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Bramshill?

John Golden
Nov 1965





A N
A T T E M P T

TO EXPLAIN THE
W O R D S

REASON,
SUBSTANCE,
PERSON,
CREEDS,

|| ORTHODOXY,
|| CATHOLIC-CHURCH,
|| SUBSCRIPTION, and
|| INDEX EXPURGATORIUS.

T^h WHICH ARE ADDED,

Some REFLECTIONS, MISCELLANEOUS
OBSERVATIONS, QUOTATIONS,

A N D

QUERIES on the same SUBJECTS.

By a Presbyter of the Church of ENGLAND

Τινὲς ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξελεῖσθαι ἐπαίρειαν ὑμῶν ΛΟΓΟΙΣ,
ἀνασκεινάζουτες τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.

AR xv. 24.

Ego, qui ubicunque quaero Veritatem, sive inter Orthodoxos
reperio, sive inter Heterodoxos, pariter amplector.

J. LOCKE LIMBORCHO.

L O N D O N,

Printed for the AUTHOR, M DCC LXXVII.

T O
His MAJESTY GEORGE III.
KING of GREAT BRITAIN,
FRANCE and IRELAND,
DEFENDER OF THE
[True, Primitive, Christian] FAITH, &c.
TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE
PEERS of GREAT-BRITAIN and IRELAND,
AND TO THE HONORABLE THE
COMMONS in PARLIAMENT assembled;
TO THE
CONVOICATIONS of ENGLAND and IRELAND,
AND TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the CHURCH of SCOTLAND;
To all his MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS in
EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA, and AMERICA;
And to ALL MANKIND:
This is most humbly INSCRIBED,
By the AUTHOR.

THE
P R E F A C E.

THE Author's design in the following sheets, is to shew what mighty evils have fallen upon Mankind by disputes amongst Christians about the use and meaning of certain words, hard to be understood and almost impossible to be explained, and thence to persuade men, if he can, to be more moderate in the use of these uncertain terms, or, at least, not to be so furious, as many have been, in compelling others to use them likewise.

As it is evident that the Protestant Religion, like Primitive Christianity, is

founded upon the natural inherent right that every man has to judge for himself, he hopes that no Protestant will think a man faulty because he may differ, in some sentiments, from the Religion which happens to be established in the Country he lives in, if he modestly assigns his reasons, and humbly proposes the means of reconciling all differences.

We are continually forming schemes for advancing the Protestant Religion and depressing Popery, because we are persuaded, that one promotes, and the other prevents, the happiness of Mankind. But we do not seem sufficiently to consider wherein *Protestantism* itself consists. All acknowledge, in general, that it consists in renouncing the Errors of *Popery*: and here they mention some particulars, as the Pope's Supremacy, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Indulgences,

gences, and others. But this is only striking at some branches while the Root of all the Evil, *the Spirit of imposing our own sense of things upon others*, is suffered to remain. But the true Protestant Principle, of allowing Private Judgment, would effectually extirpate this bitter Root, would give Human Reason its proper employment and restore the Word of God to its original dignity, by making it *alone* the Standard of Truth and Orthodoxy.

Protestants now see the follies they have been guilty of, for more than two hundred years past, in disputing, with great acrimony, amongst themselves, concerning the Outsides of Religion, such as Kneelings, Bowings, Standings, Crossings, Rings, Surplices, Hoods, Cowls, Altars and such like Articles. We all now acknowledge that these things

things *may* be where true Religion is ; and that true Religion *may* be very well without them. The great inconvenience of them is, that when they are once admitted, ignorant people look upon them as real parts of Religion, just as the untaught Indians looked upon the Cloaths of the Europeans, who first arrived in their Country, as real parts of their Bodies. Therefore the Author humbly thinks that the less of outward Ornaments there is in Religion, the less is it liable to be corrupted or misunderstood ; and that true and acceptable worship to God should always be represented to the People, as consisting intirely in Spirit and in Truth : And therefore that a plain Liturgy and Service might be composed, from the Holy Scriptures, in such general terms, as few Christians could have any Objections against : for it would seem, that
what

what is designed for general use should not be expressed in the distinguishing manner or language of any one party; otherwise there is laid the foundation of everlasting disputes and displeasure, so contrary to the designs of true Christianity. And if such a comprehensive Service were instituted, this would, still, leave every man to enjoy his own private opinions, and the whole Society be united in the Bonds of Mutual Love and Forbearance.

We all observe that the Protestant Religion gains but very little upon Popery. The reason seems to be, that the Papists are consistent with themselves, in resolving the whole of their Religion into the Decisions of their Clergy, whom they call the Church; whereas Protestants who profess to found all their Religion in the Right of Private Judgment

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to interpret Scripture, are not consistent with themselves in this profession. The Authority of their Clergy, whom they too call *the Church*, is supposed to determine on the true meaning of it amongst almost every Sect of them. So that the same arguments which they use against this assumed power of Popery, are often with a greater force, retorted upon themselves.

Several of our good Bishops see and feel this to be the case, and wish that they were not obliged to insist upon a Subscription and Declaration of an *unfeigned Assent and Consent* from the Clergy, to what has been authoritatively determined for them beforehand. And many of the Clergy complain, that they are thus precluded from the right of judging in these important matters for themselves, and are, by law, obliged to
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take up and defend the opinions of Men who were dead long before they themselves were born; and for no other reason, but because these were their opinions.

Almost every body sees that these things are wrong. Should not every body then strive to set them right? The undertaking is indeed arduous. It may be followed by the Loss of worldly honors and preferment, and by an enraged persecution of empaffioned zealots, with numbers of whom *every party* abounds. Therefore this Cause however glorious, is *prudently* declined. How few venture to speak out their real Sentiments! Archdeacon Orr, in the Preface to his Excellent Book on the Theory of Religion, has these remarkable words, ‘ To complete
 ‘ the Scheme which the Author had some
 ‘ time revolved in his mind, another

‘ Tract should be added to this, upon
 ‘ the External and Political State of Re-
 ‘ ligion. But tho’ he had made some
 ‘ progress in sketching out a general
 ‘ plan of such a work, yet as he fore-
 ‘ saw that the prosecution of it would
 ‘ lead him into a wide field of contro-
 ‘ versy, where very wise and good men
 ‘ would be found to differ greatly, he
 ‘ chose to drop the design; and will
 ‘ not hereafter probably resume it.’ But
 I heartily wish something may happen
 to make him alter his resolution.

The Author of these sheets hopes it
 will appear, to any one who shall read
 them, that he is not an enemy to any
 Man’s Person. He declares himself a
 Friend to all his Fellow Creatures: And
 indeed desires nothing in this world so
 much, as to promote their happiness, by
 uniting them in the strongest bonds of
 kindness and mutual Good-will.

A N

A T T E M P T

To Explain the

Words REASON, &c.

THE use of words is to convey the ideas of one person to another, and thus to carry on a communication of sentiments, which is the foundation of all intercourse among social beings. Words may be communicated to the eye by certain characters which we call writing; or to the ear by certain articulate sounds which we call speech. Now as these characters or sounds have not any thing in them which *naturally* express ideas, several people and nations have invented several kinds of them to carry on their necessary mutual commerce: and hence

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arises

arises the vast variety of writings and languages in the world, every nation, and almost every province, having somewhat peculiarly their own. Nay frequently the same word in the same country, and often by the same person, is used in a literal, metaphorical or analogical sense, which must make the meaning of it very different. No wonder then that men should frequently misapprehend each other in the use of these signs, which are so variable and arbitrary. Therefore it is quite necessary that in our disquisitions after truth when we make use of equivocal terms, such as admit of different meanings or may convey different ideas, we define and settle before-hand the particular determinate sense in which we use these terms. For if we sometimes take them in one and sometimes in another sense, we indeed retain the words, but we lose sight of the things which we pretend to express by them. For want of this method in proceeding, we see so many logomachies or strange disputes in the world arising from the different acceptations

acceptations of the same words; which disputes have occasioned more evil amongst us than perhaps any other cause. What lover of mankind, then, would not endeavour to put a stop to this mischief! Let us agree about the meaning of the words we use in controversy and I believe we shall soon be agreed in the things.

