

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
PROTESTANTS

OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

BY

CHARLES BUTLER, ESQ.
OF LINCOLN'S INN.

“ I look upon my Roman Catholic Brethren as fellow subjects, and fellow Christians, believers in the same God, and partners in the same redemption. Speculative differences in some points of faith, with me, are of no account: They and I have but one religion,—the religion of Christianity: Therefore, as children of the same Father,—as travellers in the same road,—and seekers of the same salvation, why not love each other as brothers? It is no part of Protestantism to prosecute Catholics; and without justice to the Catholics, there can be no security for the Protestant Establishment; as a friend, therefore, to the permanency of this Establishment, to the prosperity of the Country, and the justice due to my Catholic Brethren, I shall cheerfully give my vote, that the Bill be committed.”—Extract of the Bishop of Killala's Speech in the House of Lords, 13th of March 1793, on the Bill for the Relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects.

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A D D R E S S

To the Protestants of Great Britain and Ireland.

IN the last Sessions of Parliament, the House of Commons came to a Resolution, that "the House would early in the next Session take into its most serious consideration the Laws affecting His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects in Great Britain and Ireland, with a view to such final, conciliatory adjustment, as might be conducive to the peace of the United Kingdom, stability of the Protestant Establishment, and the general satisfaction and concord of all classes of His Majesty's subjects."

Encouraged by this Resolution, the Roman Catholics of England and Ireland intend presenting immediately separate Petitions to each House of Parliament, "for a repeal of the penal and disabling Statutes, which still remain in force against them."

In the mean time they observe with great concern, and surprize, that attempts are made to prejudice the Legislature against their application. Many erroneous, artful, and inflammatory publications of this tendency, have been actively and extensively circulated. The charges brought in them against the Roman Catholics, are of the most serious nature. The object of this Address to you, is to answer these charges, and to state to you, succinctly, the grounds of the intended application of the English Roman Catholics to the Legislature for relief. The greatest part of what is intended to be said in the Address will apply, in great measure, as much to the situation of the Irish and Scottish, as to the situation of the English Roman Catholics: but as the penal codes of Ireland, Scotland, and England, in respect to Roman Catholics, are very different, it has been thought advisable to confine the present Address to the case of the English Roman Catholics only.

I.

IT is generally represented in the publications of which we complain, that the English Roman Catholics *labour under no real grievances*; and that, if all the remaining penal laws against them were repealed, *the number of those, who would be really benefited by the repeal, would be too insignificant to make their relief an object of Legislative concern.*

But this representation is altogether erroneous—the English Catholics labour under many severe penalties and disabilities: their whole body is affected by them, and would be essentially benefited by their removal.

1st. By the 13th Charles 2d, commonly called the Corporation Act, their whole body is excluded from offices in cities and corporations.

2d. By the 25th Charles 2d, commonly called the Test Act, their whole body is excluded from civil and military offices.

How injurious these Acts are, both to the public and to the individuals on whom they operate, appeared in 1795; in which year, during the then great national alarm of invasion, Lord Petre, the grandfather of the present Lord, having, with the express leave and encouragement of Government, raised, equipped, and trained, at his own expence, a corps of 250 men for His Majesty's service, requested that his son might be appointed to the command of them. His son's religion was objected, his appointment was refused, and another person was appointed to the command of the corps. You cannot but feel how such a conduct tended to discourage the Catholics from exertions of zeal and loyalty. But the noble Family had too much real love of their country to resile from her service, even under these circumstances. His Lordship delivered over the corps, completely equipped and completely trained, into the hands of Government, and his son served in the ranks. Surely you cannot think that laws, which thus tend to alienate the hearts, and paralyze the exertions of those who, in the hour of danger, thus wished to serve their country, are either just or wise.

3d. By the 7th and 8th of William 3d, ch. 27. Roman Catholics are liable to be prevented from voting at elections.

4th. By the 30th Car. 2d. s. 2. c. 1. Roman Catholic Peers are prevented from filling their hereditary seats in Parliament.

5th. By the same Statute, Roman Catholics are prevented from sitting in the House of Commons.

6th. By several Statutes, Roman Catholics are disabled from presenting to advowsons, a legal incident of property, which the law allows even to the Jew.

7th. Though a considerable proportion of His Majesty's fleets and armies is Roman Catholic, not only no provision is made for the religious comforts and duties of Roman Catholic soldiers and sailors, but, by the Articles of War, they are liable to the very heaviest pains and penalties for refusing to join in those acts of outward conformity to the religious rites of the Established Church, which a Roman Catholic considers to amount to a dereliction of his faith. By the Articles of War, sect. 1. a soldier absenting himself from divine service and sermon, is liable, for the first offence, to forfeit 12d. and for the second, and every other offence, to forfeit 12d. and to be put in irons. By the same Articles, sect. 2. art. 5. "If he shall disobey any lawful command of his superior" (and, of course, if he shall disobey any lawful commands of his superior Officer to attend divine service and sermon) "he shall suffer death, or such other punishment as by a General Court-Martial shall be awarded."

