



## SERMON XXIV.

### Purgatory a Groundless and Dangerous Doctrine.

*Mr Edward West*

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1 Cor. III. 15.

*But he himself shall be saved, yet so as by Fire.*

**T**HIS Text, sayes *Bellarmino*, is one of the most difficult, and yet most profitable of the whole Scripture, in that from hence the Catholicks conclude two great points against Hereticks, that of *Purgatory* and *Venial* sins. *Lib. I. c. 5. de Purg.*

But as hard as the Apostles Text is, this sort of Catholicks in drawing such profound Notions from it, seem hard enough for the Apostle and his Text too; and I am much mistaken, if *Paul* would not have been alike puzzled to have understood Them, as they are at a loss to spell out the meaning of Him; it is not every one, nor may be, any one of that simple Age was aware of such a thing as *Purgatory* or *Venial* sin.

*Austin* it seems was of *Bellarmino's* mind, as in the same place he quotes him, that this was one of the hard sayings that *Peter* probably observed in *Paul's* writings, which we should take heed of wresting to our own destruction. *Austin* belike was wary, but others have ventured to bring it to the wrack, and made it speak according to their mind, as reserved and close as it was, they will teach *Paul* to speak plain, plain *Popery* ere they have done. And it is strange to consider how many hard Texts even in this obscure matter they pretend to have for them, though in our Controversies with them, we must wholly confine to plain ones: But these Magicians, in imitation as it were of *Moses*, that eminent Man of God, are altogether for bringing water out of the

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Rocks;

Rocks ; if a place be hard in it self, they think it will be too hard for us, and like a Mill-stone they cast it upon us, urging us to give an evident sence, or admit theirs ; and while we are heaving to extricate our selves, they hope for this advantage over us, leisurely to retreat from us, and before we overtake them agen, to prepare fresh work of the like kind for us ; but it is a dastardly Enemy that declines the open Field, and fights only for the Hedges and holes of Rocks, that it is greater difficulty to follow, than overcome them. To proceed :

An hard Text this is confessed to be, whereon we crave liberty to suspect they may be mistaken, and to suspend our Faith till we have made examination.

Bell. lib. 2. c. 2.  
de Purg.

But however a very *profitable* Text it is, if it affords such Doctrines as forementioned, worth many thousands by the year, I'll warrant you ; for however some dissemble the matter, on these suppositions it is, that Masses and Indulgences go off at the rate they doe : if Souls went forthwith to Heaven, they would not care a pin for them ; if forthwith to Hell, they would despair of Benefit by them : But the Opinion of *Purgatory* makes them precious, especially since, as is said, *That Souls there are defective in merit, and cannot further merit in that state themselves ;* they must needs, on this supposition, reckon themselves more beholding to them that will impart of their Oyl to them ; and in hope to partake of their Spirituals, can do no less than leave them a good share of their Temporals.

Aqu. Suppl. qu.  
71. art. 2.

Suppl. qu. 71.  
Art. 12.

And to make them the more willingly give down their milk, *Aquinas* tells them, *That the Priests Prayers, Masses, &c. profit them when dead, by vertue of what they did themselves while alive ;* you may guess his meaning, The Priest should profit him when dead, as his Purse had profited the Priest when alive ; and elsewhere he adds, *That Prayers are more effectual for us if we are particularly remembred, than if we are more generally recommended ;* well, it is but meet that the Priest should be particularly remembred, that particularly remembers us, and that something should be done, to rub up his memory of us in particular when we are gone : If *gain be godliness*, as some have supposed, certainly, this Doctrine of *Purgatory* is a prime Article of Religion ; for all Experience as well as Reason teaches us, that it is a very *profitable* Doctrine.

The Saints in Heaven are high and stout, they will give us nothing ; the Damned in Hell are a poor or surly Rout ; the one do's not need our prayers, the other does despise our prayers ; we must threaten men with this prison of *Purgatory*, or they will never pay their debts to us, but rather than lye and rot there, we may easily conclude, they will compound with us here.

But for clearer procedure, it will be necessary to shew,

1. *What the Papists do mean by Purgatory.*
2. *Whether any such thing is probably meant in this Text.*

3. *Whether*



3. Whether the Word of God does any where give ground for such a conceit, with that cogency especially, as that we should receive it for an Article of Faith.
4. I shall briefly consider (as they deserve) their Supplementary Arguments.
5. Shew what ground there is from Scripture to disbelieve any such thing.
6. What evil consequences there are of the Receipt of it.
7. And lastly, I shall give you the genuine sence of the place, and improve it.

(1) What do the Papists mean by their Purgatory?

*Ans.* That there is a purgation of our Souls preparatory to their immediate enjoyment of God, we freely grant to them, and that both in respect of Guilt and Filth; and many wayes we assign whereby this is done; eminently by the Blood and Spirit of Christ, hereby filthy wretches indeed are said to be cleansed, *1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11.* Christ was thought to have done this work effectually, what one way, and what another, *Heb. 1. 3.* and he reckoned so himself, as appears by his *sitting down*; his coming therefore was foretold, as with Fire and Water, that are the great cleansers amongst us, *Mal. 3. 2, 3.* Moreover, as Instruments that are effectual through him, this purging work is ascribed, sometimes and in some part to the Word, *Joh. 15. 3. Purifie them by thy Truth, thy Word is Truth*; at other times, and in another respect to Faith, *Acts 15. 9. Purifying their hearts by Faith*; sometimes to Afflictions, whence is that comparison *Psal. 66. 12. we went through fire and water*; so Afflictions are called, as being frequently used for our purging and cleansing: such a Purgatory we Protestants allow of; and are free to tell, that the place of it is this World; and that the Remainder of Sin, which sticks to the best of us while alive, is concluded in death; whereby the Body is incapacitated, and all its moral as well as vital Actions terminated; and wherein the Soul is perfected by the immediate Vision of God and Christ, into whose Image it is hereby changed, according to present Experience, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* and after Hope, *1 Joh. 3. 2. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

But this will not serve our Adversaries turn, let us then hear and examine their Notion of Purgatory.

Bellarmino tells us in general, That it is a certain place, wherein as in a prison, Souls are purged after this Life, that were not fully purged here, to the intent they may enter pure into Heaven. *Lib. 2. de Purg. c. 6.*

Let us inquire of him a little more particularly,

1. Where this place is?

He tells us, that the Church has not defined it, and that there are eight several Opinions about it; Fancy you see is fruitfull; here is ee'n every one his tale, but such variety cannot but much please our company,

Lib. 2. de Purg.  
c. 6.

yea and the Customers too; for if they like not one, they may take the other. But the generality of the Schoolmen will have it *in the bowels of the Earth, on the borders of Hell*; but be it where it will, I hope I shall never come thither; and, as I suppose they that thus inform us, had not been there; but all things are within the ken of the sagacious Schoolmen.

2. Who are to goe thither?

Eccl. lib. 2.  
de Purg. c. 1.

Eight Opinions also are reckoned up about this: Some thought *all men, good and bad*; others, *both Men and Devils*; others *all and only Catholicks*, (alas poor Hereticks) and so he goes on to the full number, charging one or more Fathers with each of them; and yet all but the last were out, as he concludes in the close of that Chapter; whereby I understand, that the Fathers are of no Authority, except when they speak for one; and so we as well as they will be content to be determined by them.

Ed. ibid.

But what at length is the true Opinion?

Lib. 1. c. 11.  
de Purg.

*That Purgatory is onely for them that die with Venial Sins, or that depart, Cum reatu poenae, culpis suis remissis.* This is crabb'd Latine, you will pardon me, if I cannot streight English it, I was almost stumbled before at *Venial sins*, but my Author helps me to understand what he means by them; *such as are worthy onely of a Temporal punishment.* These are petty kind of sins, but that Notion I pass over, as like to be examined by a much better hand: That which do's most puzzle me is this *Reatus Poenae*, This *guilt of Punishment that remains when the fault is pardoned*; and this Difficulty I think not easie to get over: For what is Guilt without respect to a Fault? and what place has punishment after Pardon?

