do the same that he then did, and in the same manner, even to the consummation of the world, in the commemoration of his death and passion, exhibiting and shewing forth their Lord’s death until he come; a man would suppose that he had taken these words out of the Liturgy of the church of England; for therein are they expressly found; and why then have not Protestants that which he speaks of? Yea, but Christ did this in ‘the exercise of his priestly function, and with the same power of priesthood, according to the order of Melchisedec, invested his apostles.’ Both these may be granted, and the Protestants’ doctrine and faith concerning this sacrament not at all impeached; but the truth is, they are both false. The Lord Christ exercised indeed his priestly function, when on the cross he offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit a sacrifice for the sins of the world; but it was by virtue of his kingly and prophetic power that he instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, and taught his disciples the use of it, commanding its observation in all his churches to the end of the world. And as for any others, being ‘made priests after the order of Melchisedec; besides himself alone; it is a figment so expressly contrary to the words and reasoning of the apostle, that I wonder any man not mad or angry, could

once entertain any approving thoughts of it. That our author may no more mistake in this matter, I desire he would give me leave to inform him, that setting aside his 'proper sacrificing' of the Son of God, and his hideous figment of transubstantiation, both utter strangers to the Scripture and antiquity, there is nothing can by him be named, concerning this sacrament as to its honour or efficacy, but it is all admitted by Protestants.

He pretends, after this loose harangue, to speak to the thing itself; and tells us, that the 'consecrated chalice is not ordinarily given to people by the priest in private communion;' as though in some cases, it were given amongst them to the body of the people, or that they had some public communion wherein it was ordinarily so given; both which he knows to be untrue. So impossible it seems for him to speak plainly and directly to what he treats on. But it is a thing which hath need of these artifices; if one falsity be not covered with another it will quickly reign through all. However he tells us, that they 'should do so, is neither expedient nor necessary as to any effects of the sacrament.' I wish, for his own sake, some course might be found to take him off this confidence of setting himself against the apostles, and the whole primitive church at once; that he might apprehend the task too difficult for him to undertake, and meddle with it no more. All expediency in the administration of this great ordinance and all the effects of it, depend solely on the institution and blessing of Christ; if he have appointed the use of both elements, what are we poor worms, that we should come, now in the end of the world, and say the use of one of them is not 'expedient nor necessary to any effects of communion?' Are we wiser than he? Have we more care of his church than he had? or, Do we think that it becomes us thus arbitrarily to choose, and refuse in the institutions of our Lord and Master? What is it to us what cavils soever men can lay, that it is not necessary in the way of Protestants, nor in the way of Catholics; we know it is necessary in the way of Christ. And if either Protestants or Catholics leave that way, for me they shall walk in their own ways by themselves. But why is it not necessary in the way of Protestants? 'Because they place the effect of the communion in the operation of faith, and

therefore, according to them, one kind is enough; nay, if we have neither kind, there is no loss but of a ceremony, which may be well enough supplied at our ordinary tables.' This is pretty logic, which it seems our author learned out of Smith and Seaton. Protestants generally think that men see with their eyes; and yet they think the light of the sun necessary to the exercising of their sight; and though they believe, that all saving effects of the sacrament depend on the operation of faith (and Catholics do so too, at least I am sure they say so), yet they believe also, that the sacrament, which Christ appointed and the use of it, as by him appointed, is necessary in its own kind for the producing of those effects. These things destroy not, but mutually assist one another, working effectually in their several kinds to the same end and purpose. Nor can there be any operation of faith, as to the special end of the sacrament, without the administration of it according to the mind and will of Christ. Besides, Protestants know that the frequent distinct proposals in the Scripture of the benefits of the death of Christ, as arising sometimes from the suffering of the body, sometimes from the effusion of the blood of their Saviour, leads them to such a distinct acting of faith upon him, and receiving of him, as must needs be hindered and disturbed in the administration of the sacrament under one kind; especially if that symbol be taken from them, which is peculiarly called his Testament, and that blood wherewith his covenant with them was sealed; so that, according to the principles of the Protestants, the participation of the cup is of an indispensable necessity unto them that intend to use that ordinance to their benefit and comfort; and what he adds, 'about drinking at our ordinary tables,' because we are now speaking plainly, I must needs tell him, is a profane piece of scurrility, which he may do well to abstain from for the future. What is or is not necessary, according to their Catholic doctrine, we shall not trouble ourselves, knowing that which is so called by him to be very far from being truly Catholic; the Romanists' doctrine of concomitancy, being a late figment to countenance their spoiling the people of the legacy of Christ, unknown to antiquity, and contrary to Scripture, and enervating the doctrine of the death of Christ, whose most precious blood was truly separated

from his body, the benefit of which separation is exhibited unto us in the sacrament by himself appointed to represent it; we neither believe nor value.

As the necessity of it is denied, so also, that there is any precept for it; what think you then of *πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες*; ‘drink you all of it;’ that is, this cup; they think this to be a precept to be observed towards all those who come to this supper. What Christ did, that he commanded his apostles to do; he gives the cup to all that were present at his supper, and commands them all to drink of it; why, I pray, are they not to do so? Why is not this part of his command as obligatory to them as any others? Alas, ‘They were the priests that were present, all lay people were excluded;’ not one was excluded from the cup that was there at any part of the ordinance. What, if they were all priests that were there, as no one of them was, was the supper administered to them as priests or as disciples? or is there any colour or pretence to say, that one kind was given to them as priests, another as disciples; ‘*Dic aliquem, dic, Quintiliane, colorem.*’ Was not the whole church of Christ represented by them? Is not the command equal to all? Nay, as if on purpose to obviate this sacrilegious figment, is not this word, ‘Drink you all of this,’ added emphatically, above what is spoken of the other kind? Many strange things there are, which these gentlemen would have us believe about this sacrament, but none of them of a more incredible nature than this, that when Christ says to all his communicants, ‘Drink you all of this,’ and commands them to do the same that he did, his meaning was, that we should say, ‘Drink you none of this.’ They had need, not of a ‘*Spatula lingua,*’ to let such things as these down our throats, but a bed-staff to cram them down, or they will choke us in the swallowing; and, I am sure, will not well digest when received. He must have an iron stomach, that can concoct such crude morsels.

But if this will not do he would fain have us grant, ‘That the whole manner of giving the communion unto the laity, whether under one or both kinds, is left to the disposition of the church;’ I tell you truly, I should have thought so too, had not Christ and his apostles beforehand determined it; but as the case stands, it is left so much to the disposi-

tion of the church, whether the blessed cup shall be administered to the people as it is, whether we shall have any sacraments or no and not one jot more. And let not our author flatter himself, that it was a 'pre-conceived opinion of the arbitrariness of this business, that made men scruple it no more in former ages, when the cup was first taken from them.' They scrupled it until you had roasted some of them in the fire, and shed the blood of multitudes by the sword, which was the old way of satisfying scruples.