In the last Parliament, it was shewn, that a meritorious private, for refusing (which he did in the most respectful manner) to attend divine service and sermon according to the rites of the Established Church, was confined nine days in a dungeon on bread and water.

The Roman Catholics acknowledge with gratitude, the virtual suspension of these laws, in consequence of the Orders recently issued by His Royal Highness the present Commander in Chief, and the facilities which they afford for enabling the Roman Catholic soldiers to attend their own religious worship; but they beg leave to observe, that these humane regulations still want the firm sanction of law, and therefore, to a certain extent, are still precarious: and are not *always* attended to.

8th. In common with the rest of His Majesty's Subjects, the Roman Catholics contribute to the religious establishment of the country; they have also to support
their

their own religious functionaries; and thus have a double religious establishment to defray. Of this, however, they do not complain; but they think it a serious grievance that their own religious endowments are not legalized like those of the Protestant Dissenters.

In hospitals, workhouses, and other public institutions, the attendance of the Ministers of their own communion is sometimes denied to the poor of the Roman Catholic Religion, and the children of the Roman Catholic poor are sometimes forced into Protestant schools under the eyes of their parents.

II.

SUCH, fellow subjects, is the particular operation of the principal laws still remaining in force against your English Catholic brethren.—The *general effect* of them is, to depress every member of the body below his legitimate level in society.

Even in the very lowest order of the community, some situations conferring comfort, emolument, or distinction, are open to the individuals of that class, and in proportion as the several classes of society rise into importance, these situations are multiplied. From all of them the law excludes the English Catholic. This effectually places him below his Protestant brethren of the same class, and makes the whole body in the estimation of the community a depressed and insulated cast.

This the Roman Catholics severely feel; but it is not by its substantial effects alone that they feel their depression. Some avenues of wealth are still open to them—none to honours or distinctions. Thus, thousands of these possibilities, the prospect and hope of which constitute a large proportion of the general stock of human happiness, are peremptorily denied to the Roman Catholics. No hope of provision, of preferment, of honours, or dignity, cheers their souls or excites their exertions. A Roman Catholic scarce steps into life when he is made to feel that nothing which confers them is open to him; and however successful his career may have been, it seldom happens that his success has not been, on more than one occasion, either lessened or retarded by the circumstance of his having been a Roman Catholic.

Here then our Protestant countrymen are called upon
to

to place themselves in our situation; and to reflect, what their own feelings would be, if, from a conscientious adherence to their religious principles, they belonged to a class thus legally degraded. How often would they substantially feel the effects of this degradation? How many of their hopes would it destroy? How many of their projects would it ruin? Surely a Petition to the Legislature from any portion of His Majesty's subjects, for the removal of such a woe, is entitled to the sympathy and aid of every other portion of the community.

III.

WE are sometimes told, that *however the repeal of the laws complained of by the Roman Catholics would benefit them, it would confer no real benefit on the State*; and that, as no alteration of law should take place, unless it promotes the general welfare of the State, the laws complained of should remain in force.

But we beg leave to submit to the consideration of our countrymen, that the whole kingdom would be essentially served by the repeal of the penal laws remaining in force against His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects. On this head the writer of these pages requests your particular attention.

Two-thirds of the population of Ireland, and no inconsiderable proportion of the population of England, is composed of Roman Catholics. It is obvious that the feelings of this large proportion of the community are wounded, in the highest degree, by the penal and disabling laws to which they are subject; and that they consider themselves highly injured, insulted, and degraded by them. Now, must it not be beneficial to the State, that this extensive feeling of insult, injury, and degradation, should be healed? Do not wisdom and sound policy make it the interest of the State, that every circumstance which leads this injured, insulted, and degraded, but numerous portion of the community, to think that any new order of things must end their injury, insult, and degradation, and is, therefore, desirable, should be removed as soon as possible? Surely the removal of it must be as advantageous to the State, as it will be advantageous and gratifying to the persons individually benefited by it.

But this is not the only circumstance which would make the repeal of the penal laws a general benefit to the

the State. Again we request you to consider the immense number of His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, and the great proportion which it bears to the rest of the community. What a proportion of genius, of talent, of energy, of every thing else, by which individuals are enabled to distinguish themselves, and benefit and elevate their country, must fall to their share!—But all this, for the present, is lost to you, in consequence of the penal codes. Is the subtraction of this prodigious mass of probable genius, talent, and wisdom, from the general stock, no detriment to the State? Surely it is a national loss. Thus while the penal code harasses the individual object of its infliction, it contracts and paralyzes, to an amazing degree, the strength, powers, and energies of the whole community.

IV.

IT is alleged, that the Roman Catholics of this kingdom enjoy the most full and liberal Toleration; and that Toleration is the utmost favour, to which any non-conformist to the religion established by law can reasonably aspire.

To this, we beg leave to answer, that Toleration, rightly understood, is all we ask for by our Petition. But what is toleration, when the word is rightly understood? If, after a Government has adopted a particular religion, decreed its mode of worship to be observed in its churches, and provided for its functionaries, from the funds of the State, it leaves the non-conformist in complete possession of all his civil rights and liberties, the non-conformist enjoys a full and complete Toleration. But whenever the Government of a country represses other forms of religion, by subjecting those who profess them, to any deprivation or abridgment of civil right or liberty, toleration is at an end, and persecution begins.