But this is the best account we are like to have of what is to be purged in This Purgatory; some pitifull little sins, or such that were pardoned before; in effect I perceive, that persons that goe thither need only to be a little polish'd over. They are detained in that Prison for some few Farthings, that Christ when he payd their debts left on the score (alas for him, he was so poor) and for this they and their Friends must make a purse, and so they may go out; if they have good helpers, that will go Pilgrimages, say Masses, or procure Indulgences for them, they may go out so much the sooner, but if all lyes upon themselves, they must tarry longer; and thank themselves that by their Bounty they obliged no body they left behind them to merit a speedy Release for them; ('tis likely by this to go very hard with poor Folks and Churls) and to fright persons into a readier compliance with them, the Grievousness of the punishment is set before them, Fire is the best that can be expected by them, and therein they may lye frying till the Resurrection, in some thousand years scarce making an Expiation.

Eccl. lib. 2. c. 9.  
de Purg.

And it is specially remarkable, that persons are not judg'd thither, *that the Fomes of sin may be washed, nor for any evil habits, that they may*



may be amended, but purely that their lesser debts (that Christ it seems had forgot, or was not able to discharge) may by their personal Punishment, and their living Friends Piety and Prayers, be fully payed.

And thus much for their Notion of Purgatory, as to its Place and Purposes.

(2) The Second thing to be inquired into is, *Whether it is this Popish Purgatory, that Paul means by the Fire in our Text?*

For my part I can hardly think it is, in that I find *Paul* such a stranger in all his Writings to their Notion of it; *Venial sins, Punishment after Pardon, Humane Satisfactions by translation of ones works to another*, (when indeed no one has half enough for himself) *Prayers for the Dead*, and the like, which are Perquisites of their Purgatory, he (good man) seeming utterly unacquainted with.

But he talks of Fire; and there is Fire in their Purgatory; what then? Are there not many Notions of Fire in Scripture? is not the Word, the Spirit, Afflictions, frequently set out by it? This they will not deny; there is no necessity then of interpreting this Fire by that of Purgatory; yea there is a great probability of the contrary:

1. In that it is certain, that the whole of *Paul's* Discourse here is a Metaphor, and it is likely that it is metaphorical Fire, that this metaphorical Stubble and metaphorical Builder is in danger of.

2. Whereas Fire is twice used before, it is evident, that it is not there to be understood of Purgatory-Fire, and must be so confessed by themselves; and therefore it is unlikely having other Fire at hand, he should run to Purgatory to fetch Fire, unless he had been a Disciple of *Ignatius*, that can never kindle Fire enough.

For instance, of the Fire *v. 13.* it is said, *that it shall try every mans work*; whereas Papists will yield, Purgatory is not for tryal of mens Works, they are tryed and found slight before any one comes thither; nor agen, is Purgatory according to them, for *every one*, the *very good* and the *very bad* come not thither; therefore this cannot be understood of Purgatory-Fire.

Agan, the Fire which in the beginning of our Text is said to *burn* some mens works, is the same with the Fire that *tryed* them, for *therein* some are expressly said to *abide*, and others to *burn*.

Moreover, their Purgatory Fire acts on Persons, this on Works, and such works as we cannot imagine how a material Fire should touch, unless it can, as they say, *comedere secundas notiones*; for these works, as is clear by the Context, are corrupt Doctrines.

And what reason is there in this last clause to alter the Notion of Fire? One would easily conceive, that the Fire which the Builder escaped, was the same with that which burnt his Works, for we hear of no other that he was in danger by.

And if any Fire here spoke of, might be supposed to be understood  
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metaphorically, much more this last, in that it is brought in with such signal notes of comparison, *ἐπὶ τοῦ αἵματος*, yet so *as by Fire*.

You see then, that this Text that looks fairest for their purpose of any in all the Book of God, is so far from a Cogency, that there is not so much as a probability of its meaning any such thing: Hitherto then we must be excused from receiving this Doctrine as an Article of Faith to be believed on pain of Damnation, as *Bellarmino* urges it; for we see no tolerable grounds to take it up for an Opinion. There is such a deal of force to be used to these words, to make them speak to the Popish purpose, that we may perceive them loth to own it; and for my part, if they speak no plainer, they shall stand by a while, till we have examined other witnesses.

Lib. 1. c. 15.  
de Purg.

(3) Let us enquire, *Whether the Word of God does any where give ground for such a Conceit, with that cogency especially, as that we should require it as an Article of Faith?*

The principal Texts they use either directly or indirectly, as tending to this purpose, I shall briefly examine.

Gen. 3.24.

The first I am sure they can think on, (and that you will say is far fetched,) is *Gen. 3. 24.* where God is said to have placed a *flaming sword* to keep the way of the tree of Life; this flaming Sword, say some of them, was a witness to sinners, that they must pass through Purgatory into Paradise.

*Ans.* If we mind the scope of the words, that Text rather seems to have signified, That by the old way of Works there was no entrance into Paradise; for this Sword is said to be placed to keep the way of the tree of Life, least man by eating of it should live for ever; and so makes rather against Purgatory, that seems a part or an Appurtenance of the old way of Works.

But a flaming Sword seemed a good Weapon, and they were willing to take it into their hands: and indeed their great Argument for all their peculiar Articles, has been *Fire and Sword*.

2 Macc. 12.

But to leave this Sword in the Cherubims hand, let us make a leap to 2 *Maccab. 12.* which is the alone place *Bellarmino* pitches upon in the Old Testament, as convincing in this matter; of all others he speaks very slightly, however Fathers have made use of them, as if they were such, *quæ solum probabiliter suadent*, and hereabout I shall have no controversy with him, I think he has given them their full due.

Lib. 1. c. 3. de  
Purg.

111.

The place then to be considered, is 2 *Maccab. 12. 43, &c.* where *Judas Maccabeus*, (as *Bellarmino* quotes him) is said to have gathered twelve thousand drams of Silver, and sent them to Jerusalem, to be laid out in Sacrifices for the dead; and the gloss of the Author, he adds, *That it is a pious and a wholsom thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.*

Whence he inferres, 1. That the dead may be loosed from their sins, and



and therefore there is a Purgatory: 2. That Prayers and Sacrifices doe profit the dead. Three other Inferences he draws, the least of which is, That Purgatory and Prayers for the dead must needs be an Article of Faith.

This text is their *Hercules Club*, that knocks all dead: other texts render it but probable, this it seems makes it clear and necessary to be believed, that there is a Purgatory.

*Ans.* To this we reply a great many things.

1. As to the matter of fact that is recorded of *Judas*, that he did raise a certain summe of money (though not 12000, but 200 drams, as the Greek Copy reads it) and sent it to *Jerusalem* to buy Sacrifices, I will not dispute against it, he might doe it, probably did it, and in his circumstances had good reason for it; but that he did it *pro mortuis*, or for the Relief of the Dead, that is *Bellarmines* forgery: the text sayes onely, *pro peccato, for the sin*, viz. lest being a notorious sin, the Living should be plagued for it; and that this was his case, appears by v. 42. *They prayed that the sin might be blotted out, and Judas exhorted the multitude to keep themselves afterwards free from the sin, seeing the punishment of them that had committed it*; and this is an Interpretation of his fact, that agrees to the letter of the Text, and the Analogy of Faith.

2. As for the Authors gloss (*what a piece of piety it is to pray for the dead*) we are not much concerned in it; for whoever was the Author of it, whether *Jason* or his Abbreviator, (as may seem 2 *Maccab.* 2. 24.) and however good an Historian he was, we own him for no Prophet; nor did the Church of the *Jews* ever look upon his Writings as Canonical, as Papiests themselves confess; though *Bellarmino* sayes the Christian Church did, he gives slender proof of it: *Austin* indeed sayes, *It was received of the Church not unprofitably, provided it was soberly read*; where he seems to caution against some dangerous passages in it, by which unwary Readers might be prejudiced, as much as the more wise profited.