At length our author ventures on St. Paul, and hopes, if he can satisfy him, he shall do well enough; and tells us, 'This indifferent use of communion amongst the ancient Christians in either kind, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, sometimes both, is enough to verify that of St. Paul, We are all partakers of one bread and of one cup.' But what is this indifferent use, and who are these ancient Christians he tells us of? Neither is the use of one or of both indifferent among the Papists, nor did the ancient Christians know any thing at all of this business of depriving the people of the cup, which is but a by-blow of transubstantiation. He knows they knew nothing of it, whatever he pretends. Neither doth the apostle Paul say nakedly and only, that 'We are all partakers of one bread and one cup;' but, instructing the whole church of Corinth in the right use of the Lord's supper, he calls to mind what he had formerly taught them, as to the celebration of it; and this he tells them was the imitation of the Lord himself, according as he had received it in command from him, to give the blessed bread and cup to all the communicants. This he lays down as the institution of Christ, this he calls them to the right use and practice of, telling the whole church, that as often 'as they eat this bread, and drink this cup' (not eat the bread without the cup), they 'do shew forth the Lord's death until he come.' And therefore doth he teach them how to perform their duty herein, in a due manner: ver. 28. 'Let,' saith he, 'a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.' Adding the reason of his caution; 'for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh,' &c. intimating also, that they might miscarry in the use of either element. For, saith he, 'who-soever shall eat this bread and drink this cup unworthily.'

In the administration of the whole supper you may offend, unless you give heed in the participation of either element. What can possibly be spoken more fully, distinctly, plainly, as to institution, precept, practice, and duty upon all, I know not? And if we must yet dispute about this matter, whilst we acknowledge the authority of the apostle, I think there is small hopes of being quit of disputes whilst this world continues. The pitiful cavils of our author against the apostle's express and often repeated words, deserve not our notice; yet for the sake of those whom he intends to deceive, I shall briefly shew their insufficiency to invalidate St. Paul's authority and reasonings.

1. He says, 'That we may easily see what was St. Paul's opinion from those words, Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of our Lord unworthily;' and so say I too, the meaning of them is before declared; but, saith he, 'repeating the institution as our Lord delivered, he makes him after the consecration of the bread, say absolutely, Do this in commemoration of me. But after the chalice, he speaks with a limitation, Do this as oft as you shall drink it, in commemoration of me.' What then? Pray what are the next words? Are they not, 'For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup?' Is not the same term 'as often' annexed to the one as well as to the other? Is it a limitation of the use of either, and not a limitation of that kind of commemoration of the Lord's death to the use of both? From these doughty observations, he concludes, 'that the particle 'and' in the other text, must needs be taken disjunctively; we are all partakers of one bread and of one cup. That is, all of us, either partake of both, or each one, at least, either of the one or other.' A brave exposition! But what shall we say to the other, and in the other texts, so often occurring to the same purpose? Are they also to be taken disjunctively? This, it seems, is to interpret Scripture according to the sense of the Fathers; to vent idle cavils, which they were never so weak or perverse as once to dream of. Had the apostle but once used that expression, 'this bread, and this cup,' yet adjoining that expression to the institution of Christ, commanding the administration of that bread and cup, it were temerarious boldness so to disjoint his words and render them incongruous to his purpose? But repeat-

ing the same expression so often as he doth, still with respect to the institution of the ordinance whereof he speaks, to make us believe that in all those expressions he intended quite another thing than what he says, is a wild attempt. Miserable error! what sorry shifts dost thou cast thy patrons upon? Who would love such a beast, that so claws and tears her embracers? The trivial instances of the use of the particle 'and' or 'et' disjunctively, as in that saying, '*Mulier est domus salus, et ruina?*' which is evidently used not of the same individual person, nor of the same actions, but only expresses the different actings of several individuals of the same species, concern not this business; whose argument is far from being founded alone on the signification of that particle (though its use be constant enough to found an inference, not to be shaken by a few anomalous instances), but from the necessary use of it in this place arising from the context of the apostle's discourse.

Our author farther adds, 'that sometimes the whole sacred Synaxis is called breaking of bread, without any mention of the chalice.' And what then? I pray is not the body of Christ sometimes mentioned without speaking of the blood, and the blood oftener without speaking of the body; is not the whole supper called the cup, without mentioning of the bread? 1 Cor. x. 21. all by the same synecdoche? I shall not insist on his gross, palpable mistakes, from Luke xxiv. 30. Nothing but domineering prejudices could ever put men upon such attempts, for the justifying of their errors. Upon the whole matter, we may easily discern what small cause our author hath from such feeble premises, to erect his triumphant conclusion of the non-necessity of participation of the blessed cup by the people in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. As little cause hath he to mention antiquity and tradition from the apostles, which lie universally against him in this matter; and that there is now no such custom in the Romish church, it is because they have taken up a practice contrary to the command and practice of Christ and his apostles, and contrary to the custom in obedience thereunto, of all the churches in the whole world.

CHAP. XIX.

Saints.

SECT. 27. From the communion we come to saints; and these take up the longest discourse of any one subject in the book. Our author found it not an easy task to set this practice of his church, in the worship and invoking of saints, right and strait in the minds of sober men. Several ways he turns himself in his attempt, all, as far I can perceive, to very little purpose. In all of them it is evident, that he is ashamed of their practice and principles in this matter, which makes his undertakings as to Protestants so much the worse, in that he invited them to feed upon that which he himself is unwilling to taste, lest he should be poisoned. At first, he would persuade us, that they had only a 'respectful memory and reverence for the saints departed, such as ingenuous persons will have for any worthy personages that have formerly ennobled their families.' To this 'he adds the consideration of their example and the patterns they have set us in the ways of holiness, to persuade and prevail with us to imitate and follow them.' And with sundry arguments doth he dispute for his honourable esteem and imitation of the saints departed. Herein then, it may be, lies the difference between them and Protestants; that they contend, that the true saints are to be thus honoured and followed; Protestants are of the mind that neither of them is to be done: true, for Luther, Wickliff, and especially Calvin, have intemperately opened their mouths against all the saints; Calvin in special against the persons renowned in the Old and New Testament, Noah, Abraham, Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, Moses, &c. with a great number of others. Naughty man, what hath he said of them? It is certain in general, that he hath said, that they were all in their days sinners. Is this to be endured, that 'Calvin, that holyfaced man,' should say of such holy persons, that they had need to be redeemed and saved by Jesus Christ? who can bear such intemperate 'theioma-chy?' Nay, but he had gone farther, 'and charged them every one with sins and miscarriages:' If he hath spoken

any thing of their sins and failings, but what God hath left upon record on set purpose in his word, that they might be examples of human frailty and testimonies of his grace and mercy in Christ towards them, for the encouragement of others that shall be overtaken in the like temptation, as some of them were, let him bear his own burden. If he have said no more, but what the Holy Ghost hath recorded for him and others to make use of, I envy not their cheer, who triumph in falsely accusing of him. But is this indeed the difference between Papists and Protestants about the saints? Is this the doctrine of the Papists concerning them? Is their practice confined within the limits of these principles? Are these the things, which in their principles and practice are blamed by Protestants? The truth is, this is the very doctrine, the very practice of Protestants. They all jointly bear a due respect to the memorial of all the saints of God, concerning whom they have assurance that they were so indeed. They praise God for them, admire his grace in them, rejoice in the fruits of their labours and sufferings for Christ, and endeavour to be followers of them in all things wherein they were followers of Christ; and hope to come to be made partakers with them of that glory and joy which they are entered into. Is this the doctrine of the council of Trent, or of the harmony of confessions? Doth this represent the practice of Papists or Protestants? It is very seldom you shall hear a sermon of a Protestant, wherein the example of one saint or other, is not in one thing or other insisted on, and proposed to imitation. If this venerable esteem and sedulous imitation of saints, with praising God, for his graces in them, his mercy towards them, and an endeavour to obtain the crown they have received, be the doctrine and the whole doctrine of the church of Rome about the saints departed, why should we contend any longer? All parties are agreed. Let us contend no more about that which is not; but if it be otherwise, and that neither are these things, all the things that the Papists assert and maintain in this matter, nor are these things at all opposed by the Protestants, a man may easily understand to what end our author makes a flourish with three or four leaves of his book; as though they were in difference between us. Such artifices will neither advantage his cause,