This is too plain a position to admit of contradiction: the only question, therefore, is, Whether the pains and penalties to which the Roman Catholics are still subject by the laws in force against them, deprive them of any civil right or liberty?

To meet this question fully, I shall consider how far the Corporation Act, which excludes us from Corporations, and the Test Act, which excludes us from Civil and Military offices, can be justly said to deprive us of a
civil

civil right. I prefer placing the question on these Acts, because by their own confession, it is the strongest hold of our adversaries, and because, in the discussion of that question, thus propounded, I shall advocate the cause of the Protestant Dissenters as much as our own.

Our common adversaries contend, that the exclusion of Non-conformists, by the Test and Corporation Acts, from honourable and lucrative offices, is not a punishment, and therefore is not intolerance.

But before the enactment of those statutes, were not all the subjects of this realm equally eligible, by the common law of the land, to every honourable and every lucrative office which the State could confer? Is not eligibility to office a civil right? Does it not, therefore, necessarily follow, that every statute which deprived non-conformists of their right or eligibility to office, deprived them of a civil right, and was therefore penal? If Roman Catholics had been in possession of these offices, and deprived of them in consequence of their adherence to their religion by the statutes in question, some persons might have contended for the wisdom of the statutes, but none could have contended that they were not, highly penal. But whatever difference there may be in the degree of penal infliction, there is none in the penal quality of those statutes, which deprive persons of offices, and those which deprive them of their prior legal eligibility to them. The right of possessing an office, the right of succeeding to it, and the right of eligibility to it, are equally civil rights. There is no difference in this respect between offices and landed property—the right to possess an estate, to succeed to it, and to acquire it, are equally civil rights. The justice or policy of these laws is not now under our consideration—the simple question before us is, Whether eligibility to offices and election into corporations, were not by the common law the civil right of every Englishman, and whether his being deprived of it was not a penal infliction? It is impossible to deny it. This infliction reaches every description of non-conformists to the Established Church; their religion, therefore, is not tolerated—it is persecuted. On the policy, the justice, or degree of that persecution, there may be a difference of opinion; but that, in some degree at least, it is a persecution, it seems impossible to deny. Thus we seem to arrive at this unquestionable conclusion, that, in point

of fact, all non-conformists are persecuted. The difference between Roman Catholics and other non-conformists, is, that Roman Catholics are subject to pains and disabilities which do not affect any other description of non-conformists. The Roman Catholics, therefore, are the most persecuted of all.

Here then we close with our adversaries; we seek not to interfere with the Established Church, with her hierarchy, with her endowments, with her tythes, with any thing else that contributes to her honour, her comfort, or her security. Give us but toleration in the true sense of that much abused word, and we claim no more. By the Oath prescribed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, by the 33d of His present Majesty, the Roman Catholic swears—"That he will defend to the utmost of his power, the settlement and arrangement of property in that country, as established by the laws now in being; and he thereby disclaims, disavows, and solemnly abjures any intention to subvert the present Church establishment, for the purpose of substituting a Catholic establishment in its stead; and he solemnly swears, that he will not exercise any privilege to which he is or may be entitled, to disturb and weaken the Protestant religion, and Protestant government in that kingdom."

V.

BUT it is suggested, that though it should be conceded, that all other non-conformists to the Church of England, ought to be admitted to a free and complete toleration, the Roman Catholics should be excluded from it on account of their acknowledgment of the Supremacy of the Pope.

This admits of a very easy answer. The Roman Catholics certainly acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the Pope; but they deny his temporal authority. They acknowledge no right, either in the Pope, or in any Council, to interfere in any manner in temporal concerns, or to interfere by any mode of temporal power, in concerns of a spiritual nature. By the Oath prescribed to the English Roman Catholics, by the 31st of His present Majesty, we swear, that "we do not believe that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath, or ought to have, any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within the realm."

The Irish and Scotch Roman Catholic subjects of His Majesty take a similar Oath. The answers given by the foreign Universities to the questions proposed to them by the direction of Mr. Pitt, the doctrines laid down in all our Catechisms, and other standard books of authority, express the same belief. In the Oath taken by the Irish Roman Catholics, they swear, that "it is not an article of the Catholic faith, and that they are not thereby bound to believe or profess, that the Pope is infallible; or that they are bound to obey any order, in its own nature immoral, though the Pope or any ecclesiastical power should issue or direct such an order; but that, on the contrary, they hold it sinful in them to pay any regard to such an order."

It is said, that the Popes on several occasions have claimed and exercised the right of temporal power. We acknowledge it, and we lament it. But the fact is of little consequence; no Roman Catholic now believes, that either Pope or Council, or both Pope and Council acting together, have, or ought to have any right to interfere by any form or mode, either of temporal or spiritual power, in civil concerns; or to interfere by any form or mode of temporal power, in spiritual concerns. This the Irish, Scottish, and English Roman Catholics have sworn, and they act up to their oaths.