Of all the words in use none have occasioned more altercation than those mentioned in my title. What volumes have been written! what parties have been raised! what massacres have been committed! what wars have been carried on! what vast countries have been depopulated and laid waste! by disputes concerning the meaning of these words. And tho' men have been engaged in these disputes for fifteen hundred years and more, they do not know what they are disputing about to this day. Every party inscribes certain Cabalistic terms on their banners, and imagine there is something so *charming* in them that all mankind should range themselves under their protection. Nay

different parties make use of the same words, and every one says, They only have a right to use them; and their several votaries most firmly believe their several pretensions. Surely it would be happy for mankind then, if they would all agree to enquire into the true meaning of those enchanting words, that they may not any longer be imposed upon by them. None can be against such enquiry but those who think it their interest to keep up the disputes. It is undoubtedly for the happiness of all others to know the truth of these matters; for when once men come to see how they have been amused and imposed upon they will wonder how they suffered themselves to be wrought up to animosity against each other on these accounts; they will drop their contentions and treat one another with kindness and benevolence. Happy alteration! What pains or trouble can be too great to bring it about! and here I most ardently pray to the God of all consolation to pour out the spirit of peace and good will
upon

upon all mankind, and thereby promote his glory in the highest.

Of all the words in our language the meaning of the word REASON is the most ambiguous. Sometimes it is taken for that fitness in subjects to one another which is natural and independent on will and pleasure ; as when we say that such or such a thing is agreeable or contrary to the reason of things. Sometimes it is taken for human capacity or comprehension, as in that trite observation, That many things are *above* our reason which are *not contrary* to our reason : for the meaning of that sentence must be, if it has any meaning at all, that there are many things which we have no capacity to comprehend. And this indeed every man, who reflects ever so little upon human nature, must be fully convinced of. From which I would therefore just make this remark, that we can no more argue upon such subjects, than we can describe objects which are confessedly out of sight. Sometimes the word *reason* is taken for the cause or induce-

ment which hath prevailed upon us to act after this or that manner rather than any other, as, when we say, 'This was my reason for acting thus or thus. Sometimes it signifies the argument by which we prove any truth or detect any falshood, as, we say a thing must be true or false for this or that reason. Sometimes it signifies the human intellect or understanding *, as in this sentence, The Supreme Being expects to be served by us according to that portion of reason which he hath imparted to us. Sometimes by reason we mean the moral sense, moral virtue in general, or more particularly the virtue of justice ; as when we say, It is contrary to reason to make one law for ourselves and another for other people ; and thus

* Human intellect or understanding I take to be that faculty of the mind by which it perceives objects suitable to it, and which may be communicated to it by various means.

thus we call a man good who is governed more by reason than by appetite and passion. And sometimes it is taken for the power or faculty of judging or drawing a conclusion from premises, which is the great mean by which we arrive at knowledge. The difference between the knowledge of God and of his intelligent creatures is, that he knows and sees all things, with all their possible combinations and circumstances, by *intuition*, at one view. Whereas we come to our knowledge by slow degrees, and after many deductions of one thing from another. But as all good things come from God, we could not possibly have any knowledge at all unless he had been pleased to communicate to us some portion of his own divine knowledge, and made us to perceive and see by intuition, and at the first view, some certain truths that we call Axioms, Data, or self-evident principles, which, by the use of our reason or faculty of comparing and judging, should lead us on to other truths, and raise us step by step to larger views and more extensive

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knowledge.

knowledge. This is the highest and most proper sense of the word REASON: and this includes the intellectual, the moral, and the discursive powers of the mind: the two former as certain principles, the latter as the power of comparing objects which are thus presented to us with each other, and thereby finding out wherein they agree or disagree. This is what we commonly call Reasoning, or exercising our REASON. This is the characteristic of human nature, this distinguishes man from all the other animals of the earth, and makes him wiser than the beasts that perish. The very definition of a MAN is, that he is a rational or a reasonable creature. This is his glory: This is his honour.

From what hath been said then, We may observe that REASON is two fold, Intrinsic and Extrinsic. Intrinsic Reason is a complex idea, and comprehends the intellectual, the moral and the discursive powers of the mind. Extrinsic Reason is what affects these powers from without, and induces the intrinsic faculties

culties to act; and hereby all subjects, within our comprehension, become the objects of our mental reason. Every thing, from the bowels of the earth to the most distant stars, employs our reason. All the duties which flow from the various relations we bear to the great variety of beings around us, all come under the cognizance and examination of our reason. Yea the existence and attributes of the Supreme Being himself are found out and judged of by it. So extensive, so universal is human reason. It is, or ought to be, to every man, the test of truth and proper guide of life. But some will say, The particular revelation which God hath made of his will in the Holy Scriptures is the *only* criterion or standard of truth, and therefore must be our guide in all cases, whether it be agreeable to our reason or not. This objection seems to suppose that Divine Revelation *may* not be agreeable to reason, which is but a bad compliment to any revelation. Now this argument put into form stands thus, Whatever God

hath been pleased to give us as the criterion or standard by which we are to judge of truth should be our guide in all cases. But God hath been pleased to give us the Holy Scriptures as the criterion or standard of truth. Therefore they should be our guide in all cases. Very true. Let us now apply the same argument to the faculty of reason. Whatever God hath been pleased to give us as the criterion or standard by which we are to judge of truth should be our guide in all cases. But God hath been pleased to give us our reason as the criterion or standard of truth. Therefore it should be our guide in all cases. It is certain that our gracious Creator hath given us reason as well as revelation, and great part of the business of this faculty is to judge concerning revelation itself. For beside the true revelation we see in the world a great many writings or scriptures produced at several times by confident people, as revelations coming from God, which have most certainly been the impostures of men. We might give ma-

ny instances in the heathen world, in the grand Coran of Mahomet ; the decrees of many councils, the Rosary of St. Dominic, and a thousand legendary tales, amongst some who call themselves Christians. Now in this great variety and opposition of revelations how shall we distinguish the right one? They cannot all be true, because they contradict one another. We ought not to be imposed upon, and our reason *alone* is what can prevent it. Do not all parties pretend to *argue* in favour of their own system? and what shall determine concerning the force of their several arguments? Is not the appeal universally made to reason? Do not all agree in making that the *Dernier Refort* in all their disputes. And yet notwithstanding this, some people are so inconsistent as to argue against the use of reason itself, and bring arguments to prove that arguments should have no force in matters of religion. But such people do religion no service. They rather expose than defend it by such a conduct. We should be greatly disgusted

gusted at the absurdity of a man who would seriously advise us to close our ears in order to judge of a fine piece of music, or shut our eyes to behold a fine picture. No less absurd is the enthusiast who charges us not to use our reason in considering all points of religion, which are certainly the most reasonable subjects in the world for consideration. As the sight and hearing are faculties given us by our gracious Creator to perceive objects respectively suited to them, our reason, which is by far our most excellent faculty, must have its objects too. And therefore men have always reasoned not only concerning the objects of sense, but concerning the morality of actions, the world of spirits, yea concerning the being and perfections of the blessed God himself. By reason we perceive him in our own wondrous frame, and in the wise constitution of the universe. By this we see him and feel him on our right hand and on our left, and find ourselves encompassed every moment by his immediate presence. Since God hath

hath then blessed us with this excellent faculty, shall we disdain his gift, refuse to use it, and even pretend to give as a reason for this refusal, that it is extremely weak and liable to be imposed upon. But this is a great mistake, for there is scarce a common tradesman, tho' little versed in the artificial rules of logic but has sense enough to discover the fallacy of a sophism or inconclusive argument. But here lyes the great evil, that in exercising this faculty of reason, men often impose upon themselves, by pretending to understand things which they do not, and by proceeding in their disputations upon wrong principles; for in all reasoning it is necessary, there should be some Data, some acknowledged truths to build upon. If then thro' the prejudice of education, which is prejudging things before we have examined them, or thro' an unhappy obstinacy of temper, we take certain propositions for self-evident or sufficiently proved, which are really false, and argue upon them, the fault is not in our reason