*Bell. de Purg.  
lib. 1. c. 3.*

But the Author himself acquits us from any veneration of him, by his courting his Readers favour ever and anon, and desires their pardon at least, if any thing had been said amiss, which are condescensions below the Spirit of God, or any Author inspired by it.

2 *Macc.* 2. 26;  
2 *Macc.* 2. 25;

3. If this Author had been good, and the *Jews* there had prayed for the Dead, the Papiests Inference of Purgatory, according to their own principles is weak: For it seems also by their Faith, that people may be prayed out of Hell; though this they will not grant for ordinary, lest it should spoyl their Purgatory; yet two Instances they very confidently give of it, which speaks a possibility: One of *Trajan* a bloody persecutor, upon the Prayers of *Gregory*; of which *Damascent* sayes, the whole East and West were witnesses: And the other of *Falconilla* a Pagan Woman, by the prayers of *St. Thecla*. And if there was need of any

Suppl. qu. 71.  
art. 5.

any more such stuff, the Scull of a certain Gentile Priest told *Macarius*, that its owner was delivered out of Hell by his Prayers; and here is as good Authority, as our Adversaries will bring by and by for their Purgatory: Though I must confess, these Instances, as going against the hair, do not over-cleverly go down; for though they hugely advance Prayer, they quite race Purgatory; to make up therefore differences between the combatants on each party, *Aquinas* tells us, (and he seems to moderate well, like an Angelical Doctor,) *That they were not finally sent to Hell, but according to their present merit; and that probably they were first raised to life, and so repented ere they were translated to Heaven, and also that this was not by common Law, but special privilege, an Act as it were of Chancery.* But however it was, if one late Penitent, though but one, is thought sufficient to prevent every ones despair, two such instances of damned persons recovered to grace, are ground enough to encourage Prayer for all the rest.

Sup. qu. 71.  
art. 5.

And if Fathers would make these fantastick arguments Authentick, it was easie to give many that speak probably, as if they half believed such a thing, as the possibility of a deliverance from Hell. *Origen* goes a great way beyond us; let us hear what *Austin* sayes, that they would make their great man for Purgatory; *Aquinas* denies not, but that it was his saying, *That Suffrages did profit the dead either for a full absolution, or more tolerable damnation:* Both which must referre to their state in Hell; there is no proper Damnation in Purgatory, and Remission is said to be granted before they go to Purgatory; onely an imaginary guilt remains there, that may be properly enough purged in an imaginary place, by an imaginary Fire, such as (for ought we yet hear of Purgatory) that seems to be.

And thus I conceive the force of this Text is fully enervated, the fact being shewen to have been misconstrued, the gloss not duely authorized, and the Inference not firmly grounded.

We must now pass into the New Testament, and there the most likely *Math. 12. 22.* Texts seem to be *Math. 12. 22.* where it is said of the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, *that it shall never be forgiven, neither in this World, nor that which is to come;* hence conclude they, that some sins are forgiven in the other world, and therefore a Purgatory.

*Ans. 1.* I deny the Consequence, for according to their Opinion; as you have foreheard, Purgatory is for persons whose sins are already forgiven.

2. The Original is, *ἢτε ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι, neither in this Age, nor the Age to come;* where the present Age may signifie the *Judaick state*, wherein Grace was streighter; and the future that of *Christs Kingdom*, wherein it was expected larger. Thus *age to come* is often took, as probably *Heb. 6. 5.* and according to some readings, *Isa. 9. 6.* *Christ* is called in stead of *everlasting Father*, *πῶς τὸ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος:* the Father of the Age to come.

But



But if this will not be admitted,

3. Let *Matthew* interpret himself by what he sayes in the former verse, where he tells them without this Exaggeration, that it *shall not be forgiven*; and to omit *Fathers*, let me only referre them to his *Brother Mark*, *Mark* 3. 29. where it is simply rendred, *that he hath never forgiveness*, but is in danger of, or obnoxious to *Eternal Damnation*, *ἐκ ἀπορνῆς ἔχει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. both the former Ages are here wrapt up in the one of Eternity, as it were to correct the Popish nicety.

Another Text they make use of, is *Mat.* 5. 25, 26. where we are advised, *to agree with our adversary quickly, while in the way, lest the Adversary deliver us to the Judge, and the Judge to the Officer, and we be cast into Prison, for we shall by no means come out thence, till we have paid the utmost farthing.* *Mat.* 5. 25, 26.

Here also Papists do see, Venial sins in the Farthings, Humane Satisfactions in the Pay, Purgatory in the Prison.

But that no such things can with any Congruity be hence inferred, you may observe,

1. That it is questionable, whether this is any Parable, or looks any further than the Civil differences between us and our Brother, which we should speedily take up among our selves, by the common Rule of Equity, and not suffer needlessly to come before the forensick Judges, where we may expect utmost severity; the Context inclines to this, and so this Text is expounded by *Chrysostom*, *Theophylact* and *Hierom*.

2. If a Parable; on that account, by the common Rule of the Schools it is not Argumentative, especially in an Article of Faith.

3. Its Scope must be intended, and not every particular word wracked, and that seems to be only this, That we should make our Peace with God in this Life, and as soon as we can, in that here we may expect Mercy; whereas, if we put off matters till we come before Gods Tribunal, we shall be dealt with in all severity, God will not abate us an Ace then, he will exact the utmost farthing; he will not then hear of Remission, or Composition, that we are like to go to eternal perdition; the Prison is Hell, and there is no relief from the [untill;] for the impossibility of the Condition makes that but a bare Supposition, and it is all one with *never*: as to which Resolution of the matter, we have Abettors, some of the most considerable of the Popish Doctors, *Maldon. in loc. Tolet. in Luc.* 12. *Jansen. Concord. Evang.*

A further Text *Bellarmino* layes great stress upon, is *1 Cor.* 15. 29. *1 Cor.* 15. 29.  
*What shall they doe that are baptized for the dead? if the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead.*

This we must confess is a difficult place indeed, and has wrested many great wits; but Papists think, that by way of requital as it were, they may wrest it, and by *Baptisme* understand all their voluntary services for the dead, supposing hence that they may thereby profit the dead, and

consequently, that there is a Purgatory, wherein they are detained, till by these means they are relieved.

*Ans.* 1. Their Notion of Baptism is perfectly new coyned, for though Afflictions which in the Old Testament are frequently set out by Waters, are sometimes in the Gospel couched under this Name of *Baptism*, *Mat.* 20. 22. yet Prayers, Alms, Sacrifices, and such like voluntary services were never so expressed, nor with any pretence of Reason can be thereby understood.

2. If this was granted, Purgatory could not be hence inferred, for this Baptism whatever it was, referred to the Resurrection of the *Body*, as a typical representation of that, whereon it is made use of, for Confirmation of the Faith of that; whereas Purgatory according to them is onely for the Relief of the *Soul*; that were we wholly at a loss for the positive meaning of the Text, or should we be out in our guess at it, they could reasonably take no advantage of it; for to whatever it serves, it serves not to their purpose, the Body and its Resurrection, and not the Soul and its Purgation being concerned in it, as by the Context clearly appears.

But however, to take Occasion to explain that very puzzling Text:

1. Some referre it to a corrupt Custom took up by the *Cerinthians* and *Marcionites*, of Baptizing a living person instead of his Friend which was dead, which *Paul* makes use of to their Conviction, without his own approbation. Let this have what weight it will with others, I must profess it little swayes with me.

2. Others think this Baptism referres to the washings that were used about the dead, which shewed hope of their Resurrection, otherwise why should they make such a doe about the Bodies of them: Of this Custom we hear something *Acts* 9. 37. but then we must take Baptism here in the middle Voyce, and read the Text, *Why do they baptize, or use Washings about the dead*. Let this Notion go as far as it will, I know no hurt in it.

3. According to others, Baptism may be here took for Sufferings, and so this Clause may be much the same with what follows in the next Verse, *Why stand we in jeopardy?* Why do we thus expose our Bodies, if they shall never be restored to Life?