VI.

I PROCEED to another charge:—*It is asserted to be a tenet of our faith, or, at least, a received opinion among us, that the Pope or the Church has a right to absolve subjects from their allegiance to their Sovereign.*

But this doctrine has been most solemnly abjured by us, in the oaths which we have taken to Government. It is disclaimed by the opinions of the foreign Universities; and Pope Pius the VIth proscribed it, by his rescript of the 17th of June 1791.

VII.

THE same may be said of the *charge brought against us, of holding it lawful to kill any Sovereign or any private person under excommunication.* This doctrine is also disclaimed by us, in our oaths, as "unchristian and impious;" it is disclaimed in terms, equally strong, in the answers of the foreign Universities; and Pope Pius the VIth, in his rescript of 1791, solemnly declares such a murder "to be a horrid and detestable crime."

VIII. THE

VIII.

THE same answer may also be given to the charge, of its being a *tenet of our Church, that it is lawful to break faith with heretics*. In our oaths, we disclaim that doctrine also, "as impious and unchristian;" and the terms in which it is disclaimed in the answers of the foreign Universities, are equally strong. But, without entering further on the subject of this charge, we make this solemn appeal upon it, to the feelings and common sense of every reader of these pages:—Does not the single circumstance of our being, after the lapse of 200 years, petitioners to Parliament for the repeal of the penal and disabling laws to which we are subject, in consequence of our not taking oaths, the taking of which would, at once, have delivered us from all these penalties and disabilities, prove, beyond all exception and argument, that we do not believe the existence of any power which can dispense with the obligation of an oath? On this head I beg leave to add my own testimony—having, in almost every stage of life, lived in habits of acquaintance or intimacy with all descriptions of Roman Catholics; the young, the old, the literate, the illiterate, foreigners and natives, ecclesiastic and secular, I never knew one who did not hear the charge in question with indignation, and treat it as an execrable calumny.

But it is said, that the Council of Lateran assumed a right to temporal power, and that the Council of Constance authorized the violation of the safe-conduct granted to John Huss. Both those facts are positively denied by the Roman Catholics. This is not a place for discussing the point—but, what does it signify?—If the Council of Lateran claimed for the Pope, or itself, a right to temporal power, it did wrong; if the Council of Constance authorized the violation of the safe-conduct, it did infamously, and there's an end on't.

IX.

HAVING had frequent occasion to mention in these pages *the answers of the Foreign Universities to certain questions, proposed to them by the direction of Mr. Pitt*, the reader will probably wish to be better informed of the circumstances attending the transaction.

In the year 1788, the Committee of the English Catholics waited on Mr. Pitt, respecting their application for a repeal of the Penal Laws. He requested to

be furnished with authentic evidence of the opinions of the Roman Catholic Clergy, and the Roman Catholic Universities abroad, "on the existence and extent of the Pope's dispensing power." Three Questions were accordingly framed, and submitted to his approbation. As soon as it was obtained, they were sent to the Universities of Paris, Louvain, Alcalá, Douay, Salamanca, and Valladolid, for their opinions.—The Questions proposed to them were—

1. Has the Pope, or Cardinals, or any Body of Men, or any Individual of the Church of Rome, any Civil Authority, Power, Jurisdiction, or Pre-eminence, whatsoever, within the Realm of England?

2. Can the Pope, or Cardinals, or any Body of Men, or any Individual of the Church of Rome, absolve or dispense with His Majesty's Subjects from their Oath of Allegiance, upon any pretext whatsoever?

3. Is there any principle in the Tenets of the Catholic Faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping Faith with Heretics, or other Persons differing from them in Religious Opinions, in any Transaction, either of a public or a private nature?

The Universities answered unanimously—

1. That the Pope, or Cardinals, or any Body of Men, or any Individual of the Church of Rome, HAS NOT any Civil Authority, Power, Jurisdiction, or Pre-eminence, whatsoever, within the Realm of England.

2. That the Pope, or Cardinals, or any Body of Men, or any Individual of the Church of Rome, CANNOT absolve or dispense with His Majesty's Subjects from their Oath of Allegiance, upon any pretext whatsoever.

3. That there is no principle in the Tenets of the Catholic Faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping Faith with Heretics, or other Persons differing from them in Religious Opinions, in any Transactions, either of a public or a private nature.

Nothing can be more explicit than the Answers of the Foreign Universities—some of them express perfect wonder, that such questions should be proposed to them by a Nation that glories in her learning and discernment.

As soon as the opinions of the Foreign Universities were received, they were transmitted to Mr. Pitt. But the

the Roman Catholics wish it to be most distinctly understood, that it was for *his* satisfaction, not *theirs*, that these opinions were taken. Assuredly, His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects did not want the wisdom of Foreign Universities to inform them, that His Majesty is the lawful Sovereign of all his Roman Catholic subjects, and that by every divine and human law, his Roman Catholic subjects owe him true, dutiful, active, and unreserved allegiance.

The originals of these Questions and of the Answers to them, with the notarial authentications of them, have been produced in the House of Commons by Sir John Cox Hippisley. They are in the custody of the writer of these pages, and are open to the inspection of every person who wishes to inspect them.