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son but in our prejudice or obstinacy. A person of the church of Rome will argue thus—We ought to submit to the authority of God in matters of religion.—But the authority of a council of bishops is the authority of God—therefore we ought to submit to the authority of a council of bishops in matters of religion. This is just reasoning. The conclusion necessarily follows from these premises. Taking this conclusion then for granted they will build upon it, as upon a sure foundation, such a superstructure of argumentation as will demonstrate any thing they please. Nay they will prove that we are not to use our understanding, sense or reason at all in matters of religion. And this is no idle speculation, but what they have actually reduced to positive practice. For thus they address God in their daily devotions; ‘ Lord, ‘ I believe plainly and sincerely whatever thy ‘ Holy Catholic, Apostolic and Roman church ‘ teacheth me touching any of thy most divine mysteries and doctrines. Herein I utterly

‘ terly

terly renounce the judgment of my senses
 and all human understanding, and depend
 only on thy divine and inexplicable Omnipotence.’ Prayers in the manual before-
 mafs. And I heartily wish that such language
 had been used only by them, who thus acknowledge to the world that their mysteries
 and doctrines are not the objects of common
 sense, understanding or reason ; and boldly
 charge God with what protestants think absurdity and nonsense. The receiving this one
 position as a truth, that we are to give up our
 sense, understanding or reason, and implicitly to
 submit to the determination of others, hath
 been the occasion of all the impostures in religion amongst Pagans, Mahometans, and Christians
 of every denomination. For they
 would all persuade us that it is a compliment
 to Almighty God to renounce and give up
 the use of that faculty with which he hath
 dignify’d us, whereby *alone* we can distinguish truth from error, and conduct ourselves

as he would have us. And to whom are we to give it up? Why every sect and every enthusiast lays claim to this compliment, and they severally assert, with the highest confidence, that they *alone* are deputed by him to receive it: and they tell us that we are in the greatest danger indeed if we yield it up to any other but themselves. But I think a man *very* ill deserves the character of a rational creature if he gives it up to any of them at all. God hath given it to every man for his own use. But these designing people would make their own use both of him and it.

And now I think we may determine what Mental Reason is, and wherein the use and abuse of it consists. It is that faculty of the mind by which it perceives natural and moral objects, compares them with each other, and thence forms a judgment concerning them. The use of it is to receive these objects fairly before it and to judge of them honestly as they appear. The abuse of it is to renounce and disclaim it altogether, or suffer it to be perverted

verted and byassed either in receiving these objects or in forming a judgment concerning them: and this abuse may be committed by prejudice, by obstinacy, by worldly interest, by attachment to a party, or by an absurd pride which will not suffer a man to acknowledge that he was ever in the wrong. These are, every one of them, great occasions of the abuse of reason, and therefore every man who values himself upon being a rational creature should take all the care he can to keep himself clear of them.

I do not know whether I should take up my own or the readers time in mentioning two other acceptations of the word reason, because they evidently carry so much of insult and absurdity in them; and these are *reasons of state* and *reasons of great guns*. Persons who have the government of states intrusted to them, when they commit acts of perfidy, injustice and violence against their own subjects or against any foreign power, whatever may have been their real motive, they

they screen themselves, as they think, from reproach, by alledging, It was done for certain *reasons of state*. Which expression therefore is always taken in a bad, but never in a good sense, and signifies that something hath been perpetrated very unreasonable and contrary to the common rules of justice. And as for the reason of Great Guns, I must acknowledge it is very forcible, and often succeeds when other reasons fail. It was quite agreeable to the character of Lewis XIV. to inscribe on his canon *RATIO ULTIMA REGUM*, the last reason of kings: and I have heard that another prince of the same turn used to call his guns, *Suprema Lex*. Thus many of these mortals who are vested with sovereign power, and set up at the head of nations to govern the world by Reason and Law, employ this very power to overturn and destroy what it was designed to defend, and impudently and profanely call their brutal tyranny and violence by these divine names. And I suppose the gentleman took the hint from

from the aforefaid pious King of France, who wrote upon the gate of the Inquifition at Lisbon, *RATIO ULTIMA CLERICORUM.*

Of SUBSTANCE and PERSON.

THESE are words which to a common English reader may feem to carry fuch different meanings that he may perhaps wonder to fee them joined in the explanation of each other. But before he hath read out this Effay, I believe he will be convinced of the neceffity of confidering them together. They are originally Latin, and have been both fubftituted one after another as tranflations of the fame Greek word ὑπόστασις Hypoftafis. Therefore we will firft confider them as Latin words, and then how they came, as occafion required, to be both ufed inftead of the fame Greek word. The word *SUBSTANCE*, according to its Etymology, fignifies (exactly as the Greek word

word Hypostasis somewhat which stands under or supports something: and therefore the philosophers define it as a Being subsisting of itself. But as I proposed to explain the several meanings of the words in my title, I beg leave here just to observe that the word Substance is sometimes taken in a metaphorical sense, and then signifies closeness, compactness, solidity; as when we handle a well made piece of stuff, we say, It has good Substance in it. Sometimes it is taken in an analogical sense, and then it signifies a mans revenue, income or property; as we say of a wealthy person, That he is a man of Substance. For as Substance supports all the various modes of beings, so a man's property and estate supports all the various modifications of his expences. But let us return to its original and philosophic sense, as a Being subsisting of itself. The idea of a Being is the most general and abstracted idea we can form. And BEING by Philosophers is divided into Substance, and the qualities of Substance which they

they call Accidents or Modes. By these modes *alone* we have ideas conveyed to our minds of any objects whatsoever. But as it is impossible they should exist without Substance to support them, we are as sure of the existence of Substance as of modes. But what this Substance is, the most acute Philosopher, is at as great a loss to determine as the meanest peasant. We see but the outside and the actions of Substance, but what the essence or inward constitution of it is, we know not. We find in ourselves reason, will, love, hope and other mental powers, but are we not quite ignorant of the Substance in which these powers reside? The pen I am now writing with hath many constituent parts, the barrel, the pith, the plumage, all of different qualities and consistence: But can I say whether these several parts are of the same or different Substance? or even whether the ink be of the same or a different Substance from the pen? Sir ISAAC NEWTON hath offered it as a conjecture that all the original constituent