nor his person with sober knowing men. As to his whole discourse then, I shall only let him know, that Protestants are unconcerned in it. They bear all due reverence to the saints departed this life, and strive to follow them in their course; although I must add also, that their example is very remote from being the chiefest incentive or rule unto, and in the practice of, universal obedience. The example of Christ himself, and the revealed will of God in his word, are their rule and guide; in attendance whereunto thousands amongst them (be it spoken to the praise of his glorious grace), do instantly serve God in all good conscience day and night, and holding the head, grow up into him, who is the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

To close this discourse, and to come to that which he seems to love as a bear doth the stake; the practice of the Romish church, in the invocation and adoration of saints; he tells us, to usher it in, two pretty stories out of antiquity: the first, of the Jews; and last, of the pagans. 1. For the Jews; 'that they accused the Christians before the Roman emperors for three things: that they had changed the sabbath, that they worshipped images of the saints, that they brought in a strange God named Jesus Christ.' What if they did so? Was all true that the Jews accused the Christians of? Besides, what is here about the invocation of saints? somewhat indeed we have about pictures and images, which it seems are contrary to the Judaical law; not a word do we meet with about their invocation of saints. But indeed this is a pretty midnight story, to be told to bring children asleep; as though the Jews durst accuse the Christians before pagans for 'having images and pictures,' when the pagans were ready every day to destroy those Jews, because they would have none? A likely matter they would admit of their complaint against them that had them, or that the Jews had no more wit than to disadvantage themselves in their contest by such a complaint? Besides the whole insinuation is false; neither did the Jews so accuse them; nor had the Christians admitted any religious use of pictures or images in those days. And this their defence to the accusation of the pagans, that 'they rejected all images,' makes as evident as if it were written by the sun-beams to this day. Being charged by the pagans with an imageless

religion, they everywhere acknowledge it, giving their reason why they neither did, nor could admit of a religious use of any image at all. I presume our author knows this to be so, and I know, if he do not, he is a very unfit person to talk of antiquity.

Of the like nature is the story which he tells us of the things the pagans laughed at the Christians for. Amongst these was 'the worship of an ass's head, which shews,' saith he, 'the use and respect they had for images. For the Jews had defamed Jesus Christ our Lord, whose head and half portrait Christians used upon their altars, even as they do at this day, amongst other things of his great simplicity and ignorance.' So used men to talk, who either know not, or care not, what to say. I would gladly impute this story of the ass's head, and the Jews' accusation, to our author's simplicity and ignorance; because if I do not so, I shall be compelled to do it unto somewhat in him of a worse name; and yet that by-insinuation of the use of 'the head and half portrait of our Saviour upon altars by the old Christians,' before Constantine's days, of whom he speaks, will not allow me to lay all the misadventure of this tale upon ignorance. Surely he cannot but know that what he suggests is most notoriously false, and that he cannot produce one authentic testimony, no not one, of any such thing: whereas innumerable lay expressly against it, almost in all the preserved writings of those days. For the story of the ass's head; seeing, it seems he knows not what I thought every puny scholar to be acquainted with, I hope, he will give me leave to inform him, that it was an imputation laid upon the Jews, not the Christians, and that the Christians were no otherwise concerned in the fable, but as they were at any time mistaken to be Jews. The figment was invented, long before the name of Christians was known in the world, and divulged before and after by as great wits as any were in the world, as Appian, Tacitus, Trogus, and others. The whole rumour arising from their worshipping a golden calf in the wilderness, and afterward his imitation progeny at Dan and Bethel. The confutation of the lie, by Josephus, is known to all learned men; who tells Appian, that if he had 'not had the head of an ass, and the face of a dog, he would never have given credit unto, or divulged, so loud a lie.'

Little countenance therefore is our author like to obtain from this loud lie, invented against the Jews, to prove the worshipping of pictures and images among Christians; nor is that his business in hand, if he be pleased to remember himself, but the invocation of saints, which now at length he is resolved (but I see unwillingly) to speak unto.

Had he intended plain dealing, and to persuade men by reason and arguments, he should nakedly and openly have laid down the doctrine and practice of his church in this matter, and have attempted to justify the one and the other. This had been done like a man who liked and approved what his interest forced him to defend; and upon honest principles sought to draw others to share with him in their worth and excellency. But he takes quite another course, and bends his design to cover his ware, and to hoodwink his chapmen, so to strike up a blind bargain between them.

Two things he knows, that in the doctrine of his church about the veneration of saints, Protestants are offended at.

1. 'That we ought religiously to invoke and call upon, pray unto them, flying unto them for help and assistance;' which are the very words of the Trent council, the avowed doctrine of his church, which whosoever believes not is cursed.

2. 'That we may plead for acceptance, grace, and mercy with God, for their merits and works,' which our author gilds over, but cannot deny. If he will plainly undertake the defence of either of these, and endeavour to vindicate the first from superstition and the latter from being highly derogatory to the mediation of Christ, both, or either, to have been known or practised in the first churches, he shall be attended unto. To tell us fine stories, and to compare their invocation of saints, to the psalmist's apostrophes unto the works of the creation to set forth the praise of the Lord, which they do in what they are, without doing more, and to deny direct praying unto them, is but to abuse himself, his church, his reader, and the truth; and to proclaim to all, that he is indeed ashamed of the doctrine which he owns, because it is not good or honest, as the orator charged Epicurus. In the practice of his church, very many are the things which the Protestants are offended with. Their ca-

nonization framed perfectly after the manner of the old heathen apotheosis; their exalting men into the throne of religious worship, some of a dubious existence, others of a more dubious saintship; their dedication of churches, altars, shrines, days to them. Their composing multitudes of prayers for their people to be repeated by them: their divulging feigned, ludicrous, ridiculous legends of their lives to the dishonour of God, the gospel, the saints themselves, with innumerable other things of the like nature, which our author knoweth full well to be commonly practised and allowed in his church. These are the things that he ought to defend and make good their station, if he would invite others to a fellowship and communion with him. Instead of this, he tells us, that his Catholics do not invoke saints directly; when I shall undertake (what he knows can be performed) to give him a book bigger than this of his, of prayers allowed by his church, and practised by his Catholics, made unto saints directly, for help, assistance, yea, grace, mercy, and heaven, or desiring those things for their merit, and upon their account; which, as I shewed, are the two main parts of their doctrine condemned by Protestants. I can quickly send him Bonaventure's Psalter, prayers out of the Course of Hours of the Blessed Virgin, our Lady's Antiphonies of her sorrows, her Seven Corporeal Joys, her Seven Heavenly Joys, out of her Rosary. Prayers to St. Paul, St. James, Thomas, Pancratius, George, Blase, Christopher, Who not? all made directly to them, and that for mercies spiritual and temporal; and tell him how many years of indulgences, yea, thousands of years, his popes have granted to the saying of some of the like stamp; and all these not out of musty legends, and the devotion of private monks and friars, but the authentic instruments of his church's worship and prayers. Let our author try whether he can justify any of these opinions or practices, from the words of the Lord in Jeremiah, 'Though Moses and Samuel should stand before me, yet is not my soul unto this people;' declaring his determinate counsel for their destruction, not to be averted by Moses or Samuel, were they alive again, who in their days had stood in the gap and turned away his wrath, that his whole displeasure should not arise; or from the words of Moses, praying the Lord to