Let me adde a Fourth Notion, that takes Baptism in a literal Sence, and supposes an Ordinary Figure of one Number for another, where there is speech of the dead; and that the meaning is, If the Dead rise not, what shall become of us and our Baptism, that are baptized into *Jesus* who is dead, for *if the dead rise not*, as he there sayes, *Christ is not risen*, and consequently our Gospel and *hope is vain*; and thus by a small dispensation with Grammar, which the Apostle does not exactly tye himself to, we have a plain and safe meaning of this difficult Text; however in regard of its difficulty, I should judge it very improper, to make it the Basis of any new uncouth Article; I would rather use it for confirmation



firmation of one that was otherwise sufficiently bottomed, and would keep to the Apostles scope in the Application of it, till I had its fuller and surer interpretation; and that certainly is, to confirm us from something in use among us, of the future Resurrection.

The last Text I shall mention, that is of any probability, is 1 *Pet.* 3. 19. 1 *Pet.* 3. 19. where Christ is said by the Spirit to have gone and preached to the Spirits in Prison, that were sometimes disobedient in the dayes of Noah.

This Prison they dream is Purgatory, and it seems that there is preaching in it too, but to what purpose, if there be no repenting or changing of Estate, as every where Papiſts confess there is not in Purgatory? and I suppose while the Scripture speaks of the so great wickedness of the world before the Flood, they will not think that the men of that Age went generally to Purgatory, and therefore Christ might have had but few Auditors, if he had gone thither to have preached to them.

The plain meaning of that Text is, that Christ by his Spirit in Noah did once preach unto that Generation, whose Spirits are now in hold as Criminals for their then disobedience, of which preaching of Noah, and the strivings of this Spirit, we hear, 2 *Pet.* 2. 5. *Gen.* 6. 3.

But to suppose Christs personal going into those dark Regions, to preach the Gospel to Spirits so long departed, is a ridiculous Fable, and destructive even of their own Notion of Purgatory; that reckons the present Life the Way, the Race, and that hereafter is no opportunity to obtain Grace, but satisfy Justice.

Such shifts then they are put to, that right or wrong will take upon them to defend a bad cause; and yet as little as these Scriptures I have quoted make for them, and as much as in truth they make against them, they are their chief Weapons: If I should mention several others, I could propose no other design than to shame them; but it may be they will say, Doe that if I can; I shall however forbear, in that it may be an harder task than I am aware, for some folks have Whores Foreheads, and will not be ashamed.

(4.) Let us now briefly consider their Supplementary Arguments; which ordinarily are from these heads.

1. *Reasons.*
2. *Fathers.*
3. *Councils.*
4. *Consent of Nations.*
5. *Revelations.*

I. Let us hear their strong *Reasons* for a Purgatory, and the first I find to be this:

First, In that some sins are Venial, and onely worthy of a temporal Punishment, and it is possible a man may depart out of this Life onely with

*Bell. de Purg. c. 11. l. 1.*

these, Therefore it is necessary that they should be purged, and expiated in another.

Reason.

Secondly, When Sinners are reconciled to God, the whole Temporal Punishment is not alwayes remitted with the Sin, and a man may die before he has discharged it, and therefore in the other World he must make it up; and hereon a Purgatory seems necessary.

And these are all the Reasons *Bellarmino* gives us, but adde what I shall consider under the following distinct heads; and by this you'll see upon what lame legges this great Doctrine stands: For,

1. We utterly deny any Sin, to be in this sence *Venial*, having learn'd out of the Scriptures, that *the wages of sin*, one as well as another, is death, *Rom. 6. 23.*

Rev. 3. 19.

2. Though we allow of Fatherly Chastisements that God layes on his people here, for others example, and their own amendment, as a fruit of Love rather than Justice; we understand nothing of a proper punishment by way of *personal* Satisfaction that is required of us, when God has pardoned us; having learnt, that *God does Abundantly pardon where he pardons*, *Isa. 55. 7.* and having confidence that Christ has fully satisfied, where he has undertook to satisfy, *by one Sacrifice Perfecting for Ever them that are sanctified*, *Heb. 10. 4.* and that there is *No condemnation to them that are in Christ*, *Rom. 8. 1.* And we reckon it absurd, that we should be loosed in respect of our Greater sins, by the sufferings of another, and held for our slighter Peccadillo's to make satisfaction in our own persons; we cannot conceive why Christ that payd the pounds, should grudge the pence; after he has payd our Debt, he should suffer us to lye for Fees. If there was a meetness we should finart for any of our sins, one would expect it rather for our great ones; but the Goodness that passes over them, will not disparage it self to take notice of little things; but we assure our selves where it sets on Forgiveness, it will make clear work, *forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin*, that all Glory may be to God.

3. We suppose the wise Providence of God do's so far subserve his Covenant, that no surprizal shall happen to them interested in it, to cut them short of the full benefit of it, and that God will continue them in this Life, till he has fitted them for a better; otherwise *David* was out in his Notion of Gods Covenant, that reckoned it *ordered in all Things and sure*, *2 Sam. 23. 5.* and we are abused in what we hear of his exact and accurate Providence, *Matth. 10. 29, 30.* If this be all *Bellarmines* Reason for a Purgatory, to catch those of God's people that shall drop out of his providential hand, that they may not quite fall into Hell, he may content himself, God is not so careless of his own matters, or People, as he would make him; his Fruit drops not off the Tree of its own accord, that there should be danger of its falling before it was ripe; but he gathers it in convenient season, so that there is no need of a Purgatory, wherein it should lye mellowing. You see by what we have replied.



replyed in these three particulars, how streightened they are for Reasons, that they must extenuate the Desert of Sin, lessen the Merit of Christ, and reflect on the wise Providence of God, to have any shew of one; and I must profess, had I hesitated at the Doctrine of *Purgatory* before, such Reasons as these for it, would have confirmed me in the disbelief of it; *'Tis time to desert that Faith, where I cannot be a Believer, without being also a Blasphemer.*

II. Their Second Argument is from *Fathers*: As to which I briefly reply, that upon Examination I find some false Fathers imposed, others falsely quoted, others falsely applied to what they never intended, as was easie to give instances, were they not from other hands so abundantly ministred.

Fathers.

And further I find, (as is said of a certain people) that they sell powder to Friend and Foe, whereby a great noyse is made, and a great smoak is raised, in which a man may soon lose his Religion, but I pity the poor man that is to seek it among them.

And herein I acknowledge God very good to his Church, discouraging her by this Humane uncertainty from pinning her Faith on Man, and directing her to his infallible Word, on which alone she can safely and reasonably settle; and such an Observation I conceive put the Spouse on that particular Inquisition after Christ himself, *Cant. 1. 7. Tell me, (O thou whom my Soul loveth,) where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at Noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside (or sitteth Vailed after the manner of Harlots) by the flocks of thy Companions?* That Church that would keep it self chaste, must be aware of wanton Shepherds, how it sits down by them, or dallies with them, and keep close to Christ, that it may be delivered from them; and that Church or Society of men is a Strumpet, that draws a Veyl over its own Eyes, not caring to distinguish between Christ and his Companions; that listens to every ones Voyce, and receives every ones Embrace; *Christs sheep know his Voyce, and follow him, and a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the Voyce of strangers, Joh. 10. 4, 5.* And a Stranger he is, and a strange voyce he has, that speaks not according to what is written, and so he should be looked on by you, *Gal. 1. 6, 7, 8, 9.*

I speak not this to disparage the true Fathers, but I fear, as by the body of *Moses*, (if he could have found it, or *Michael* would have delivered it,) the Devil had a design of imposing upon *Israel*; so under the name of divers upright and eminent Fathers, the Deceiver of the Nations, and his Prophets, have obtruded upon the World many gross Superstitions and corrupt Doctrines, whereof it is but needfull we should take caution, especially if there appears to us the Ghost of an ancient Father, long dead, and hid from former Ages, and raised by we know not what Inchantments of later Impostors, speaking things dissonant to the Analogy of Faith; as is the case in respect of divers of those Fathers the Papists

urge

2 Tim. 3. 17.  
Councils.

urge us with, as *Dyonisius, Clemens, Ephrem, &c.* But universally it is a good Rule, to beware of Men, and have your eye to the Word of God, which is able to instruct you to every good work.