particles

particles of matter *may* be of the same Substance, and even of the same form; and that the vast variety we see in the world may arise from the different combinations and motions of these original particles. But even supposing this were proved, which is far from being the case, we are still at as great a loss as ever. For who could yet say, what is the Substance of these particles. We have no principles to go upon in an enquiry after a solution of that question. We are lost in the search, and therefore are forced to give it over as inscrutable. What Substance then is, in a philosophic sense, no man can find out: nor can perhaps the most exalted cherub in the highest heaven. The knowledge of this seems peculiar to the Deity who is self-existent, uncaused, original Substance, and from whom alone all other Substances emanate and proceed. It was the opinion of Spinoza that there is but one Substance in the universe, that it hath existed always and will exist for ever; and that the vast variety of beings in

it are only different modifications of this Substance. And this τὸ ἓΝ or one Substance he calleth *God*. This scheme of his, tho' supported with great subtilty and wit, is really so full of absurdities, that it is now most justly exploded. But he is thought to have taken it up from the abstruse and endless disputes which have been carried on in the world for very many centuries, whether the Son of God be of the same Substance with the Father: for he is supposed to argue thus with himself. If, according to the prevailing hypothesis, two distinct intelligent beings can be of one and the same Substance, why may not three! if three, why may not four! if four, why may not four thousand! and so on, any number, ad infinitum. This shews to what wild extravagancies men may be carried by admitting one wrong principle. Should we not then be extremely modest and cautious in arguing upon topics which we cannot have any idea of? what absurd disputes have been carried

carried on amongst Philosophers * and Christians of all sects and denominations concerning subjects which all acknowledge, at the same time, to be inexplicable! surely we had better never begin the dispute at all which we know before hand can never be ended. And *that* concerning Substance is surely one of these.

But since we can make nothing of Substance, let us try if we can succeed better in Person. This word according to its etymology originally signifies the Mask which was worn by the Roman players when they acted their parts upon the stage. These masks were painted in the several characters which these actors were to assume; and openings made in the mouth, thro' which the voice sounded to the audience. Hence, in a little time
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* Some alledging that the only Substance in the universe is matter, and others allowing of no Substance but Spirit.

the verb *personare* came to signify to imitate the actions or character of another man, and in this sense it is used in our own language even to this day. The noun came to signify the station of life any man appeared in; and agreeably to this, we say that an upright judge, like God, is no Respector of Persons; then the Human Body and its external qualities, which were continually represented in all their varieties on the stage; and then they made use of these expressions, a comely person, a tall person, an handsome person, &c. and then it came to be united to the qualities of the mind and a generous person, a worthy person and the like became very common Phrases. And sometimes it is used to signify an Individual of the Human Kind as endowed with some of these mental and corporeal qualities. But it was never applied to any other Species of Being till the latter end of the fourth Century when it was brought into the Christian Divinity to denote something, that remains still unintelligible, relating to the Deity, upon the following occasion. But

here I beg to be indulged in giving a short historical account of what I think is necessary to introduce this *occasion* properly. Some Centuries before the Birth of our Saviour, Alexander King of Macedon and his Successors, with their Grecian Armies, had conquered Asia, Egypt &c. and carried their Learning and Language into all these Eastern Countries. The Grecian Philosophy and polite Arts being thus introduced, came to flourish as much in some of these conquered nations as ever they had done at Athens itself. The Ptolomies founded noble Schools and a magnificent Library at Alexandria; and many Asiatic Princes did the like in their respective Dominions. The Romans, a little before our Saviour's Birth, had made themselves Masters of these Countries, which they found thus grecianized both in their Language and Manners. These Romans, surprized and delighted with the Elegance of the Greeks, soon polished themselves by it, and became Poets, Orators and Philosophers, intirely upon the Grecian Plan.

Thus

Thus these Arts were translated to Rome, and from thence diffused over the Western, as they had been before over the Eastern parts of the world. Things were in this situation when the Apostles were sent out to preach the Gospel. They found the world indeed immersed in Idolatry and Vice: But most people were used to reflect, to argue, and dispute. There were Philosophers every where. Thus was Mankind prepared for listening to the Doctrine of these new Preachers, and for examining the proofs that were brought to confirm it. The Consequence was glorious for Christianity. The more it was examined, the more it prevailed: And the most learned men of the world, in a few years, made public profession of it, and thought it their highest honor to declare themselves its most zealous Champions, even to the Death. What contributed very much to this glorious Event was an Institution of Philosophers, begun at Alexandria by Pota-mon, who had been a Platonic, just about the time of our Saviours Birth. This Sect.

was founded upon the most generous plan, of examining every opinion, by whomsoever it was proposed, and embracing the truth wherever they should find it. They culled out from every Philosopher what was excellent in him, and without confining themselves to any Master, or any Sett of Hypotheses they only proposed to examine all, and *choose* the best. Hence they took the name of *Ecleſtics*, or the *Chusers*. This was an excellent preparation for the Christian Religion, so that when the Gospel was preached at Alexandria, several of these Eclectic Philosophers embraced it, and having become Doctors amongst the Christians, founded the famous Christian Catechetical School of that City. The first who presided in it was Athenagoras. He was succeeded by Pantaenus and he by Clement of Alexandria, who expressly declares himself an Eclectic. And he was succeeded in this Employment by the great Origen. This Eclectic method spread itself from Egypt into all the Provinces of Asia and Africa. The Christians

tians were indeed confined in it somewhat more than the Pagans, but in time, they likewise came to take great liberties, by transplanting into their Religion several of the antient Philosophers Tenets. In morality they chiefly followed the Stoics, whose Precepts they found very agreeable to the Gospel. But, from the too good opinion they had of them, they followed them likewise in what was bad, in an austerity and severity much greater than Jesus Christ and his Apostles have required. This gave rise to the humor of placing much Religion in retiring into Desarts and monasteries, and abstaining from some sorts of food, either perpetually or at particular seasons. The Eclectics did not find that any of the Philosophers had written better upon the Divinity and Genii, the Soul and these things that do not fall under the senses, than Plato and his followers, and therefore they adopted very many of their notions in these matters. It was their opinion that the Genii, as so many Angels or Messengers, were employ-

ed by God in conducting the affairs of men; and this introduced amongst Christians the worship of Angels and departed saints. In Logic the Ecclesiastics preferred Aristotle before all others, and so came to employ the Distinctions and Subtilties of this Philosopher in explaining the Doctrines of our Holy Religion; and hence was introduced all that dark unintelligible metaphysical jargon into the Christian Theology which hath obscured its brightness, and made the clearest Truths become matters of the darkest litigation. Now it was that the abstruse Philosophic Terms of Substance, Essence and the like were brought into Christian Divinity; and as these could never be explained, Contentions about them were never to cease. So soon did our watchful Enemy sow Tares with the good Seed; and they have afforded him a most plentiful Crop of Mischief every Day since. St. Paul certainly foresaw this, when he advised the Colossians, Beware lest any man spoil you thro' Philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments,

rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. This Humor of Philosophizing soon shewed itself in a vast variety of Sects or Heresies which sprung up in the Primitive Church, all occasioned by departing from the Revelation of the Mind of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures, and forming, every one of them, Schemes of Belief according to their several notions in Philosophy; and hence St. Cyprian in his 67th Epistle says of the Heretic Novatian, who had been a Stoic Philosopher, that he retained more obstinacy and conceit from his worldly, than he had gained gentleness and peaceableness from his Christian Philosophy. The Greek Philosophers in their Metaphysical Treatises frequently made use of the words Hypostasis Substance, and Ousia Essence: but as they could not form different Ideas of them, they used them promiscuously for each other, which was still the occasion of much wrangling amongst them. But the first time these words were publickly offered amongst the Christians to explain their Doc-

trine was in the Year 270, at the second Council of Antioch, in which Paulus Samosatenus Bishop of that See was deposed, for saying that Jesus Christ was the Creature of God the Father. Some of that Council then proposed, and amongst the rest Paul himself, that Jesus Christ, should, by their Decree, be acknowledged as ὁμοούσιος of the same Substance or Essence with the Father. This occasioned much altercation amongst the Bishops, but it was at last carried in the negative, and this word was rejected as *productive of endless disputes*. The account which Dr. Cave gives us of this affair, from Athanasius, Basil and others, is very curious, and I have therefore inserted it at the bottom of this page. Disputes concerning