‘remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob his servants; which he immediately expounds, as they are also in a hundred other places, by remembering his ‘covenant made with them, and the oath he sware unto them;’ these are pitiful poor pillars to support so vast and tottering a superstruction. And yet they are all that our author can get to give any countenance to him in his work, which indeed is none at all.

Neither do we charge the Romanists with the particular fancies of their doctors, their ‘speculum trinitatis,’ and the like; no, nor yet with the grosser part of the people’s practice in constituting their saints in special presidentships, one over hogs, another over sheep, another over cows and cocks, like the ruder sort of the ancient heathen, which we know our author would soon disavow; but the known doctrine and approved practice of his whole church, he must openly defend, or be silent in this cause hereafter. This mincing of the matter by praying saints, not praying to them, praying to them indirectly not directly; praying them, as David calls on sun, moon, and stars to praise the Lord, so praying to them, as it is to no purpose, whether they hear us or no, is inconsistent with the doctrine and practice of his own church to which he seemeth to draw men, and not to any private opinion of his own. And a wise piece of business it is indeed, that our author would persuade us that we may as well pray to saints in the Roman mode, as Paul desired the saints that were then alive to pray for him. We know it is the duty of living saints to pray for one another; we know a certain way to excite them to the performance of that duty in reference unto us; we have rule, president, and command in the Scripture to do so, the requests we make to them are no illicit acts of religion; we pray to them neither directly nor indirectly; but desire them by virtue of our communion with them, to assist us in their prayers, as we might ask an alms, or any other good turn at their hands. I wonder wise men are not ashamed thus to dally with their own and others eternal concerns. After all this, at one breath he blows away all the Protestants as childish (just as Pyrgopolenices did the legions of his enemies), they ‘are all childish;’ let him shew himself a man, and take up any one of them as they are managed by any one learned man of the church of England, and answer

it if he can. If he cannot, this boasting will little avail him with considering men. I cannot close this paragraph without marking one passage toward the close of it. Laying down three principles of the saint's invocation, whereof the first itself is true, but nothing to his purpose; the second is true in the substance of it, but false in an addition of merit, to the good works of the saints, and not one jot more to his purpose than the other; the third is, That 'God cannot dislike the reflections of his divine nature diffused in the saints out of the fulness of his beloved Son, when any makes use of them the easier to find mercy in his sight.' These are good words; and make a very handsome sound. Wilt thou reader know the meaning of them, and withal discern how thy pretended teacher hath colluded with thee in this whole discourse? The plain English of them is this. God cannot but approve our pleading the merits of the saints for our obtaining mercy with him. A proposition as destructive to the whole tenour of the gospel and mediation of Jesus Christ, as in so few words could well be stamped and divulged.

CHAP. XX.

Purgatory.

SECT. 28. We are at length come to purgatory, which is the pope's Indies; his subterranean treasure house, on the revenues whereof he maintains a hundred thousand fighting men, so that it is not probable he will ever be easily dispossessed of it. This is the only root of dirge, though our author flourishes, as though it would grow on other stocks. It is their prayer for the dead which he so entitles, and in the excellency of their devotion in this particular he is so confident, that he deals with us as the orator told Q. Cæcilius, Hortensius would with him, in the case of Verres, bid him take his option and make his choice of what he pleased, and it should all turn to his disadvantage; Hortensius by his eloquence would make any thing that he should fix on turn to his own end. He bids us on the matter, choose whether

to think the souls they pray for, to be in heaven, hell, or purgatory; all is one, he will prove praying for them to be good and lawful. Suppose they be in heaven, What then? What then? may we not as 'well pray for them, as for sanctifying the name of God, which will be done whether we pray or no.' Suppose they are in hell; 'yet we know it not, and so may shew our charity towards them;' but suppose they be in purgatory, 'It is the only course we can take to help them.' [Of purgatory we shall speak anon.] If there be no other receptacle for saints departed, but heaven and hell, it is but a flourish of our author, to persuade us, that prayers for them in the Roman mode, would be either useful or acceptable to God. Suppose them you pray for, to be in hell; the best you can make of your prayers, is but a vain babbling against the will and righteousness of God; an unreasonable troubling of the judge after he hath pronounced his sentence. Yea, but you do not know them to be in hell, then neither do you suppose them to be there; which yet is the case you undertake to make good; 'Suppose they be in hell, yet it is well done to pray for them,' and to say they may not be there, is to suppose they are not in hell, not to suppose they are; unless you will say, suppose they are not in hell, you may pray for them, suppose they are in hell; hereunto doth this subtlety bring us. But it is not the will of God, that you should pray for any in hell; no not for any in heaven, unless it be the will of God, that you should oppose his will in the one, and exercise yourselves in things needless and unprofitable in the other; both which are far enough from his mind, and that word which I believe, at last will be found the only true and infallible rule of worship and devotion. When we pray for the sanctifying of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, the doing of his will, we still pray for the continuance of that which is as to outward manifestation, in an alterable condition; for the name of God may be more or less sanctified in the world; and for that which is future. But to pray for them that are in heaven, is to pray for that for them, which they are in the unalterable enjoyment of: and besides, to do and practice that in the worship of God, which we have no precept, no precedent, no rule, no encouragement for, in the Scripture; nor the approved examples

of any holy men from the foundation of the world. Whatever charity there can be in such prayers, I am sure, faith there can be none, seeing there is neither precept for them, nor promise of hearing them.

But it is purgatory that must bear the weight of this duty. 'This,' saith our author, 'need not to be so condemned, being taught by pagans and ancient rabbies, and so came down from Adam by a popular tradition through all nations,' a great many of whose names are reckoned up by him, declaring by the way which of them came from Shem, which from Ham, which from Japhet, to whom the Hebrews are most learnedly assigned. For the pagans, Virgil, Cicero, and Lucretius, are quoted as giving testimony to them. This testimony is true, in the first especially lies the whole doctrine of purgatory. Some Platonic philosophers, whom he followed, have been the inventors of it. That some of the pagans invented a purgatory, and that Roman Catholics have borrowed their seat for their own turn, is granted. What our author can prove more by this argument, I know not. The names of the old Hebrew rabbins that had taught, or did believe it, he was pleased to spare; and I know his reason well enough, though he is not pleased to tell us. And it is only this, that there are no such old rabbins, nor ever were in the world; nor was purgatory ever in the creed of the Judaical church, nor of any of the ancient rabbins. Indeed here and there one of them seemed to have dreamed, with Origen, about an end of the pains of Gehenna; and some of the latter masters, the cabalists especially, have espoused the Pythagorean metempsychosis; but for the purgatory of the pagans and Papists, they know nothing of it.