X.

IT is also objected to the Roman Catholics, that it is *an article of their faith, or, at least, that they consider it to be lawful, to persecute Heretics for their religious opinions.* All this the Roman Catholics most explicitly deny, and they consider it is completely denied in the solemn disclaimers made by them in all their oaths, of the direct or indirect right of the Pope or the Church to temporal power; as, without temporal power, persecution cannot subsist.

They admit that many persons of their communion, both ecclesiastic and secular, have, at different times, been guilty of the crime of religious persecution; but they blame the conduct of those persons as severely, as it is blamed by their Protestant brethren.

They also plead a tremendous set-off. The massacre of Paris, on St. Bartholomew's day, was most horrid; but it had been preceded by the atrocities, full as horrid, of the Anabaptist Protestants at Munster. To the burnings in the reign of Queen Mary the Roman Catholics oppose the executions of Priests in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth, and the three first Princes of the House of Stuart: they apprehend, that more cannot be said against the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, than against the deprivation of 2,000 Presbyterian Ministers of their livings, by the Act of Uniformity. They also bring into account, Oate's plot; the sentence of death passed on Servetus for errors against the Trinity, through the influence of Calvin, his execution, and the justifi-
cation

cation of it by two of the principal pillars of the Reformed Church, Melancthon and Beza. Between those enormities it is not easy to strike a balance. But the Roman Catholics may justly ask, by what principle of justice, or by what fair course of reasoning, the Protestant is authorized to ascribe the instances of persecution, which he proves on Roman Catholics, to a principle of the Roman Catholic Creed, unless he allows at the same time, that the instances of persecution which the Catholic proves in the Protestant Church are equally attributable to some principle of the Protestant Creed. "Brother, brother (say two known characters on the stage) we have both been in the wrong."—Let us learn wisdom from them; let us no more upbraid one another with our common failings; let us forget and forgive, bury all past animosities in oblivion, shake hands, and be friends. This is the only rational mode of closing this—by far the most disgusting and disgraceful of all our controversies.

XI.

ANOTHER charge is brought against us by our adversaries, in consequence of the *Doctrines imputed to us respecting Sacerdotal Absolution*. We are said to believe that the mere absolution of a Priest, without any thing on our part, is a full remission of sin. In answer to this we shall only transcribe the following passage from the Book of Prayers for the use of Catholics serving in fleets and armies:—"You know, from the Catechism you have learnt, and the Books of Catholic instruction you have read, that the absolution of a Priest can be of no benefit to you, unless you be duly disposed to a reconciliation with your offended God by true faith, by a sincere sorrow for all your sins, by a firm resolution never to commit them again, and by a willingness to satisfy God and your neighbour also, as far as justice requires. Without those dispositions on your part; the act of the Priest would not be ratified in Heaven; you would be guilty of the profanation of the Sacrament of Penance, and provoke the indignation of the Almighty, instead of obtaining his mercy."

It is not a little remarkable, that a Canon of the English Church, in 1608, enjoining the Priest not to make known to any one what had been revealed to him, bears such a similitude to the Roman Catholic doctrine

doctrine on this head, that when it was produced by Sir John Cox Hippisley in the House of Commons, Mr. Wilberforce interrupted him, by saying, that it was a Canon, not of the English but the Romish Church, and expressed his astonishment when Sir John Hippisley shewed it to be one of the most recent Canons which had been formed for the government of the Established Church.

XII.

ONE of the objections most strongly urged against the Roman Catholics, is *the tenet imputed to them, that none are saved out of their communion.*

I beg leave not to enter into a discussion of this objection, as it cannot be urged to us by a Protestant of the Established Church of England, as the Athanasian Creed forms a part of her Liturgy, and he swears that our doctrine of transubstantiation is damnable; or by a Protestant of the Established Church of Scotland, as the Protestants of that Church, in their Profession of Faith of 1568, say, that "out of the Church there is neither life nor everlasting happiness;" or by a Protestant of the French Huguenot Church, as in their Catechism, on the 10th article of the Creed, they profess, that "out of the Church there is nothing but death and damnation."

XIII.

THIS leads us to observe, that *passages are often cited from the works of Roman Catholic writers, which express, that the Roman Catholic religion has always been the same; and that those who say that the modern Roman Catholics differ in one iota from their predecessors, either deceive themselves or wish to deceive others.* These passages have been cited to prove, that whatever doctrine any Pope or any ecclesiastical body, or any writer of approved authority, has maintained or sanctioned in former times, is universally approved of by the modern Catholics. But this is a very unjust perversion of the meaning of the writers from whose writings these passages, or passages of a similar import, are cited. Not one of them approves of any act of temporal power which the Pope or any body of Churchmen have ever claimed in right of their spiritual character. In the cited passages, the writers mean to assert no more than that the faith and essential discipline of Roman Catholics

lies have always been what they now are. But they admit that the resort of the Popes, or of any other ecclesiastics to temporal power, for effecting the object of their spiritual commission, was not only no part of the faith or essential discipline of the Church, but was diametrically opposite to its faith and discipline. The passages, therefore, to which we allude, can never be brought to prove the position for which they are quoted. To urge them for such a purpose, is evidently a gross perversion of their meaning.