Ex Athanasio (De Synod. 708.) multi colligunt Samosatenum το ὁμοούσιος in Christo agnovisse. Verum non aliud eo loco dicit Athanasius quam Paulum ex detorto Catholicorum vocabulo Sophisticum argumentum contra Christi Divinitatem

cerning these words, were, we may easily imagine, carried on in private from this time. But in about fifty years they became very public. After the death of Achillas Bishop of Alexandria two of the Presbyters of that City, Arius and Alexander, were set up in nomination, by the Clergy and People, to succeed him. *Philostorgius* the Arian Historian

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rian

excogitasse; nempe nisi confiteremur Christum, ex homine Deum factum esse, sequeretur ipsum Patri esse *ὁμοῖον*, ac proinde tres esse substantias, unam quidem primariam, duas ex illa derivatas: *συμμετρικῶς* enim & crasso sensu vocabulum accepit, quasi in Essentia Divina, perinde ac in rebus corporeis usu venit, ut ab una substantia, altera, eaque diversa, derivetur. Quo circa ne hac voce hæretici ulterius abuterentur, silentio supprimendam censuerunt Patres Antiocheni; non quod Catholicum vocis sensum damnarent, sed ut omnem *sophistice cavellandi occasionem hæreticis praeriperent*, ut ex Athanasio, Basilio, aliisque abunde liquet.

Historia Litteraria. Sacc. Novat. Paulus Sam.

rian positively says that Arius had most votes, but that he generously and modestly declined it in favor of his Competitor. Be that as it will, Alexander became Bishop. At it was the Custom for every body there, we may easily suppose that He and Arius had attended the Philosophic and Catechetic Schools established in that City. Here they were early instructed in Philosophy as well as Christianity, and had got the common failing, viz. an Itch for harangueing and disputing on the most abstruse Subjects. It happened one Day that Alexander discoursing, in the presence of his Presbyters and the rest of the Clergy, on the Trinity, asserted that in the Trinity there was an Unity; Arius, supposing the Bishop to mean it in the * Sabellian Sense, contradicted him and

* Sabellius was an Egyptian Philosopher, and maintained that there was but one ὐπόστασις or Substance in the Deity, and that the Distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost proceeded from his different ways of manifesting himself.

and disputed against his assertion in this manner, that if the Father begat the Son, then the Son had a beginning of Subsistence, and consequently that there was a time when he was not a Son and therefore produced or made by the Father out of nothing. This Controversy, thus unhappily begun, engaged many persons on each side, and caused great disputes, especially at Alexandria, where the Bishop and Arius were looked upon as the Heads of the contending parties ; which occasioned Constantine the Great, who was the first Christian Emperor, to write a Letter to them, in which he blames them both, Alexander for propounding nice and subtil questions to his Presbyters, and Arius for returning answers concerning things *never to be thought of*, or if once thought of, to be *immediately stifled in the profoundest silence*. But this had no effect upon Alexander, who soon after convened a Council of Egyptian Bishops, and in it excommunicated Arius and several others, Bishops and Presbyters, who declared themselves

selves of his opinion. Arius then retired
 into Palestine and complained every where
 of the Bishop's severity. His Cause was
 heard and espoused by the Bishops of Asia,
 particularly by Eusebius of Nicomedia, Eu-
 sebius of Cesarea, and Paulinus of Tyre,
 who wrote to Alexander, intreating him to
 remit of his displeasure and restore Arius.
 This Alexander refused. Whereupon the
 next Year (323) the Asian Bishops who pro-
 tected Arius, held a Council in Bithinia,
 wherein they declared Arius Orthodox and
 worthy of the Communion of the Church.
 Thus Councils were held against Councils,
 and Bishops engaged against Bishops, in the
 fiercest animosities concerning opinions which
 wise men thought they had better have left
 undecided. The very next Year 324 Con-
 stantine sent Hosius Bishop of Corduba to
 hold another Council at Alexandria about
 this affair. Hosius, being a moderate man,
 did what he could to reconcile these con-
 tending parties, but finding all his endea-

vors ineffectual, he would decide nothing. These Contentions amongst the Christians raised such contempt of them in the Heathens of Alexandria that they exposed and ridiculed them in their public theatrical Plays and Entertainments. The good Emperor grieved at all this, resolved to put an end for ever to these disorders, and therefore the next Year 325 summoned a Council of Bishops from all Parts to determine this Controversy between Alexander and Arius. This Council met at Nice where these bold Champions came, each to defend his cause. This occasioned many tedious debates. Constantine then desired Eusebius Bishop of Cesarea, who was the most learned man of that time, to draw up a Creed or Confession to which they might all agree. He did so, and the Emperor was much pleased with his draught. But Alexander and his party were quite dissatisfied with it, for it wanted the word *ὁμοούσιος* of the same Substance with the Father. The Emperor thought the inserting this might put an end

to all altercation, and therefore recommended it to the Council to put it in, and it was done accordingly. But did this produce the Peace which the good Emperor intended? Soon, too soon he found that it had the most contrary effect: for the matter of the Dispute, which could never be determined, still remaining, both parties carried on the contention with so much violence and heat as soon raised a most destructive flame, which has continued burning in the Christian Church ever since; and will continue while the passions, the ignorance and the pride of men afford it fuel: for I think I may venture to say that the inserting that unintelligible word into the Nicene Creed, has, by a fatal concatenation, been the occasion of all the disputes which have arisen amongst Christians from that Day to this; as I believe will appear by going on a little further with the history of it.

Alexander had brought, in his train, to the Council a young Ecclesiastic of Alexandria named Athanasius, who by his forwardness

wardness and a ready knack at disputing, made a great figure in supporting the Opinions of his Patron: and Alexander dying, in a little time, Athanasius was chosen to succeed him, who, with the warmest zeal, opposed Arius and all his followers ever after. And now it was that Athanasius and Arius took the lead as the Chiefs in these fierce Contentions. But how shall I proceed in the dismal Story! O that we could *draw* an impervious Veil over all the dreadful Scenes that follow, and hide for ever from the Eyes of men those Excommunications, Imprisonments, Confiscations, Banishments, Insurrections, Murders, Massacres and Tortures brought on Christians by one another, for not understanding and professing what all parties acknowledged could not be understood. But since these things are so well known to the world that they cannot now be concealed, I will just relate so much of them as is necessary to bring me to my proposed point, viz. to shew how the word PERSON came to be brought into these disputes.