On these testimonies he tells us, 'that this opinion of the soul's immortality, and its detention after death in some place *'citra cœlum,'* is not any new thing freshly taught, either by our Saviour or his apostles, as any peculiar doctrine of his own, but taken up as granted by the tradition of the Hebrews, and supposed and admitted by all sides as true, upon which our Lord built much of his institutions.' Gallantly ventured however! I confess, a man shall seldom meet with prettier shuffling.

Purgatory, it seems, is the doctrine of the soul's immor-

talities, and detention in some place 'citra cœlum.' Who would ever have once dreamed of this, had not our author informed him? This it is to be learned in the Roman mystery; the doctrine of purgatory, is the doctrine of the soul's immortality; never was doctrine so foully mistaken as that hath been; but if it be not, yet it is of the 'detention of the souls in some place 'citra cœlum.' It is indeed, but yet our author knows, that in these words as bad, if not a worse fraud than under the other is couched. It was the opinion of many of the ancients, that the souls of the saints that departed under the Old Testament, enjoyed not the blessed presence of God, but were kept in a place of rest until the ascension of Christ. And this our author would have us to think is the doctrine of purgatory; he himself I hope enjoys the contentment of believing the contrary. But he tells us, 'that our blessed Saviour and his apostles were not the first that taught this doctrine,' that is, of purgatory. As though they had taught it at all, or had not taught that which is inconsistent with it, and destructive of it, which is notorious that they have! And for the traditions of the Hebrew church; as that was none of them, so I believe our author knows but little what were. But he takes a great deal of pains to prove, though very unsuccessfully, that 'the Jews did believe, that the souls of those that departed before the resurrection of the Messias, did not enter heaven;' as though that was any thing to his purpose in hand; but he is, as I said, marvellous unsuccessful in that attempt also. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man, prove only that Lazarus's soul was in Abraham's bosom; that Abraham's bosom was not in heaven, it doth not prove. Peter in the second of the Acts, proves no more, than that the whole person of David, body and soul, was not ascended into heaven; the not ascending of his soul alone, being nothing to his purpose. But what he cannot evince by testimonies, we will win by dint of arguments. 'The Jews,' saith he, 'could not believe what God had never promised; but heavenly bliss was none of the promises of Moses's law, nor were they ever put in hope of it, for any good work that they should do.' It seems then, that which was promised them in Moses's law, was eternal life in some place 'citra cœlum,' or 'citra culum,' until the coming of the Messias;

for this he would fain prove that they believed, and that rightly. This, I confess, is a rare notion, and I know not whether it be 'de fide,' or no; but this I am sure, that it is the first time that ever I heard of it, though I have been a little conversant with some of his great masters. But the truth is, our author hath very ill success for the most part, when he talks of the Jews; as most men have, when they talk of what they do not understand. Eternal life and everlasting reward, the enjoyment of God in bliss, was promised no less truly in the Old Testament, than under the New, though less clearly; and our author grants it, by confessing that the estate of the saints in rest 'extra cœlum,' to be admitted thither upon the entrance made into it by the Messias, was promised to them, and believed by them, though any such promise made to them, or any such belief of them, as should give us the specification of the reward they expected, he is not able to produce.

'The promise of heaven is made clear under the New Testament, yet not so,' he tells us, 'but that in the execution of this promise, it is sufficiently insinuated, that if any spirit issue out of his body, not absolutely purified, himself may indeed by the use of such means of grace, as our Lord instituted, be saved, yet so as by fire;' 1 Cor. iii. I think I know well enough what he aims at, but the sense of his words I do not so well understand. Suppose a spirit so to issue forth as he talks? seeing we must not believe, that the blood of Jesus purges us from all our sins; who, or what is it then that he means by himself? Is it the spirit after it is departed? Or is it the person before its departure? If the latter, to what end is the issuing forth of the spirit mentioned? And what is here for purgatory, seeing the person is to be saved by the means of grace appointed by Christ? If the former, as the expression is uncouth, so I desire to know, whether purgatory be an instituted means of grace or no? and, whether it was believed so by Virgil, or is by any of the more learned Romanists? I think it my duty a little to retain my reader in this stumbling passage. Our author having a mind to beg some countenance for purgatory from 1 Cor. iii. and knowing full well, that there is not one word spoken there about the spirits of men departed, but of their trials in this life, was forced to confound that

living and dead means of grace and punishment, things present and to come, that somewhat might seem to look towards purgatory, though he knew not what. Nor doth he find any better shelter for his poor purgatory, turned naked out of doors, throughout the whole Scripture, as injurious to the grace of God, the mediation of Christ, the tenour of the covenant of grace, and contrary to express testimonies; in those words of our Saviour, Matt. v. who speaking of sinners, dying in an unreconciled condition, having made no peace or agreement with God, says, that being 'delivered into prison, they should not go forth, until they had paid the utmost farthing.' For as the persons, whom he parabolically sets forth, are such as die in an absolute estate of enmity of God; which kind of persons, as I take it, Roman Catholics do not believe to go to purgatory; so I think it is certain, that those enemies of God, who are, or shall be, cast into hell, shall not depart until they have paid the uttermost farthing; and that the expression, 'until,' doth in Scripture always denote a limitation of time to expire, and the accomplishment afterward of what is denied before; I suppose, nay, I know, he will not say. So that their lying in prison until they pay the uttermost farthing of their debts (which is not God's way of dealing with them whom he washes and pardons in the blood of Christ, who are not able to pay one farthing of them), is their lying there to eternity. And so also the sins of which it is said, they shall 'not be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come,' in one gospel; it is said in another, 'that they shall never be forgiven;' that is, not really forgiven here, nor declared or manifested to be forgiven hereafter. Besides, methinks this should make very little for purgatory, however the words should be interpreted; for they are a great aggravation of the sins spoken of, as the highest and most mortal that men may contract the guilt of, that can be pardoned, if they can be pardoned. That the remission of such sins may be looked for in purgatory, as yet we are not taught: nay, our own author tells us, That mortal sins must be remitted, before a man can be admitted into purgatory; so that certainly there is not a more useless text in the Bible to his present purpose than this is, though they be all useless enough in all conscience.