III. They pretend also Councils in the Case.

Bell. de Rom.  
Pont. lib. 4.  
c. 14.

To which pretence I reply, that we find none of Antiquity or Universality to move us in the matter; nor for ought appears, was it ever industriously handled till the Council of *Florence*, not much upward of two hundred years, as *Bellarmino* himself seems to grant; on occasion of Pope *John* the 22th. being impeached of Heresie, as believing the sleep of all Souls till the general Resurrection, he plainly tells us, that he believed so, while it was lawfull for him so to doe without danger of Heresie, for the Church had not then defined what in that case was to be believed. And consequently the division of our dead Saints into those in Heaven and in Purgatory, even according to him, was not determined in any antecedent Council; and we are not moved by an Article of Faith that is so novel; our Creed was compleated 1000 years since, whereas it seems this great Article of Purgatory is not of 300 years standing; for before then we might safely have believed all Souls quiet enough. And the truth of it is, this Opinion did prevail, as an Opinion, among several of the Ancients, and was probably the true foundation of those Footsteps of Superstition that we find among them in reference to the Dead; yet though this Foundation by the Popish Church it self is rased, the Popish purgatory, upon the Superstructure of straw that the Ancients laid thereon, is principally founded; as in all their Treatises of that Subject may be observed.

Consent of  
Nations.

Lib. 4. de purg.  
c. 11.

IV. The Fourth Argument is, from general Consent of Nations; and here *Bellarmino* reckons up the *Hebrews*, the *Mahumetans*, and the *Heathens*.

I had expected he would have brought in the *Greeks* also; and it may be supposed he took that for granted, in regard he had quoted so many of the *Greek* Fathers in the former Chapter, that for ought I perceive spake good *Greek*, if that would end a controversie; or however, say our *Neotericks*, the *Greeks* differed in this point heretofore, they agreed to it in the Council of *Florence*; where the *Greek* Emperour *Paleologus*, and *Joseph* the Patriarch of *Constantinople*, with divers *Greek* Bishops were present, and gave their consent in the disputed point of *Purgatory*.

In answer to this, I reply only two things, (for I am loth to lose the *Greeks*, I must confess, being so considerable a Body of Christians.)

De purg. lib. 1.  
c. 2.

1. That *Bellarmino* does yield the *Greeks* to be suspected at least of Heresie in this business, and the *Armenians* also, and brings in *Aquinas* as of his mind; and yet further feeds his suspicion from the proceeding of the very Council of *Florence*, whence later Writers would perswade us of their being right for the business.

2. Whatever was done by the *Greek* Bishops in that Synod, the rest of



of the *Greek Churches* disowned when they came home, and interdicted them all Christian Burial for their pains; and a fatal Council this is noted every way to have been to the *Greeks*, for in it the Patriarch dyes, presently after the Emperour, and within fourteen years after, *Constantinople* is took by the *Turks*, the Emperours Brother slain, the *Greek Empire* dissolved, the Christians of those parts enslaved, and gave thereby to find *their Purgatory* in this world.

As to their pretension to the *Hebrews* as being for Purgatory, they have shewed their proof, 2 *Mac.* and it is needless further to disprove them.

For the *Heathen*, especially the Poets, I think we may grant several of them, as Abettors, and I suppose *Fathers* of this profound Notion.

As to the *Mahumetans* also I will not much dispute, nor wonder if I find Purgatory in their *Alcoran*, since *Sergius* the Monk was one of the Authors of it.

And on recollection of the whole, this specious Argument of *Consent of Nations* results, in the sweet Harmony of *Turks*, *Papists*, and *Heathen Poets*; and like enough, if we would trace them, they agree in more points than this, and herein let them glory on, while we comfort ourselves in our redemption from our vain Conversation received by Tradition from our *Fathers*. 1 Pet. 1. 12.

V. The Fifth and last Argument is from *Apparitions*; and here I might tell you abundance of pretty storyes, were it worth the while. Apparitions.

But as to these I must frankly say, that if they had been true, (whereas the generality of them smell of fiction,) and if there had been ten, where we hear onely of one, it would have made this Doctrine more suspicious; it seems hereby the interest of Hell to promote such Fancies; These Phantasms, Ghosts, or what else you will call them, were never, as I find, *allowed Preachers*, nor do any of the Monks record that they shewed them their *Orders*, and it is observable, they came with different stories, some describing a Popish Purgatory, and others as it were a *Turkish Paradise*; but God has directed us to *Moses and the Prophets*, Luk. 16. 29. and upbraided *inquiring for the Living, of the Dead*. Isa. 8. 19. So that I look on all of this Nature as diabolical Delusion, and the heeding of such things as a great declension from God, and the very precipice unto all superstition. And now let Papists further brag, that they have not onely *Turks and Heathens*, but even *Hell* it self of their mind.

But we have followed them too far in their Fopperies, let us briefly inquire,

(5) What ground there is from Scripture to disbelieve any such thing as Purgatory?

1. The Scriptures mention onely a two-fold State of Persons departed this Life, placing some in Heaven, and others in Hell; and accordingly allure the Good by the Hopes of one, and fright the Bad with the Threats of the other. Scripture Grounds to believe no Purgatory.

Threats of the other, never setting before us for Encouragement or Discouragement any Third state after this Life; *Mat. 16. 16. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned:* and least Sophisters should except, that he sayes not he shall presently be saved, but by the intermediation of Purgatory, we find it elsewhere, even in words of the present expressed, *Joh. 3. 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life;* and on the contrary, *the wrath of God is said to abide on him that doth not.*

2. The Scripture makes onely a two-fold division of Saints, in respect of place, dividing the whole Family into them on Earth, and them in Heaven, *Eph. 3. 15.* Therefore none that are under his Fatherly Love and Care, can well be supposed elsewhere.

3. The Saints that undoubtedly knew the mind of God, have not onely been assured themselves, but have assured one another, that on their bodily death, they should goe forthwith to Bliss: whence is that, *to me to dye is gain, I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, Phil. 1. 21.* And agen, *2 Cor. 5. 8. We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord;* so the converted Thief expected and was assured, (when he had no time to make personal satisfaction, as the Papists require) *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,* not Purgatory; there to be sure Christ is not; and where he is, there you may all along observe, they expect to be, and that immediately; *Lazarus* is no sooner dead, but he is seen in *Abrahams bosom*, which sure was a place of Rest; and in general, they are pronounced *blest that dye in the Lord, as resting from their labours, Rev. 14. 13.* And lest this should be restrained to Martyrs, and the former to eminent Saints, (*such as the Thief for instance*) we hear it, that good men, without exception, are taken hence in pity, that they may be freed from present evil, and go to rest after their hard labours; which certainly implyes not, their being cast into Purgatory-fire, if it be so fierce especially, as it is painted.

4. The Scripture speaks of Christ as having fully satisfied, and of Believers as being intirely sanctified, and thereon at peace with God, and as rejoycing in hope of the Glory of God, looking on all the Afflictions that remain as flea-bitings, little momentany things, which they would not certainly have spoke so contemptibly of, if they had thought they might have layn some thousand years in Purgatory-flames: No, they reckoned onely of the *Sufferings of the present time*, not dreaming of any afterwards, but on their *Justification by Faith* concluded of their *Peace with God.* And agen, they are spoken of *joying in God through their Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they had Now received the Attainment;* they did certainly expect that God had no after-reckoning for them; their *smiling look* on God, spoke evidently they thought not of further Severities from him.

5. The Scripture speaks of God as *thoroughly* pardoning upon our repenting;

Isa. 57. 1, 2.

Rom. 8. 12.