Neither in the Council of Nice, nor at any time before, had there any proposal been made to acknowledge the Consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son. On the contrary, several Bishops who subscribed the Nicene Creed, and particularly the Great Eusebius Bishop of Cesarea, after this expressly calls the Holy Ghost one of the Creatures that were made by the Son. But Athanasius that he might complete his Trinity, was the first who ever asserted that the Holy Ghost was of the same Substance with the Father and the Son, and introduced the Phrases of *μία ἕσθια* one Essence, and *τρῖς ὑπόστασις* three Substances, which strange language gave great offence even to many of his own party. He behaved himself so indifferently, to say no worse, in the exercise of his Episcopal office at Alexandria, that many complaints were soon brought against him: and in the Year 331 he was cited, by the command of the Emperor, to appear before a Synod of Bishops to be held at Cesarea in the Year 334, to answer these complaints.

plaints. But he did not obey this Citation. Upon which the next Year 335 Constantine ordered a Council to be held at Tyre, and Athanasius to be cited before them afresh, to clear himself, if he could, of the Crimes laid to his charge; and he wrote to Athanasius, at the same time, that he should not fail to come there; and expressed himself in such terms as shewed that he was highly displeas'd with his conduct. And here I must observe that all the Accounts we have of Athanasius from this time are taken from his own writings and those who have copied from them: for *Philostorgius* and other Historians of the Arian Party have been either destroyed, or else lye now so closely secreted and concealed in the present Libraries, that we only see Athanasius's Actions as represented by himself, always in the best light, and his Prosecutors always in the worst. I shall therefore now only mention a few bare matters of fact which he himself hath inform'd us of and leave the Reader to make his own reflexions upon them. He came to
the

the Council of Tyre attended by a great number of Egyptian Bishops in his train. Here he was accused of many Crimes, of which he says he was quite innocent; but acknowledges that the Council were so cautious of passing a rash sentence against him, that they sent a Committee of themselves all the way into Egypt, to enquire, upon the spot, concerning some facts which were said to have been committed there. He says indeed this Committee was composed of his Enemies and that he withdrew from Tyre before they returned, and acknowledges that, upon their report to the Council, he was condemned and deposed from his Bishopric. He fled to Constantinople and desired to be heard by the Emperor; but He would not see him. And all he could obtain was, that Constantine wrote to the Bishops of the Council to come to Court to give him a particular Account of this whole affair. Upon this they sent six Bishops to lay their proceedings before him: and when they came, they accused Athanasius of other Crimes beside

beside those that were judged in the Council. All which exasperated the Emperor to so high a Degree that he immediately banished him to Triers a City in Germany ; and here he remained till the Emperor's Death. But while the Council of Tyre was sitting, Constantine ordered the Bishops who composed it to repair to Jerusalem, to the Dedication of a magnificent Church which he had erected there. When they had performed this office they held a Council in that City, in which they absolved Arius and his followers from the Sentences which had been pronounced against them at Alexandria and elsewhere, received them into the Communion of the Church, and wrote a Synodical Letter to the Egyptians and Alexandrians wherein they inform them, that they had received Arius and his party, since they were satisfied that their Doctrines were *very Orthodox*.

Constantine, soon after the Council of Nice had shewn great countenance to the Arian

rian party, and in the Year 337 was baptized by Eusebius Bishop of Nicomedia, who had all along been the chief defender of Arius and his opinions. Upon this Emperor's Death, the Empire, according to his Will, was divided amongst his three Sons, who, by mutual agreement, recalled all the Bishops that had been banished by their father to their several Sees; and then Athanasius returned to Alexandria. But he was soon after accused by his Enemies to Constantius the Emperor of stirring up sedition in the City, of imprisoning and severely using many innocent people, and of selling, for his own use, the Corn which the Emperor had given to be distributed amongst the poor and widows of Alexandria. Upon these accusations Constantius wrote a very sharp Letter to Athanasius, who thereupon got together a Synod of Egyptian Bishops in the Year 339, and they all testified for Athanasius's innocence in these particulars. But this did not preserve him from prosecution:

for

for the Emperor called a Council at Antioch in the Year 341 to judge of Athanasius's Case : and the first thing the Council did was to Depose him again, and Consecrate Gregory of Cappadocia Bishop of Alexandria in his stead ; and they then made and subscribed a New Creed, in which the offensive word (Homoousios) was quite left out. Athanasius now finding his case hopeless—Deprived of his Bishopric, and another in possession of it, formed a most desperate resolution, unworthy of a Christian Bishop, and which hath had the most fatal Consequences. He appealed from the Council of Antioch and the Emperor, to Julius Bishop of Rome—fled to that City, and put himself under the protection of that Prelate. Julius highly delighted with this Event, as it was an acknowledgement that his Jurisdiction is above all others, most gladly received him and his Appeal. And this laid the foundation of the Papal Supremacy, upon which hath been built such a Superstructure of Dominion, of Doctrines and Worship, as hath

hath astonished the thinking world ever since. Now Athanasius, was highly careffed, and dignified with the Title of Saint. His Opinions must be defended to give the better pretext for defending his person ; and so the Athanasian Homoussian Doctrin, which had been condemned by the Eastern Bishops, at the same time with Athanasius himself, must be taken up at Rome as the great pretence for defending the much injured Saint.

Thus things stood in the Year 347, when the Emperor Constans who governed the West, and his Brother Constantius who ruled in the East, vastly scandalized at the unchristian disputes which had prevailed so long in the Christian Church, resolved to join in putting an utter end to them ; and for this good purpose they summoned a Council of the Bishops from both their Dominions, to be held at Sardica a City in Illyricum. And hither they all repaired. And now I believe the Christian Reader will expect that these good and learned men, being called together

ther for so good a work, encouraged and supported by the good Emperors, will certainly apply themselves to heal those dangerous wounds which former dissensions had made. How they did this will now appear. The Eastern Bishops, who had deposed Athanasius and some others, proposed, before they would go upon any other business, that the Sentences which they had passed upon these Offenders should be acknowledged by the whole Council as just, and *they* be excluded from all Ecclesiastical Communion. The Western Bishops, most of them strongly attached to Julius Bishop of Rome, refused to agree to this proposal. The Eastern Bishops, perceiving by this refusal that their Authority and Jurisdiction were to be called in question by the Pope and his party, retired from the City of Sardica to Philippopolis in Thrace, and there held a Council, which they called indeed the Council of Sardica, because they had been summoned to that place, and the Council began there.

And

And from Philippopolis they wrote a Letter, which they dated from Sardica, addressed to all the Bishops of the world, in which they exclaim against Athanasius and some others, and represent them as the wickedest rogues living. They declare that they cannot join with the Bishops in the West because they had received into their Communion those Bishops who were deposed in the East : and upon account of this violation of their Authority they excommunicated several of the Western Bishops, and amongst the rest Hosius the President of the Council, and Julius Bishop of Rome. They complain that the whole world was turned upside down, and the whole Church disturbed for the sake of one or two turbulent wicked fellows. They accuse the Bishops of the West of Arrogance ; and severely reprove them for endeavoring to establish a new Law, by taking the liberty to examine over again what had been determined in the East before. They observe that the ancient Discipline of the Church is contrary to this Practice ; and that

that the Judgments given in the East ought to be confirmed in the West, as those of the West were received in the East: and they prove this Rule by several examples. Lastly they add their Confession of Faith, without the word *Homoousios*. This Epistle is inscribed particularly to Gregory Bishop of Alexandria, to Amphion of Nicomedia, some others, and to all the Bishops of the world. While these things were transacting at Philippopolis, the Western Bishops at Sardica were not idle on their part. They determined that no alteration should be made in the Creed of the Council of Nice. They acquitted Athanasius of all the sentences pronounced against him, and restored him to the Communion of the Church, they excommunicated and deposed, in their turn, eight of the Eastern Bishops who were most active in the Council at Philippopolis; and they confirm to Julius Bishop of Rome the power of receiving Appeals from all parts of the world. These Contentions amongst the Bishops necessarily produced many Tumults amongst the People,

especially at Alexandria, in one of which many were killed on both sides, and amongst the rest Gregory the Bishop. Constantius who had conceived a great dislike to Athanasius, and accused him as the Author of all the Mischief, was very desirous to have him condemned in the West as he had been so remarkably in the East, and therefore, when he was Master of the whole Roman Empire by the Death of his Brothers, he assembled a Council, in the year 353, at Arles in France, of the Western Bishops only: and hither the Pope sent for Legates Vincentius Bishop of Capua, and another Bishop of Campania, Marcellus; and here, after a long hearing, all the Bishops and amongst the rest the Popes Legates themselves subscribed the Condemnation of Athanasius, Paulinus of Triers only refusing, who for this reason was sent into banishment.