But here a matter falls across his thoughts, that doth not

a little trouble him; and it is this, That St. Paul, in his epistles, never makes use of 'purgatory, directly at least as a topic-place, either in his exhortations to virtue, or dissuasions from vice;' and I promise you, it is a shrewd objection. It cannot but seem strange, that St. Paul should make no use of it, and his church make use almost of nothing else. Little, surely, did St. Paul think, how many monasteries and abbeys this purgatory would found; how many monks and friars it would maintain; what revenue it would bring into the church, that he passeth it by so slightly; but St. Paul's business was to persuade men to virtue, and dehort them from vice. And he informs us, that there is such a contemperation of heat and cold in purgatory, such an equal balance between pains and hopes, good and evil, that it is not very meet to be made a topic for these ends and purposes; that is, that indeed that is of no use in religion. The trouble and comfort of it, are, by a due mixture, so allayed, as to their proper qualities, that they can have no operation upon the minds of men, to sway them one way or other. Had some of our forefathers been so far illuminated, all things had not been at the state wherein they are at this day in the papacy; but, it may be, much more is not to be expected from it, and therefore it may now otherwise be treated than it was yerst-while, when it was made the sum and substance of religion. However, the time will come, when this Platonical signet that hath no colour from Scripture, but is opposite to the clear testimonies of it; repugnant to the grace, truth, and mercy of God; destructive to the mediation of Christ; useless to the souls of men, serving only to beget false fears in some few, but desperate presumptions, from the thoughts of an after-reserve, and second venture after this life is ended; in the most, abused to innumerable other superstitions, utterly unknown to the first churches, and the orthodox bishops of them, having by various means and degrees crept into the Roman church (which shall be laid open, if called for), shall be utterly exterminated out of the confines and limits of the church of God. In the mean time, I heartily beg of our Romanists, that they would no more endeavour to cast men into real scorching consuming fire, for refusing to believe that which is only imaginary and fantastical.

CHAP. XXI.

Pope.

SECT. 29. It is not because the pope is forgotten all this while, that he is there placed in the rear, after images, saints, and purgatory. It is plain, that he hath been borne in mind all along; yea, and so much mentioned, that a man would wonder, how he comes to have a special paragraph here allotted to him. The whole book seems to be all pope, from the very beginning, as to the main design of it; and now to meet, pope, by himself again, in the end, is somewhat unexpected. But, I suppose, our author thinks he can never say enough of him. Therefore, lest any thing fit to be insisted on, should have escaped him in his former discourses, he hath designed this section, to gather up the paralipomena, or ornaments he had forgotten before to set him forth withal. And indeed, if the pope be the man he talks of in this section, I must acknowledge he hath had much wrong done him in the world. He is one, it seems, that we 'are beholden unto for all we have that is worth any thing;' particularly for the 'gospel, which was originally from him; for kingly authority, and his crown-land with all the honour and power in the kingdom; one, that we had not had any thing left us, at this day, either of truth or unity, humanly speaking, had not he been set over us. One, in whom Christ hath no less shewn his divinity and power, than in himself; in whom he is more miraculous, than he was in his own person. One, that by the only authority of his place and person, defended Christ's being God against all the world; without which, humanly speaking, Christ had not been taken for any such person as he is believed this day.' So as not only we, but Christ himself is beholden to him, that any body believes him to be God. Now truly, if things stand thus with him, I think it is high time for us to leave our protestancy, and to betake ourselves to the Irishman's creed, 'That if Christ had not been Christ when he was Christ, St. Patrick (the pope) would have been Christ.' Nay, as he is, having the hard fate to come into the world, so many ages after the ascension of Christ into heaven, I know not what is left for Christ to be, or do. The

Scripture tells us, that the gospel is Christ's, originally from him; now we are told it is the pope's, originally from him; that informs us, that by him (the wisdom of God) 'kings reign, and princes execute judgment;' now we are taught, 'That kingly authority, with his crown-land, is from the pope.' That instructs us, to expect the preservation of faith and truth in the world, from Christ alone; the establishment of his throne and kingdom for ever and ever; his building, guidance, and protection of his church: but we are now taught, that for all these things we are beholden to the pope, who, by his only authority, keeps up the faith of the Deity of Christ; who surely is much engaged to him, that he takes it not to himself. Besides, what he is, for our better information, that we may judge aright concerning him, we may consider also what he doth, and hath been doing, it seems, a long time; 'He is one that hath never been known to let fall the least word of passion against any, nor move any engine for revenge; one whose whole life and study is to defend innocence,' &c. That by his 'general councils, all held under, and by him, especially that of Nice, hath done more good than can be expressed; careful, and more than humanly happy, in all ages, in reconciling Christian princes,' &c. 'One who let men talk what they will, if he be not an unerring guide in matters of religion and faith, all is lost.' But how shall we come to know, and be assured of all this? Other men, as our author knows and complains, speak other things of him; is it meet, that in so doubtful and questionable a business, and of so great importance to be known, we should believe a stranger upon his word, and that against the vehement affirmations at least of so many to the contrary: the Scripture speaks never a word that we can find of him, nor once mentions him at all. The ancient stories of the church are utterly silent of him, as for any such person as he is here described, speaking of the bishop of Rome, as of other bishops in those days, many of the stories of after-ages give us quite another character of him, both as to his personal qualifications and employment. I mean, of the greatest part of the series of men going under that name. Instead of peace-making and reconciliation, they tell us of fierce and cruel wars, stirred up and managed by them; of the ruin of kings, and kingdoms, by their

means: and instead of the meekness pretended, their breathing out threatenings against men that adore them not; persecuting them with fire and sword, to the utter depopulation of some countries, and the defiling of the most of Europe with bloody cruelties. What course shall we take in the contest of assertions, that we may be able to make a right judgment concerning him? I know no better than this, a little to examine apart the particulars of his excellency as they are given us by our author, especially the most eminent of them; and weigh whether they are given in according to truth or no.

The first that we mentioned was, that 'the gospel was originally from him, and to him we are beholden for it.' This we cannot readily receive; it is certainly untrue, and fearfully blasphemous to boot. The gospel was originally from Christ; and to him alone are we beholden for it, as hath been before declared. Another is, that 'kingly authority amongst us, and his crown-land is from him.' This is false and seditious. Kingly authority in general is from God, and by his providence was it established in this land, before the pope had any thing to do here; nor doth it lean in the least on his warranty, but hath been supported without the papacy, and against all its oppositions, which have not been a few. A third is, that, 'humanly speaking, had not he been set over us, we had not had this day either truth or unity.' I know not well, what you mean by 'humanly speaking;' but I am sure, so to blaspheme the care and love of Christ to his church, and the sufficiency of his word and promised Spirit to preserve truth in the world, without the pope, whose aid in this work he never once thought of, requested, appointed, is, if not inhuman and barbarous, yet bold and presumptuous. That 'Christ hath no less shewed his divinity in him than in his own person,' is an expression of the same nature, or of a more dreadful, if possible it may be. I speak seriously, I do not think this is the way to make men in love with the pope. No sooner is such a word spoken, but immediately the wicked bestial lives, the ignorance, atheisms, and horrid ends of many of them, present themselves to the thoughts of men, and a tremor comes over their hearts, to hear men open their mouths with such blasphemies, as to affirm, that the Lord Christ did as much manifest his divinity and