Rom. 5. 1.

v. 11.



repenting; *Ezek. 18. 22. All his Transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him. Heb. 8. 12. I will be mercifull unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more*; whereas he would remember them with a witness, if he should throw them into that dark Prison, till they had made in their own persons an Expiation, by such sufferings as are not to be parallel'd on Earth.

6. The Scripture speaks expressly of this Life as our Way and onely working-time, and that *in the night of Death no man can work*; and *Joh. 9. 4. moreover, that every man shall receive according to what he hath done in the Body*, 2 Cor. 5. 10. *He* and not another, *Done* and not suffered; *in the Body*, while Soul and Body were together, and not what the Soul should doe apart; and indeed, what is done out of the Body, is not the act of the man, and so can tend neither to his good or hurt, and consequently, what the *Soul* is supposed to suffer in Purgatory, can no wayes be imagined Expiatory for what was done in the Body, as Papiſts themselves in effect grant, (in denying that there is any Merit) and thereby yield their Purgatory a fantastical and insignificant thing.

7. And lastly, if there was such a distress incident to the Souls of Believers after death, no doubt but God would have appointed something for their relief; but no Sacrifice do we find under the Law that referres to the dead, or any one Office appointed or performed by any Ancient Saint under that dispensation, that can probably be applyed to such a purpose; whereas every Minute case was respected, and from All uncleanness care was taken we might be purged; but the Dead, God seems willing should be deserted, not only by his passing them over, but charging us, as it were, to make as little adoe as may be about them, we *defile our selves by touching of them*, and are discharged those pœnances that natural Superstition had ingaged the Nations in; in reference to them: *Dent. 14. 1. You shall not cut your selves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead*; and to the same purpose more fully, *Lev. 19. 27, 28. This care we find taken to prevent much Ceremonie, such especially as carryed a shew of severity, and seemed likeliest (according to the Popish Notion) to have profited the dead; but nothing in its stead does appear instituted for their relief; which silence speaks, That persons removed into the other world, are either happy above our Help, or miserable beyond it: The Seventh day under the Law, was the day that perfected their cleansing, and what was not clean then, we hear not when it should be clean; by which probably was typified, that the time of Life was the time of Hope, and what was neglected in that term, was not to be repaired unto Eternity.* Numb. 19. 12.

Thus much for Scriptural Arguments against this Doctrine of Purgatory.

But I foresee a shrewd Cavil, which yet I am ashamed to concern my self about, it has so little in it; but on the same account I might have let all alone. Let us then hear it: Why,

R r r

We

Cavil.

E. W. Prot.  
without prin-  
ciples, p. 459.

We have brought never a positive Scripture, that sayes, There is no such place as *Purgatory*; and an huge Out-cry is on such Occasions taken up against our *Negative* way of arguing against a Doctrine that they *positively* profess.

*Ans.* 1. This old Father had said something, if he had told us, they had *positively* proved it; but *positive* Profession without proof (methinks) should not privilege any one from anothers *as-positive* Negation, if I may so phrase it. And truly on their part it lyes to have given us positive and expresse Scripture for *Purgatory*, that would-impose it on us as a positive Article of Faith to be believed on pain of Damnation, which how they have quitted themselves in, may be observed in the obscure and impertinent Allegations before instanced in.

2. It seems abundantly sufficient for a *suspension of Faith*, (which is our case,) that we see, and are able to shew, that there is *no* Foundation for it, which is that I think he calls our *Negative way of Arguing*.

3. It seems absurd to provoke to positive expresse Scripture against every particular Chimæra that may come into mens heads, a thousand years after the Scriptures were writ; for so, if any man should assert, (especially if many should agree to it) that *Mahomet* is a true Prophet, or that the Moon was a Millstone, or whatever else can be supposed more unlikely; I am bound to subscribe to it, except I can bring particular, positive, expresse Scripture against it. It has alwayes been the prudence of Law-givers to direct their particular Laws against Faults in being, lest in forbidding all that might be, they might teach some, that never else would have been; God has walked in the same wisdom he infused into them, and it has sufficed him particularly to condemn what was particularly practised against Faith and good Manners, leaving general Rules for the Tryal of after Emergencies. Yet,

4. In the Scriptures we have quoted, there is that positively asserted, that gives us good Foundation positively to conclude, that there is no such place as *Purgatory*.

For if Christ has fully satisfied, and God fully pardoned, and gave hopes to his people, that on their departure hence, they shall be immediately glorified, (all which has been fully by positive Scriptures proved) we may positively conclude, that other Satisfactions are not required, the Saints shall not be so severely punished, nor their Expectations at that rate delayed, as in the Doctrine of *Purgatory* is asserted. And thus we have done with our *Doctrine positive*.

Evil Consequences of the  
Doctrine of  
*Purgatory*.

(6) *What evil Consequences are there of this Doctrine of Purgatory, where it is received, and whercon it should not be received?*

I have forehinted some, which I shall briefly recapitulate, and adde a few others.

1. Hereby the Freeness of Gods Grace is disparaged, and he is represented an hard Master to them that fear him, contrary to the Notion he has



has every where given them of himself, and his design of insinuating into the good Opinion of them, as one mainly tender over them: God would make them believe, that *he was afflicted in all their Afflictions*, and angry with them that layd an hard blow, or continued an heavy hand upon them, though it was but for seventy years. But in this Doctrine of *Purgatory* he is represented as of a far other temper; and that when men have done their worst with them, they shall not scape so, but he will have his pennyworths out of them, and a thousand years exquisite Torments shall not suffice some of them; which is to dash the good Opinion his Saints (on his Sons Report) had conceived of him.

2. Hereby the Fulness of Christs satisfaction is denied, and Faith in him much discouraged. What confidence indeed can be put in him, if he should leave us thus in the lurch, and force us to seek other Friends, when we have most need of him.

3. Hereby the horrid Nature of Sin is lessened, in that any thing that we can suffer in a little time, or our Friends can doe over and above their own Duty, is reputed a just satisfaction for it, or any the least Reminders of it.

4. Hereon Humane works and helps are over advanced, and many a piece of Superstition and Will-worship introduced, and a pack of deceitfull Priests diverted from their proper work with the Living, and vainly occupied about the Dead, that have no more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the Sun.

Eccel. 9. 6.

5. Hence Bad men are less carefull to prepare for Death, since a great part of their business may be done by other hands when they are gone.

6. Hereon Good men are e'en afraid to dye, for it seems a terrible thing to enter into this *Purgatory*, where especially their coming out depends so much on mans Sincerity, whom it is hard to trust when one is gone; and his Reward is come. They that know the difficulty of Believing in Christ, must needs be more streightened to place any comfortable confidence in a Priests prayers and Masses, that (if he be faithfull while he live,) lives not for ever to make Intercession, or make up his Satisfaction for him.

From all which I conclude,

That the Doctrine of Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead, as if thereby their afflicted, tormented Souls could be relieved, is a Corruption of lamentable consequence to the Church, and a pernicious snare to Souls.

General Conclusion.

But since there is no such Thing as a Purgatory after this Life,

1. Let us purge and prepare our selves as much as we can in this Life, making use of Christs Blood, Spirit and Word to that purpose, and freely submitting to, and complying with present Afflictions in their design this way, considering, That *Christ gave himself for us, that he*

Use.

might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Let the fire of holy zeal burn in your breasts, since the Fire of an after-Purgatory, is not like to kindle on your persons.

Psal. 50. 22.

2. Let this cut off all vain hopes after death from them that have neglected Salvation-work in life, considering that there is no relief for them hereafter, but to Hell God will immediately send them, *Psal. 9. 17. Consider this ye that forget God, and unpreparedly expose your selves to his hand, for he will tear you in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver you; or yet further to speak to you in the Psalmists words, Ps. 49. 6, 7, 8. They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their Riches, none of them can by any means redeem his Brother, nor give to God a Ransom for him; For the Redemption of their Soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*

3. Let this chase away needless Fears from good people at the point of Death, for when they have drunk that Cup, they shall taste no more bitter to all Eternity, Sorrow and sighing shall fly away, and everlasting Joy shall be upon their heads.