XIV.

I SHALL only notice, one further objection:—*The supposed immensity of the distance, between the Creed of the Established, and the Creed of the Roman Catholic Church; from which, it is inferred, that there always must be a spirit of religious discord, and never a communion of civil rights between the members of them.*—To this, the experience of mankind give a clear answer,—if you remove persecution, you remove discord. If you do not compel a person to enter your church, he will shake hands with you at the door of it: and many years will not pass away before you will meet at the same altar.

But, is the difference between the churches really as great as it is generally thought?—The divine precept, that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, is equally recognized by Protestants and Roman Catholics. They are equally willing to have their conduct, on every occasion of life, tried by that golden rule. What further can Government require, on the moral code of her subjects?

In respect to their religious code,—All Christians agree, 1st. that, there is one God; 2dly, that, he is a Being of infinite perfection; 3dly, that, he directs all things, by his providence; 4thly, that, it is our duty to love God, with all our hearts; 5thly, that, it is our duty to repent of our sins; 6thly, that, God pardons the truly penitent; 7thly, that, there is a future state of rewards and punishments, where all mankind shall be judged according to their works; 8thly, that, God sent his Son into the world, to be its saviour; the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him; 9thly, that, he is the true Messiah; 10thly, that, he worked miracles, suffered, died and rose again, as is related in the four gospels; and 11thly, that, he will, hereafter, make a second appearance on the earth, raise all mankind from the dead,

judge the world in righteousness, bestow eternal life on the virtuous, and punish the workers of iniquity.

In the belief of these Articles; all Christians, Roman Catholic, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, and Socinians, are agreed. In addition to these Articles, each division and subdivision of Christians has its own tenets. Now, let each settle among its own members, what are the Articles of Belief, peculiar to them, which, in their cool, deliberate judgment, they consider as absolutely necessary that a person should believe, to be a member of the church of Christ; let these Articles be divested of all foreign matter, and expressed in perspicuous, exact, and unequivocal terms; and above all, let each distinction of Christians earnestly wish to find an agreement between themselves and their fellow Christians:—the result of a discussion, conducted on this plan, would most assuredly be, to convince all Christians, that the essential Articles of religious credence, in which, there is a real difference amongst Christians, are, not very numerous; and that, if the reunion of Christians, be no more than a golden dream, the possible approximation to it is nearer, than is generally supposed.

And, after all, is the Reunion of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, absolutely impossible?—Bossuet, the glory of the Roman Catholic Church, and her ablest champion, thought it was not.—Towards the end of the 17th century, the Emperor Leopold, and several princes in Germany, conceived a project of reuniting the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches. In consequence of it, a correspondence took place between Bossuet, on the part of the Roman Catholics, and Molanus and Leibniz, on the part of the Lutherans. Molanus, was director of the Protestant Churches and consistories of Hanover; Leibniz, was a Member of the Aulic Council. In the exact sciences, he was inferior to Newton alone; in metaphysics, he had no superior; in general learning, he had scarcely a rival; in the theological disputes of the times, he was singularly conversant. The correspondence between these great men, on the subject of the Reunion, may be seen, in the *Œuvres Posthumes de Bossuet, Vol. I.*; *Nouvelle Edition des Œuvres de Bossuet, Vol. XI.*; *Leibnizii Opera, studio Lud. Dutens, Vol. I. & V.*; and the *Pensées de Leibniz, 2 Vol. 8vo.* Every word of the correspondence deserves the perusal, both of the Scholar and the

Divine. A short view of it is given, in the Account of the Life and Writings of Bossuet, recently published by the writer of these pages. It continued during ten years:—I shall transcribe from it, the two following passages, from the letters written by Bossuet to Leibniz. “The Council of Trent,” he says, in one of them, “is our stay; but, we shall not use it, to prejudice our cause. We shall deal, more fairly, with our opponents. We shall make the council serve for a statement and explanation of our doctrines. Thus, we shall come to an explanation on those points, in which, either of us imputes to the other, what he does not believe, and, on which, we dispute, only because we misconceive each other. This may lead us far: for, Molanus has actually conciliated the points, so essential, of Justification and the Eucharist. Nothing is wanting to him, on that side, but, that he should be avowed. Why should we not hope, to conclude, in the same manner, disputes less difficult and of less importance?” The letter, from which, the passage is extracted, was written in an early stage of the controversy: what might not be hoped from such a spirit of good sense and conciliation!—The letter, from which, the following passage is extracted, was written in the tenth year of the correspondence: and I feel, that every reader of these pages will lament, with me, that it is the last letter in the correspondence. “Among the divines of the Confession of Augsburg,” says Bossuet, “I always placed M. Molanus, in the first rank, as a man, whose learning, candour and moderation, made him one of the persons, the most capable I have ever known, of advancing the NOBLE PROJECT OF REUNION. In a letter, which I wrote to him, some years ago, by the Count Balatis, I assured him that, if he could obtain the general consent of his party, to what he calls his *Cogitationes Privatae*, I promised myself, that, by joining to them, the remarks, which I sent to him, on the Confession of Augsburg, and the other symbolic works of the Protestants, the work of the Reunion would be perfected, in all its most difficult and most essential parts; so that well disposed persons might, in a short time, bring it to a conclusion.”