I should tire my Readers patience were I to recount how the Athanasian Homousian Doctrine rose and fell in the several subsequent Councils of Sirminum, Milan, Beziers, Antioch, Ancyra, Ariminum, Seleucia, and Constantinople;

stantinople; and therefore I leave them unnoticed, for the present, that we may hasten to the Council of Alexandria held by Athanasius himself. After the death of Constantius the Emperor and George the Bishop who was killed in another tumult of the Alexandrians, Athanasius had taken possession of his old See again. From the year 325, when he argued so strenuously in the Council of Nice for the Homousian Doctrine, he had seen how violently this Doctrine had been opposed, and that many who wished him well, still disliked the nice distinction which he had invented of (Mia Ousia) one Essence, and (Treis Hypostaseis) three Substances, in the Trinity. He therefore now either thought it prudent, or found himself compelled, to give up at last, in his own City of Alexandria, his own favorite Notion, or rather his own favorite words, for Notion neither he nor any body else could have of his distinction; and here in this Council, in the year 362, it was determined that they who say there are three Hypostases or Substances in the Trinity, are of the same

with those who say there is but one, because they take the same word in different senses. And now the Latins being likewise ashamed of the words hitherto commonly used by them to express this Doctrine in their language, *una Effentia*, & *Tres Substantiae*, thought fit to change the Stile, and in imitation of their friends at Alexandria, to say there was but *una Substantia*, one Substance, and *Tres Personae*, Three Persons, in the Deity; and so the word *Effentia* lost its place intirely, and the word *Substantia* was put in its stead; and the word *Persona* introduced in the place of *Substantia*; and so these words have been used in the Latin Theology ever since. But whether they convey any clearer Idea than the former to any other man I know not. Sure I am they are equally obscure to me. Indeed many learned men, who were interested in the point, have employed their utmost subtilty in giving new meanings to the word *Person* in order to reconcile the world to it, in a Divine Sense. But all they have said about it, may be reduced to these two meanings, either that it signifies

fies a distinct intelligent Being, or some certain Mode, Quality or manner of A&ing in such a Being. But either of these significations applied to the Divine Nature in the oeconomy of our redemption involves in it such inextricable difficulties, and is attended with such Consequences, as makes it irreconcilable to Human Reason. The ingenious Mr. Jones, in his Answer to the Essay on Spirit, says, ‘ We know what we mean when we apply ‘ the word *Person* to the Godhead, and scorn ‘ any low equivocations about it.’ Many of his Readers, and I amongst the rest, heartily wish he had been pleased to let us know too what meaning he has of the word *Person* thus applied, and had given us a fair definition of it.

We may now see how the Greek words *ουσία* Essence, and *ὑπόστασις* Substance came unhappily to be transplanted from Philosophy into Christian Theology, what infinite confusions they have occasioned in the Christian Church, and how and when the Latin words *Substance* came to be substituted for the former,

mer, and *Person* for the latter. So that any body who reads the Greek and Latin Fathers and Systems of Divinity, must remember that the words *Ousia* sometimes signifies Essence and sometimes Substance; and *Hypostasis* sometimes signifies Substance and sometimes Person, just according to the Scheme or System of Divinity which the Author has adopted.

But before I end this Essay on the word Substance, I beg leave just to take notice of another strange abuse of it in the new invented term *Transubstantiation*, which, a few Centuries agoe, was found out to denote a most wonderful change said to be performed when there was nothing at all done. That Bread may be changed into Flesh we every day experience in our food and nourishment, but then we do not say that the Substance of the Bread is changed, but the Mode. The same Substance which was in the form of Bread yesterday is to day in the form of Flesh and Blood. Who ever said that in any Vitrification or in any other chemical transformation the Substance of the Body was changed,
That

That remains, tho' the form may be greatly altered. But the Gentlemen of the Church of Rome tell us, with the greatest confidence, that the Substance of the Bread, in what they call the Sacrament of the Altar, is changed into the *Substance* of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ. And this Change they call by the new term *Transubstantiation*. But how they came to be so intimately acquainted with *Substance* as to know, and to know infallibly as they pretend, the difference between the *Substance* of Bread and Wine and of human Flesh and Blood is out of the reach of my Philosophy—and Faith too; and I believe out of theirs. Could they perform a Metamorphosis or Transformation in this affair we might be the better able to judge of it: but to perform a Transubstantiation is to perform Nothing at all, till they can ascertain to us the specific differences of the Substances of the several Subjects which they say are thus transubstantiated.

Of CREEDS.

Creed is a Latin word and signifies a Collection of Articles to be believed: and agreeably to this it is expressed in Greek by the word *Symbolon*.

As the Opinions which we embrace and believe have great influence upon our actions, it is of the last importance to a Mans self, and the Society he belongs to, that his Opinions be founded in Truth. Hence he is induced to perform the Duties which result from the several relations he stands in to the vast variety of Beings about him. He is easy to himself and to the rest of the world with which he is connected.

Before the time of our Blessed Saviour, the Heathens believed so many absurd Doctrines concerning their Gods, that all the Nations of the Earth were corrupted to the last degree in their sentiments and practices. From their belief in some of these Gods they learned
Drunkenness

Drunkenness and filthy Excess; from others, War, Havock and Desolation; from others, the most shocking Impurities and Sensualities; and from others, Fraud Theft and Robbery. The Jews likewise were greatly corrupted in their notions of Religion. The Sadducees openly declared against Spiritual Beings and a future state. The Pharisees were strict indeed in observing external appearances and outward Ceremonies; but presuming on these as sufficient they neglected to purify their hearts; and practised all secret wickedness without restraint. To rectify these terrible disorders, God was graciously pleased, in his own good time, to send his Beloved Son into the world, to appear amongst us as a Man, vested indeed with divine authority, to instruct us fully in our duty, and to lead us to happiness by the performance of it; to give us in his own example a perfect pattern of all virtue, and at last to sacrifice his life itself and suffer the most ignominious death, to obtain pardon and immortal life for those who

should believe in him and keep his commandments. This was the glorious person so long expected by men, especially by the Jews, under the name of the *Messiah*, the *Christ*, or *the Son of God*. When Jesus of Nazareth appeared in the world he manifested himself, by most convincing proofs, especially by his Resurrection from the Dead, to be this Divine Person: and his Apostles were sent all over the earth, endued with most miraculous powers, to declare and prove to the world that this Jesus was the CHRIST whom they had so long expected: and when Men were, by their preaching and miracles, convinced hereof, and professed their belief of this Doctrine, they were admitted into the Christian Religion, and baptized in the name of the one God and Father of all, of his Son Jesus Christ, and of his Holy Spirit. And the Belief and Profession of this one Proposition, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, was all that was required by the Apostles from their Profelytes, whether Jews or Gentiles, in order to be thus admitted to the participation of the