power in such beasts, as in his own person. 'Yea, that he is more miraculous in him, than he was in himself:' what proof, sir, is there of this? Where is the Scripture, where the antiquity, where the reason for it? We tell you truly, we cannot believe such monstrous figments upon their bare affirmation. Yea, but this is not all, 'Christ is beholden to him for all the faith of his Deity that is in the world;' Why so? Why, by the 'only authority of his place and person, he defended it.' When? 'When it was opposed by the Arians,' and he called his council of Nice, where he condemned them. Who would not be sick of such trifles? Is it possible that any man in his right wits should talk at such a rate? Consult the writings of those days, of Alexander of Alexandria, of Athanasius, Gregory, Basil, Chrysostom, Austin, who not? Go over the volumes of the councils of those days; if he can once find the authority of the pope of Rome, and his person, pleaded as the pillar of the faith of Christ's Deity, or as any argument for the proof of it, let him triumph in his discovery. Vain man that dares to make these flourishes, when he knows how those ancient Christian heroes, of those days, mightily proved the Deity of Christ from the Scriptures, and confounded their adversaries with their testimonies, both in their councils, disputes, and writings, which remain to this day. Was not the Scripture accounted, and pleaded by them all as the bulwark of this truth? and did not some of them, Athanasius for instance, do and suffer for the maintaining of it, more than all the bishops of Rome in those days, or since? and, what a trifling is it to tell us of the pope's council at Nice? As though we did not know who called that council, who presided in it, who bare the weight of the business of it, of whom none were popes, nor any sent by popes; nay, as if we did not know, that there was then no such pope in the world, as he about whom we contend. Indeed it is not candid and ingenuous for a man to talk of these things in this manner. The like must be said of the six first councils mentioned by him; in some of which the power of the bishop of Rome was expressly limited, as in that of Nice, and that of Chalcedon, and in the others; though he was ready enough to pretend to more, yet he had no more power than the bishops of other cities, that had a mind to be called patriarchs. We do not

then, as yet, see any reason to change our former thoughts of the pope, for any thing here offered by our author; and we cannot but be far enough from taking up his, if they be those which he hath in this discourse expressed, they being all of them erroneous, the most of them blasphemous.

But yet, if we are not pleased with what he is, we may be pleased with what he does; being so excellent a well accomplished person as he is; for he is one that was never 'known to let fall a word of passion.' That, for casting off his authority should procure thousands to be slain, and burned, without stirring up any 'engine of revenge,' these are somewhat strange stories. Our author grievously complains of uncivil carriage toward the pope in England, in all sorts, men, women, and children. For my part, I justify no reviling accusation in any, against any whatever; but yet I must tell him, that if he thinks to reclaim men from their hard thoughts of him (that is, not of the person of this or that pope, but of the office as by them managed) it must not be by telling him, he is a fine accomplished gentleman, that he is 'a prince, a stranger, a great way off, whom it is uncivil and unmannerly to speak so hardly of:' but labour to shew, that it is not his principle to impose upon the consciences of men, his apprehensions in the things of God; that he is not the great proclaimer of many false opinions, heresies, and superstitions, and that with a pretence of an authority, to make them receive them whether they will or no; that he hath not caused many of their forefathers to be burned to death, for not submitting to his dictates, nor would do so to them, had he them once absolutely in his power; that he hath never given away this kingdom to strangers, and cursed the lawful princes of it; that he pleads not a sovereignty over them, and their governors, inconsistent with the laws of God and the land: 'Hæc, cedo, admoveant templis, et farre litabo.' For whilst the greatest part of men amongst us, do look upon him as the antichrist foretold in the Scripture, guilty of the blood of innumerable martyrs, and witnesses of the truth of Christ; others who think not so hardly of him, yet confess he is so like him, that by the marks given of antichrist, he is the likeliest person on the earth to be apprehended on suspicion; all of them think, that if he could get them into his power, which he endeavours continually, he would burn them

to ashes; and that, in the mean time, he is the corrupt fountain and spring of all the false worship, superstition, and idolatry, wherewith the faces of many churches are defiled. To suppose he can persuade them to any better respect of him than they have, by telling them how ‘fine a gallant gentleman’ he is, and what a great way off from them, and the like stories, is to suppose, that he is to deal with fools and children. For my own part, I approve no man’s cursing or reviling of him; let that work be left to himself alone for me: I desire men would pray for him, that God would convert him and all his other enemies to the truth of the gospel; and in the mean time to deliver all his from their policy, rage, and fury.

We may easily gather what is to be thought of the other encomiums given to him by our author, by what hath been observed concerning those we have passed through; as that ‘his whole life and study is to defend innocency,’ &c. It must needs be granted, that he hath taken some little time to provide for himself in the world; he had surely never arrived else to that degree of excellency, as to tread on the necks of emperors, to have kings hold his stirrup, to kick off their crowns, to exceed the rulers of the earth in worldly pomp, state, and treasures, which came not to him by inheritance from St. Peter; and whether he hath been such a defender of innocency and innocents, the day wherein God shall make inquisition for blood, will manifest. The great work he hath done by his general councils, a summary of which is given us by our author, is next pretended. ‘All this was done by him, yea, all that good that was ever done by general councils in the world was done by him;’ for they were all his councils, and that which was not his, is none. I shall only mind our author of what was said of old, unto one talking at that rate that he is pleased here to do:

‘Labore alieno magnam partam gloriam
Verbis sæpe in se transmovet, qui habet salem
Qui in te est.’

All the glory and renown of the old ancient councils, all their labours for the extirpation of heresies and errors, and the success that their honest endeavours were blessed withal, with the seasoning of one little word ‘his,’ are turned over to the pope. They were ‘his councils;’ a thing they never

once dreamed of; nor any mortal man in the days wherein they were celebrated. Convened they were in the name, and upon the institution of Christ, and so were 'His' councils; were called together, as to their solemn external convention, by the emperors of those days, and so were, not their councils, but councils held by their authority, as to all the external concernments of them. This the councils themselves did acknowledge; and so did the bishops of Rome in those days, when they joined their petitions with others unto the emperors, for the convening of them; and seldom it was, that they could obtain their meetings in any place they desired; though they were many of them wise at an after game, and turned their remoteness from them into their advantage. As they were called by the emperors, so they were composed of bishops and others, with equal suffrages. How they come to be the pope's councils, he himself only knows, and those to whom he is pleased to impart this secret, of other men not one. Indeed some of them may be called his councils, if every thing is his, wherein he is any way concerned; such was the first council of Nice, as to his pretended jurisdiction; such that of Chalcedon, as to his primacy; such were sundry famous conventions in Afric, wherein his pretensions unto authority were excluded, and his unseemly frauds discovered. Nay, there is not any thing upon the roll of antiquity of greater and more prodigious scandal, than the contests of popes in some African councils, for authority and jurisdiction. Their claim was such, as that the good fathers assembled wrote unto them, that they would not introduce secular pride and ambition into the church of Christ; and the manner of managing their pretensions, was no other but downright forgery, and that of no less than canons of the first memorable council of Nice; which to discover, the honest African bishops were forced to send to Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, for authentic copies of those canons; upon the receipt whereof, they mollified the forgery with much Christian sobriety and prudence unto the bishop of Rome himself, and enacted a decree for the future, to prevent his pretensions and claims. Besides, as the good bishops aver, God himself testified against the irregular interposition of the pretended power of the bishop of Rome; for whilst they, being synodically assembled, were

detained and hindered in their procedure, by the Romanists' contests for superiority, Apiarius, the guilty person, being convinced in his conscience of his many notorious evils and crimes, from a just censure whereof, the Roman interposition was used to shelter him, of his own accord cast himself at the feet of the assembly, confessing all his wickedness and folly. Of the six first councils then there is no more reason to call them the pope's, or to ascribe their achievements unto him, than there is to call them any other bishop's of any city, then famous in the world. In that which he calls the 'seventh general council,' indeed a conventicle of ignorant, tumultuous, superstitious Iconolaters, condemned afterward by a council held at Frankfort, by the authority of Charles the Great, he stickled to some purpose for images, which then began to be his darlings; and though we can afford that council to be his, for any concernment we have in it, yet the story of it will not allow us to do so; it being neither convened nor ruled by his authority, though the brutish monks in it were willing to shelter themselves under the splendour and lustre of his see. About those that follow, we will not much contend: it matters not whose they were, unless they had been better; especially such as laid foundations for, and stirred up princes to shed the innocent blood of the martyrs of Christ, to some of their perpetual ignominy, reproach, and ruin. But yet our author knows, or may know what long contests there have been, even in latter ages, whether the council should be the pope's council, or the pope should be the council's pope; and how the pope carried it at last, by having more archbishopricks and bishopricks in his disposal than the councils had. And so much for the pope's councils.