4. Let what has been said commend the Protestant Doctrine in denying Purgatory, as a usefull wholsome Doctrine, while we live, and alike comfortable to them that have lived well, and learn'd to rely on Christ, when they come to dye.

(7) Lastly, let me give the genuine sence of this place, and improve it, and this will force a more particular respect to the Context.

1. The Builders are generally understood, (in a way of Eminency at least) of the Doctors of the Church; though I will not contend, if any shall comprehend also their Disciples that shall build their Faith upon the Doctrine which they have delivered.

2. The Foundation that is built on by both Builders is supposed the same, *The Lord Jesus Christ*, such as own him, are as to the main Christian; they on all hands are yielded to broach damnable doctrines indeed, that deny the Lord that bought them, *2 Pet. 2. 1.*

In locum.

3. As to the Materials that are superstructed on this Foundation, though some of our Adversaries are contentious about them, and will (against all sence) suppose by Gold and Silver to be meant *good Works*, and by Hay and Stubble *venial sins*, (which is a perversion of the very scope of the Text) yet hereabout we are pretty generally agreed, that at least properly and firstly, the Apostle speaks of Doctrines, and by *Gold, Silver, and precious Stones*, are meant a Superstructure suitable to, and worthy of the Foundation, like precious Faith, that in the whole Building there may be a proportion: And by Wood, Hay and Stubble, (as *A lapide* phrases it) we understand, *Doctrina incerta, frivola, pamposa, phalerata, curiosa, inutilis*; an uncertain, frivolous, pompous Doctrine, that has more shew than substance; that is of a base, earthy, rotten, moulding, perishing



perishing Nature, that is a blemish to the Foundation, and destroys the Uniformity of Christian Religion; and makes a meer *Nebuchadnezzars* Image of it, part Gold, and part Clay; that can never cement or hold long together: And by these last Builders, or rather Dawbers, I understand eminently the *Popish* Doctors; Christ they seem content should lye for the Foundation, though some will tell them, it is but a Nominal Christ that they lay there neither, for the stress of their Building is layd on other things, while they make use of his Name; and we must be beholding to our selves, and I know not what Saints, for our Salvation, though He bears the Title of *our Saviour*. Yet grant it, that they make Christ their Foundation, what incongruity is there between that and their superstruction? To instance:

Christ is *King*; this they pretend to own, a *golden foundation*: But *Psal. 2. 6.* They must reign. This in effect they inferre; a wooden, dirty, dungy Superstruction. If you ask wherein they do so? I answer, (1) In dispensing with Christs Laws, which they do at pleasure. (2) In making New Laws equally obliging Conscience under pain of Damnation; this they have done with that Arrogance, that we may finde Ten of theirs to One of Christs, as will appear by comparing their Voluminous Decretals with his Gospels, and his Servants Epistles. And lastly, in taking upon them to Authorize as it were and inforce his Laws, as if they had their binding power, not so much from Christs Institution, as the Popes Declaration: nor in this can they pretend Substitution, unless they could shew us his Commission, walked by his Directions, or expressed more Subjection. That Scripture, in regard of the Popes Arrogance, both in respect of Christ and his People, may well be applyed (as undoubtedly it belongs) to him; that *as God, he sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, 2 Thess. 2. 4.*

Agan, Christ is *Prophet*; a good Foundation: But we must ultimately hear and heed the Pope; a strawy superstruction, and a perfect degrading of Christ by implication; see whether we bring against them a wrongfull accusation: *Things are not to be believed because Christ said them, but because the Church of Rome avouches them*; the very Scriptures themselves, and every particular Article of Faith, according to them, have their Credibility, not from any character that Christ has put upon them, or Seal that he has set to them, but as the Church votes them, so we must believe of them: This is more notorious than that we should need to bring in particular Authors of theirs; and what is the meaning of this, but while they give Christ the Name, to usurp to themselves the Office of instructing and enlightening the world; *it may be no Heresie to disbelieve what Christ has said*, as was fore-noted in the instance of Pope *John 22<sup>th</sup>*; but he that suspends Faith to any thing, or dares think contrary to what the Pope (forsooth) and his Council have instamped with their Authority, he is an intolerable Heretick, and fit onely for Hell.

Heb. 10. 14.

Once more, They will not stand with us about Christs being *Priest*, wherein they seem to own the *Foundation*; but streight joyn with him such a frye of their *Sacrificuli*, as if they much doubted his sufficiency: hence also we are taught by them to multiply Sacrifices as well as Priests, as if he had not by that one he offered, for ever perfected them that believe; we are put on personal Satisfactions, directed to others Intercessions, all wayes are devised to affront him in this Office, while they pretend to own him.

And by what in these particulars has been instanced, is evidenced what it is to rear a strawy Superstruction on this golden Foundation, wherein the Papists of all men are notoriously guilty.

4. By the *Day* that shall declare every mans work, the Papists will have meant, as in their Translation is read, *the Day of the Lord*; by which some of them understand the Day of the general Judgement; though others will admit a more particular Judgement, and with good Reason; for if good and bad works were not declared till the day of the universal Judgement, and the fiery Tribulation of that day, the Fire of Purgatory would go quite out, for there would be no place for that: But it is confessed on all hands, that the generality of *Greek Copyes*, read onely *the Day*, not *the Day of the Lord*; and that it is not ἐκείνη ἡ ἡμέρα, as that great Day is wont to be expressed, but onely, ἡ ἡμέρα; Therefore hereby I am inclined to understand some brighter season of the Gospel, and *day*, in respect of its Light, to distinguish it from the former times, which were a kind of Night, wherein those Mysts had arose, that the Light and Heat of this Day should scatter and chase; according as was foretold, 2 *Thess.* 2. 8. *That this wicked one should be revealed, and that the Lord should consume him with the Spirit of his Mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming*; which word we find has been regarded, and that *wicked one* and his Works (however by the advantage of former darkness he and they were concealed) have begun to be revealed, consumed, and we hope, as the day grows brighter, to see utterly destroyed. For as the Day growes in Light, we may expect it to increase in Heat, that it shall be tormenting, through its violent scorching, to them that for their evil and odious works have alwayes affected darkness and shade, *Rev.* 16. 8, 9.

5. We are hereby lead further into the understanding of the Fire after mentioned, as a Concomitant of this day, wherein every mans work, that is, Words and Faith, should be tryed, all adulterate works consumed, and such like workers damaged and greatly endangered; and this Fire I understand partly of the Word of God, which I find so expressed, *Jer.* 23. 29. *Is not my Word like Fire?* and so acting, *Jer.* 20. 9. *His Word in my heart was as a burning Fire, shut up in my Bones*; partly I understand it of the Spirit, that shall blow up this Word, and actuate it unto a greater vigour, making it to burn fiercer, as Bellowes doe inrage our ordinary fire, to which there seems an allusion, *Isa.* 30. 33. *the breath*



*breath of the Lord like a stream of Brimstone doth kindle it*; and in regard of the inflammations that are made in the Heart by the Spirits enforcing the Word, it may be called a *Spirit of Burning*, *Isa. 4. 4.* And yet further I conceive, great and grievous Tribulations may be a third ingredient of this fire, and all to make it yet fiercer and fiercer, that it may be effective for the various purposes for which it is sent, probation, purgation, or consumption, according to the pliability or obstinacy of the Objects it meets with.

When this fire shall be kindled, and at this rate quickened, true and false Doctrine shall be distinguished, the one cleared, and the other condemned; and so each mans works manifested.

This premised, what remains is easily explained.