XV.

SUCH, then, being the charges brought against the Roman Catholics by their adversaries, and such being the defence made by the Roman Catholics to them, will not every candid Protestant admit, that the unfavourable opinion, which some still entertain of the civil and religious principles of Roman Catholics, is owing, in a great measure, to prejudice?

But we have the satisfaction to find, that *the prejudice against us decreases rapidly*. With the mildness and good sense which distinguishes his respectable character, the Earl of Liverpool thus expressed himself, in his speech in the debate of the House of Lords, on the Petition presented by the Irish Catholics in 1810:—
“I have heard allusions made this night, to doctrines, which I do hope no man now believes the Catholics to entertain: nor is there any ground for an opinion that the question is opposed under any such pretence. The explanations which have been given on this head, so far as I know, are completely satisfactory, and the question as it now stands, is much more narrowed than it was on a former discussion.”—[See his Lordship’s Speech, printed and published by Keating & Booker.] How very little beyond this declaration, and a Legislative enactment in consequence of it, do the Roman Catholics solicit!

CHARLES BUTLER.

Lincoln’s-Inn, }
 Feb. 5, 1813. }

P. S.—Since this Letter was written, I hear, with infinite pleasure, that, by a legislative decree of the Cortes, the SPANISH INQUISITION IS UTTERLY ABOLISHED.—So perish every mode of Religious Persecution, by whom or against whomsoever raised!

I.

THE OATH AND DECLARATION prescribed by the British Parliament of the 31st of His present Majesty, AND WHICH IS TAKEN BY ALL ENGLISH CATHOLICS.

“ I *A. B.* do hereby declare, That I do profess the
 “ Roman Catholic Religion.
 “ I *A. B.* do sincerely promise and swear, That I will
 “ be faithful, and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty
 “ King George the Third, and him will defend to the
 “ utmost of my power against all conspiracies and
 “ attempts whatsoever that shall be made against his
 “ Person, Crown, or Dignity: And I will do my utmost
 “ endeavour to disclose and make known to His Majesty,
 “ his Heirs and Successors, all Treasons and Traiterous
 “ Conspiracies which may be formed against him or
 “ them: And I do faithfully promise to maintain, sup-
 “ port, and defend, to the utmost of my power, the
 “ Succession of the Crown; which Succession, by an
 “ Act, intituled, ‘ An Act for the further Limitation of
 “ the Crown, and better securing the Rights and Liber-
 “ ties of the Subject,’ is, and stands limited to the
 “ Princess Sophia, Electress and Duchess Dowager of
 “ Hanover, and the Heirs of her Body, being Protes-
 “ tants; hereby utterly renouncing and abjuring any
 “ obedience or allegiance unto any other person claim-
 “ ing or pretending a right to the Crown of these
 “ Realms. And I do swear, That I do reject and de-
 “ test as an unchristian and impious position, that it is
 “ lawful to Murder or Destroy any person or persons
 “ whatsoever, for, or under pretence of, their being He-
 “ retics or Infidels; and also that unchristian and im-
 “ pious Principle, that faith is not to be kept with
 “ Heretics or Infidels: And I further declare, that it is
 “ not an Article of my Faith; and that I do renounce,
 “ reject, and abjure the Opinion, that Princes excom-
 “ municated by the Pope and Council, or any authority
 “ of the See of Rome, or by any authority whatsoever,
 “ may be deposed or murdered by their Subjects, or
 “ any person whatsoever: And I do promise, that I will
 “ not hold, maintain, or abet any such Opinion, or any
 “ other Opinions contrary to what is expressed in this
 “ Declaration: And I do declare, that I do not believe
 “ that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign Prince,
 “ Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath, or ought to have,
 “ any

* any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority,
 “ or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this
 “ realm: And I do solemnly, in the presence of God,
 “ profess, testify, and declare, that I do make this De-
 “ claration, and every part thereof, in the plain and
 “ ordinary sense of the words of this Oath, without
 “ any Evasion, Equivocation, or Mental Reservation
 “ whatever, and without any dispensation already
 “ granted by the Pope, or any authority of the See of
 “ Rome, or any person whatever, and without thinking
 “ that I am, or can be, acquitted before God or man, or
 “ absolved of this Declaration, or any part thereof,
 “ although the Pope, or any other person or authority
 “ whatsoever, shall dispense with, or annul the same, or
 “ declare that it was null or void. So help me God.”

II.

THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS prescribed
 by the Acts of the Irish Parliament to IRISH
 ROMAN CATHOLICS.

THE first is the *Oath of Allegiance and Declaration*,
 prescribed by the Irish Act of the 13th and 14th of His
 present Majesty; and is taken by all Irish Roman
 Catholics.