Our author adds, that 'he hath been more than humanly happy in reconciling Christian princes;' but yet I will venture a wager with him, that I will give more instances of his setting princes together by the ears, than he shall of reconciling them; and I will manifest, that he hath got more by the first work, than the latter. Let him begin the vie when he pleaseth; if I live, and God will, I will try this matter with him before any competent judges; 'Tu dic mecum, quo pignore?' How else to end this matter, I know not.

I see not then any ground my countrymen have to alter

their thoughts concerning the pope, for any thing here tendered unto them by this author; yea, I know they have great reason to be confirmed in their former apprehensions concerning him. For all that truly honour the Lord Jesus Christ, have reason to be moved, when they hear another, if not preferred before him, nor set up in competition with him, yet openly invested with many of his privileges and prerogatives; especially considering, that not only the person of Christ, but his word also is debased to make way to his exaltation and advancement. Thence it is, that it is openly averred, that were it not for his 'infallibility, we should all this time have been at a loss for truth and unity.' Of so small esteem with some men is the wisdom of Christ, who left his word with his church for these ends, and his word itself. All is nothing without the pope. If I mistake not in the light and temper of my countrymen, this is not the way to gain their good opinion of him. Had our author kept himself to the general terms of a good prince, a universal pastor, a careful guide; and to general stories of his wisdom, care, and circumspection for public good, which discourse makes up what remains of this paragraph, he might perhaps have got some ground on their affection and esteem, who know nothing concerning him to the contrary; which in England are very few. But these notes above Ela, these transcendant encomiums, have quite marred his market. And if there be no medium, but men must believe the pope to be either Christ or antichrist, it is evident which way the general vogue in England will go, and that at least until fire and fagot come; which, blessed be God, we are secured from, whilst our present sovereign sways the sceptre of this land; and hope our posterity may be so, under his offspring, for many generations.

CHAP. XXII.

Popery.

SECT. 30. Our author hopes, it seems, that by this time he hath brought his disciples to popery; that is the title of the last paragraph, to his business, not of his book; for that which follows, being a parcel of the excellent speech of my lord chancellor, is about a matter wherein his concernment lies not: this is his close and farewell. They say, there is one, who, when he goes out of any place, leaves a worse savour at his departure, than he gave all the time of his abode; and he seems here to be imitated. The disingenuity of this paragraph, the want of care, of truth, and of common honesty, that appears in it, sends forth a worse savour than most of those, if not than any, or all of them, that went before. The design of it is to give us a parallel of some popish and Protestant doctrines, that the beauty of the one may the better be set off by the deformity of the other. To this end he hath made no conscience of mangling, defacing, and defiling of the latter. The doctrines he mentions, he calls the more plausible parts of popery. Such as he hath laboured in his whole discourse to gild and trick up with his rhetoric, nor shall I quarrel with him for his doting on them: only I cannot but wish it might suffice him to enjoy and proclaim the beauty of his church, without open slandering and defaming of ours. This is not handsome, civil, mannerly, nor conscientious. A few instances will manifest, whether he hath failed in this kind or no. The first plausible piece of popery, as he calls it, that he presents us in his antithesis, is 'the obligation which all have who believe in Christ to attend unto good works, and the merit and benefit of so doing;' in opposition whereunto he says Protestants 'teach that there be no such things as good works pleasing unto God, but all be as menstruous rags, filthy, odious, and damnable in the sight of heaven; that if it were otherwise, yet they are not in our power to perform.' Let other men do what they please, or are able; for my part, if this be a good work, to believe that a man conscientiously handles

the things of religion, with a reverence of God, and a regard to the account he is to make at the last day, who can thus openly calumniate, and equivocate; I must confess, I do not find it in my power to perform it. It may be, he thinks it no great sin to calumniate and falsely accuse heretics; or, if it be, but a venial one. Such a one as hath no respect to heaven or hell, but only purgatory, which hath no great influence on the minds of men to keep them from vice, or provoke them to virtue. Do Protestants teach, 'There are no such things as good works pleasing to God,' or that 'those that believe, are not obliged to good works?' In which of their confessions do they so say? In what public writing of any of their churches? What one individual Protestant was ever guilty of thinking or venting this folly? If our author had told this story in Rome or Italy, he had wronged himself only in point of morality; but telling it in England, if I mistake not, he is utterly gone also as to reputation. But, yet you will say, that if there be good works, yet it is not in our power to perform them. No more will Papists neither, that know what they say, or are in their right wits, that it is so without the help of the grace of God; and the Protestant never lived, that I know of, that denied them by that help and assistance to be in our power. But they say, they are 'all as filthy rags,' &c. I am glad he will acknowledge Isaiah to be a Protestant, whose words they are concerning all our righteousness, that he traduceth; we shall have him sometime or other denying some of the prophets or apostles to be Protestants; and yet it is known, that they all agreed in their doctrine and faith. Those other Protestants whom he labours principally to asperse, will tell him, that although God do indispensably require good works of them that do believe, and they by the assistance of his grace do perform constantly those good works, which both for the matter, and the manner of their performance, are acceptable to him in Jesus Christ, according to the tenour of the covenant of grace, and which, as the effect of his grace in us, shall be eternally rewarded; yet, that such is the infinite purity and holiness of the great God with whom we have to do, in whose sight the heavens are not pure, and who charges his angels with folly, that, if he should deal with the best of our works, according to the

exigence and rigour of his justice, they would appear wanting, defective, yea, filthy in his sight; so that our works have need of acceptance in Christ no less than our persons; and they add this to their faith in this matter, that they believe, that those who deny this, know little of God or themselves. My pen is dull, and the book that was lent me for a few days is called for. ‘*Ex hoc uno;*’ by this instance; we may take a measure of all the rest wherein the same ingenuity and conscientious care of offending is observed, as in this; that is, neither the one or other is so. The residue of his discourse is but a commendation of his religion, and the professors of it, whereof I must confess, I begin to grow weary; having had so much of it, and so often repeated, and that from one of themselves, and that on principles which will not endure the trial and examination: of this sort is the suffering for their religion, which he extols in them. Not what God calls them unto, or others impose upon them in any part of the world; wherein they are not to be compared with Protestants, nor have suffered from all the world for their papal religion, the hundredth part of what Protestants have suffered from themselves alone, for their refusal of it, doth he intend; but what of their own accord they undergo. Not considering, that as outward affliction and persecution from the world, have been always the constant lot of the true worshippers of Christ in all ages; so, voluntary self-macerations have attended the ways of false worship among all sorts of men from the foundation of the world.