His Work may be said to *abide*, whose Doctrine shall be approved, and *he shall receive a reward*; present, in the further satisfaction of mind he shall receive by the Spirits confirmation and consolation of him, as to what he has preached, professed, or believed; and future, in the peculiar Glory he may expect, as having found Grace to be faithful in all times: This *John* exhorts the Elect Lady to look to, that both he and she might *receive a full reward*, *2 John 8.*

7. His Works are said to be burnt, that yields to the burning Light of that day, that submits to the Convictions of the Spirit, and quits his former Errours; so Christ is said to *come to destroy the works of the Devil, by the manifestation of himself*, *1 Joh. 3. 8.* That is, to burn them, as here, with the brightness of his coming; and so the Sons of *Levi* were purified; by his burning up their dross, and leaving them thereby a pure mass; it is, I'm sure, no uncouth Notion we give you, when we interpret this burning of their works, by a purification that shall pass upon the Builders, in their separation and consumption, through the Spirits efficacious and clear Conviction. But,

8. *How is the Builder hereon said to suffer loss?* It may seem his Gain.

*Ans.* Yea, and it will prove so, as Losses often doe, even as the Mariner accounts it, when by the loss of his Lumber he saves his Treasure, by the loss of his Goods he saves his Ship, by the loss of his Ship he saves his Life; But whatever he does gain, Loss still he is reckoned to sustain. So in the present Case, he that on the Spirits Conviction quits his former Errours, gets the knowledge of the Truth, gets Favour with God, which are far better things than what he has parted with. Yet inasmuch as these things might have been easier and cheaper had, than (it may be) he comes by them, and in that by a kind of force, as in a Fire or Shipwrack, to save himself he parts with them; they may bear the Name of a Loss, as *Paul* reckons the parting with his Righteousness, though it was in order to the winning of Christ, *Phil. 3. 7, 8.* *Those things that were gain to me, I counted loss, yea doubtless, I count all loss, I have suffered the loss of all things, &c.*

And.

And in the present case, whenever these refuse-works are burnt, we may reckon up some Loss, as (may be) the loss of Time, the loss of Labour, the loss of Reputation, the loss of Preferment, the loss of Life; so some have found in quitting their corrupt Opinions, but the promise is, *He that loseth his Life for my Name, shall find it*, Matth. 10. 39.

9. From hence naturally results the interpretation of our Text, [*But he himself shall be saved, yet so as by Fire,*] that is, by yielding to these Convictions, and quitting his false Opinions, even as when a mans House is on fire, if he leaves his Goods, leaps out of the Window, and hastes away, he may save his own person with the loss of the Rest; but if he obstinately resist the fire, in zeal to save his Substance, he may perish himself: In like manner, if when this Spiritual Fire do's fall from Heaven upon our spiritual Hay and Stubble, we suffer it to prey there-upon, and content our selves to escape with our own Lives, giving up these Idols of our Hearts, and inclining our selves to embrace Gods Revealed Truths, we may save our Souls with some little scorching. But if we go about to quench this Fire, and suppress its Light, with resolution to save this pitifull stuff; we may possibly preserve that, but more than hazard the everlasting burning of our own Souls by it. *For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the Truth in unrighteousness; and to them that are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish will God repay on every Soul of them.*

Rom. I. 18.

And this I suppose is the genuine meaning of the place.

Obj. But our Adversaries will be asking, What Pope, what Council sayes so? by what Authority will we inforce their receiving of this sence?

*Ans.* To which I answer in two particulars:

1. I note the Commentaries of Popes and Councils, however good they be at it, are very rare things, and come not to every ones hands; one may guess them choyse Jewels, that they keep them so close; though they are a spightfull sort of Folks, if they onely know the Mind of God, that they so rarely apply themselves to open the Word of God.

2. I suppose there is *Authority* in the Text sufficient to bow our Minds to read it with meekness, and without prejudice; and being confident of this, I am less solicitous for the *Authority* of the Comment. For in our giving the sence of Scripture, we pretend not to have *dominion* over any ones Faith, that we should come with Serjeants and Bailiffs to arrest any ones consent without his due conviction to it; but it suffices us to propose with Fidelity, what on our best search and most serious prayer, seems likeliest to be the mind of God, and commend our selves and sence to *every mans Conscience in the sight of God*; and he that hath an Eye to see, let him see; but he that will flutter out all the light that is brought



brought to him, because it is not set on a Candle-stick that likes him, let him lie in darkness, if he affects it; but let him think of the blackness of darkness that may be reserved for him, as a just punishment of his despiht of Light. This has been thought a meet Recompence for such Errour.

*Ser. de dyp.  
& mund.*

Briefly then, as I promised, to improve this genuine sence,

Improve-  
ment.

1. By way of *Exposition* of Protestants Charity, wherein Papists much glory: Even We say they hold that they may be saved; We doe; but observe in what Cases: 1. In case of *invincible* Ignorance; and thus we hope well of many a devout Soul that dyed in their Communion, in the *night* of Popery, and had not Means or Opportunities to know better; their walking in all known Duty, and Repenting even of unknown iniquity, might commend them to Gods infinite mercy; but still this is onely our Charity, a Relyance on which, except we had better Judgements than they think we have, makes not for their safety. 2. In case of their Reformation in compliance with after-conviction; and thus we have like hope of *Turks* and *Pagans*, and this I am apt to think is almost generally expected, since the *day* of Gospel Light has begun to dawn, and much more as it grows brighter and brighter, and its beams dart hotter and hotter upon their Consciences: Let the Learned of them especially look to it, for however it goe with the simpler sort, that are so of Necessity, they will hardly escape, Persons and Works too; but if they abide together, now the *day* of the Lord is begun, and his Fire goes forth, they are like to be burnt up, and perish together. And it is not our Charity, nor (may be) Gods Mercy, that will relieve them, while Christs Merit, in despiht of all the Convictions of his Spirit, is thus slighted by them.

2. By way of *Call* to ingenuous Papists, to close with this way that is discovered for their Salvation, by quitting their strawy and wooden Superstructions, and giving up all their vain Inventions to their *first Conviction*; I would not have them prevent it, nor delay upon it; it is dangerous abiding in *Babylon*, when it is *day*, retaining the works of darkness, when it is light; when you do hear Gods Call, (and hearken for it) *Come out from amongst them, lest ye partake of their Plagues*: or to apply what was said to *Lot*, *Gen. 19. 17. Escape for your life, look not behind you, neither stay in all the plain, escape to the Mountains, lest you be consumed.*

Rev. 18. 4

3. By way of *Caution* to unwary Protestants, that (may be) hold the Foundation; look also to the Superstruction, take heed of strange and uncouth Opinions, and when you have imbibed them, be not over-tenacious of them, but give them up streight to Conviction, and stand not on the loss of Reputation, the quitting them may be the onely means of thy Salvation. For though there may seem no great evil in thy Opinion, thy obstinacy in adhering to it, when sufficient Light is given to see the

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folly

folly of it, may in continuance become the Sin against the Holy Ghost, that will never be forgiven.

Conclusion. To conclude; I read, *Act. 19. 19, 20.* Of many that had used curious Arts, which brought their Books together, and burnt them before all men, and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of Silver, so mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed. A remarkable instance indeed of the power of the Word: That Scholars should be wrought on to burn their Books, their Books of curious Arts, that got them probably their Credit; their Books of such a value. And the truth on't is, to accommodate our present case hereto; mens own Notions and Fancies are dear to them, when no outward advantage follows them, [ *Qui velit ingenio cedere rarus erit,* ] but much more when their Interests are twisted with them: Yet methinks, their Souls should be much more precious; and for their sakes, I beseech all concerned in the former charge of foolish Builders, that they cast away their Idols of Silver and of Gold, to the Bats and to the Moles; and I beseech God in the behalf of Rome, and all that partake with it in its unmeet and unworthy Superstructions, though on the common Foundation; that on the warm Application of the Word, they may separate from their works, lest as the fire grows hotter, they be consumed with them. A blessed Bonfire it would be, to see their Works all burning, and therein blessed, as it would tend to their Souls saving. But oh! my heart mis-gives me; if Gods Word so far prevail for their Conviction, what means that crackling Noyse I hear, of Fire and Brimstone prepared for their Destruction? *Rev. 17. 16. & ch. 18. v. 8.*

Cease frightening one another with your Purgatory flames, that are but imaginary; and fly the Fire of Gods Wrath, kindled at his Jealousie, that is like to prey upon you unto all Eternity.