“ I *A. B.* do take Almighty God, and his only Son
 “ Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, to witness, That I will
 “ be faithful and bear true Allegiance to our most gra-
 “ cious Sovereign Lord King George the Third, and
 “ him will defend to the utmost of my power against
 “ all conspiracies and attempts whatsoever that shall be
 “ made against his Person, Crown, and Dignity; and
 “ I will do my utmost endeavour to disclose and make
 “ known to His Majesty, and his Heirs, all Treasons and
 “ traiterous Conspiracies, which may be formed against
 “ him or them; and I do faithfully promise to maintain,
 “ support, and defend, to the utmost of my power, the
 “ Succession of the Crown in His Majesty’s family,
 “ against any person or persons whatsoever, hereby ut-
 “ terly renouncing and abjuring any obedience or alle-
 “ giance unto the person taking upon himself the stile
 “ and title of Prince of Wales, in the lifetime of his
 “ father, and who since his death is said to have assumed
 “ the stile and title of King of Great Britain and
 “ Ireland, by the name of Charles the Third, and to any
 “ other person claiming, or pretending a right to the
 “ Crown

“ Crown of these Realms: And I do swear, That I do
 “ reject and detest, as unchristian and impious to
 “ believe, that it is lawful to murder or destroy any
 “ person or persons whatsoever, for, or under pretence
 “ of their being Heretics, and also that unchristian and
 “ impious principle that no faith is to be kept with
 “ Heretics: I further declare, that it is no article of my
 “ faith, and that I do renounce, reject, and abjure, the
 “ opinion that Princes excommunicated by the Pope
 “ and Council, or by any authority of the See of Rome,
 “ or by any authority whatsoever, may be deposed or
 “ murdered by their Subjects, or by any person what-
 “ soever; and I do promise, that I will not hold, main-
 “ tain, or abet, any such opinion, or any other opinion,
 “ contrary to what is expressed in this Declaration:
 “ and I do declare, that I do not believe that the Pope
 “ of Rome, or any other Foreign Prince, Prelate, State,
 “ or Potentate, hath, or ought to have, any temporal or
 “ civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence,
 “ directly or indirectly, within this Realm: And I do
 “ solemnly in the presence of God, and of his only Son
 “ Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, profess, testify, and de-
 “ clare, That I do make this declaration, and every part
 “ thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words
 “ of this Oath, without any evasion, equivocation, or
 “ mental reservation whatever, and without any dis-
 “ pensation already granted by the Pope, or any autho-
 “ rity of the See of Rome, or any Person whatever,
 “ and without thinking that I am, or can be acquitted
 “ before God or man, or absolved of this Declaration,
 “ or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other
 “ person or persons or authority whatsoever, shall dis-
 “ pense with or annul the same, or declare that it was
 “ null and void from the beginning.

“ So help me God.”

III.

THE OATH AND DECLARATION prescribed
 by the Irish Act of the 33d of His present
 Majesty, and is taken by all Irish Roman
 Catholics, wishing to entitle themselves to the
 benefit of that Act.

“ I *A. B.* do hereby declare, That I do profess the
 “ Roman Catholic Religion.

“ I *A. B.* do swear, That I do abjure, condemn, and
 “ detest, as unchristian and impious, the principle that
 “ it

“ it is lawful to murder, destroy, or any ways injure any
 “ persons whatsoever, for or under the pretence of being
 “ a Heretic: And I do declare solemnly before God,
 “ that I believe, that no act in itself unjust, immoral,
 “ or wicked, can ever be justified or excused, by or
 “ under pretence or colour that it was done either for
 “ the good of the church, or in obedience to any
 “ ecclesiastical power whatsoever: I also declare, that
 “ it is not an Article of the Catholic Faith, neither am
 “ I thereby required to believe or profess, that the Pope
 “ is infallible, or that I am bound to obey any order, in
 “ its own nature immoral, though the Pope, or any
 “ ecclesiastical power, should issue or direct such order;
 “ but on the contrary, I hold that it would be sinful in
 “ me to pay any respect or obedience thereto: I further
 “ declare, that I do not believe, that any sin whatever
 “ committed by me, can be forgiven, at the mere will
 “ of any Pope, or any Priest, or of any person or persons
 “ whatsoever, but that sincere sorrow for past sins, a firm
 “ and sincere resolution to avoid future guilt, and to
 “ atone to God, are previous and indispensable requisites
 “ to establish a well-founded expectation of forgiveness,
 “ and that any person who receives absolution without
 “ these previous requisites, so far from obtaining thereby
 “ any remission of his sins, incurs the additional guilt
 “ of violating a Sacrament: And I do swear, that I will
 “ defend, to the uttermost of my power, the Settlement
 “ and Arrangement of Property in this Country, as
 “ established by the Laws now in being: I do hereby
 “ disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure, any intention
 “ to subvert the present Church Establishment, for the
 “ purpose of substituting a Catholic Establishment in
 “ its stead: And I do solemnly swear, that I will not
 “ exercise any privilege to which I am or may become
 “ intitled, to disturb and weaken the Protestant Religion
 “ and Protestant Government in this Kingdom.

“ So help me God.”