advantages

advantages revealed and purchased by our Blessed Redeemer: for this one Proposition included in it a Belief of the Wonders of his Life and Death. But in process of time when the particular accounts of these were published by the Evangelists who had certain proofs of the facts which they relate, then an explicit declaration of a belief of these facts was required in order to be admitted to the privilege of Baptism. And hence it was that almost every Bishop in the primitive Church drew up a Summary of these Doctrines or facts which was to be used in admitting persons to Baptism in their respective Dioceses, and these were called *Creeds*. And it is very remarkable that all these agree in the main tho' there is unavoidably some small difference in the expression. Thus far things were carried on in the Christian world with unanimity and concord, tho' a little interrupted by the absurd Doctrines of those vain People who called themselves *Gnostics* from their pretending to *know* much more than others. But they were of little importance and short continu-

ance;

ance ; for they, by breaking into several parties, soon confounded one another ; and instead of raising themselves by this superior knowledge which they boasted of, they fell into the lowest contempt by the grossest ignorance which they discovered, on every occasion. Indeed the learned Historian of the Apostles Creed thinks that many Articles of it were framed in opposition to these absurd People. But this is doing them too much honor. It is like opposing the brightest Sun-shine to the blaze of a Candle. To what else can we liken the opposing the plain matters of Fact recorded of our Saviour in the Gospels to the fanciful Reveries of these ignorant Enthusiasts ! No—That Creed seems to have been framed very early as a Summary of the Christians Faith to distinguish them from the Jewish and Heathen world : as it might indeed afterwards distinguish them from the follies and ravings of the Basilidians, Valentinians, Marcionites and other whimsical Sects of the Gnostics.

Beside this Creed, which, for its antiquity,
is

is called the Apostles, there are several other Creeds recorded by the Ancients. We have a Creed in Irenæus, the Creed of Origen, the Creed of Tertullian, the Creed of Cyprian, the Creed of Gregory Thaumaturgus, the Creed of Lucian the Martyr, the Creed of the Apostolic Constitutions, the Creed of Jerusalem, the Creed of Caesarea in Palestine, the Creed of Alexandria, the Creed of Antioch, the Nicene Creed as first published by the Council of Nice, and the Nicene Creed as enlarged by the Council of Constantinople. From all which I would observe that they all profess a Belief in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But the first of them that mentions any thing like a Trinity in Unity, and an Unity in Trinity, is that of Lucian the Martyr, about the end of the third Century, when the Platonic Philosophy was very prevalent amongst Christians. Lucian's words, as related by Athanasius himself are these *τῆ ἰσοστασις τρία, τῆ δὲ συστάσεως ἓς*. In Substance they are Three things, in Agreement they are One. I must here likewise make another Observation, that the Nicene

Creed, made in the fourth Century, when Peoples Passions and Rage against each other were excessive, was the first Creed that ends with Anathemas and Curses against such as would not make profession of the same belief. And from this, All the Creed-makers afterwards took the fatal example. Every Party henceforward seems to vye with each other which of them can best wield the Arms of the Almighty, and throw about his thunders with the surest destruction. Vain and presumptuous Man! How daring oftentimes to curse whom God hath blessed; and to thrust out of the Church whom God will receive into his Kingdom.

The Council of Nice, by inserting that unintelligible philosophical Term *ὁμοέσις* into their Creed, laid the foundation of those endless disputes, hatreds and persecutions which have so heartily plagued the Christian world from those remote times down to this very day. No wonder therefore that Sabinus a Macedonian Bishop called them a Council of Fools. The very Men who introduced this
term

term acknowledged that it could not be explained: for how can it, since it conveys no Idea to the mind. It seems indeed to have been given out as the Watch-word or Shibboleth of the Party, who were resolved to ruin all who could not, or would not, pronounce it. It must grieve every good mind to behold, on this occasion, so remarkable an instance of the infirmity of human Nature as we see in the greatest man of that Council Eusebius Pamphilus Bishop of Caesarea. He declared himself against this word from the beginning: but when the Emperor Constantine advised the Receiving of it, he, contrary to his own sentiments, submitted like the rest; and wrote an Epistle to the Clergy and People of his Diocese, in which he attempts to give them his reasons for so doing. But whoever reads it must discern what perplexity and distress of mind he was then in. He acknowledges that he was first against this word. Then he owns it to be inexplicable, and afterwards, he goes about to explain it. And how does he do this? Why, By telling us what it does not signify,

signify, but never what it does. And, in short, fairly acknowledges that it was to please the good Emperor he subscribed this Creed. But he was soon after at liberty to declare his real sentiments. The Emperor himself changed his Conduct, conceived a violent dislike to Athanasius who had been the great stickler for the offensive word, and united himself to the Arian Party who had opposed it; and in a Council held at Tyre in the year 335 by his Authority, had Athanasius condemned, and a New Creed was made and enjoined, in which the word *homoousios* was quite obliterated. In this Council Eusebius Pamphilus bore a great part; and some time after, the Emperor was baptized by Eusebius Bishop of Nicomedia, who had been a more zealous Supporter of Arius and his Party than ever his Namesake of Caesarea had been. And now the Opposers of the Athanasian Homoousian Doctrine began to be called Eusebians from these two great men of that name who declared their disapprobation of that term. Thus the Christian world was divided into two great

Sects,

Sects the *Athanasian* and *Eusebian*, who met in several Councils to make Creeds, and to depose and anathematize one another. This fatal word was the pretence for contention. They agreed in every thing else, and only disputed about what they all were forced to acknowledge they did not understand. In the year 341 there was assembled a Council at Antioch, where there were four several new Creeds proposed, in all which the word *ὁμοουσιος* was left out, and they agreed to the last, which is to be seen in Athanasius. This Council restored Arius to the Communion of the Church, because they say they found his Doctrine to be Orthodox; they deposed Athanasius from the Bishopric of Alexandria, and consecrated Gregory of Cappadocia Bishop there in his stead. In the year 345 there was another Council at Antioch where they made a very particular Creed of the Christian Faith, in which they anathematize the Errors of Paulus Samosatenus, Sabellius, Marcellinus

nus * and Photinus, but were very careful to leave out of their Creed the offensive word Consubstantial. The Bishops of the East sent this Creed to a Council of the Western Bishops who were then assembled at Milan, that they might All join in the same Confession.

* As we have before spoken of Paulus Samosatenus and Sabellius, it may be proper here to say somewhat of Marcellus. He was Bishop of Ancyra in Galatia, and published a Book in answer to Asterius the Arian. In this work Marcellus would not allow the high honors to Jesus Christ that Arius supposed him to be possessed of: but plainly asserted that our Blessed Saviour was but a mere man, that he began to exist at the time of his incarnation, before which he had no proper Hypostasis, but lay quiescent in the mind and will of the Father, as a word does in man till actual speaking brings it forth. He presented his Book to the Emperor Constantine, but he referred the matter to the Synod which was then sitting at Constantinople 336, who censured Marcellus and deposed him from

on. But these would not receive it, and gave this as a reason, that they would adhere to the Nicene Faith, and would receive no other. In the year 347 was held the famous Council of Sardica which divided into two parties. The Western Bishops remained at Sardica. The Eastern Bishops retired to Philippopolis, and Each made its different Creed. The Western Prelates established the Pope's Power; the Easterns rejected it with great indignation, and excommunicated Julius Bishop of Rome as the Leader and Introducer of all Evils, and one who opened an Inlet to what would overturn all divine Institutions. In the second Council
of

from his Bishopric: whereupon, in imitation of Athanasius, he appealed to Pope Julius who received him kindly; and Marcellus in the year 347 was restored to his See by the Council of Sardica who established the Pope's authority to receive Appeals.

Photinus was Bishop of Sirmium in Pannonia. Had been a Disciple of Marcellus, and held almost the same Tenets.

of Sirmium held in the year 351, the first Creed of that name was made according to the sense of the Semiarians who prevailed there. These Semiarians would not use the word *ὁμοουσίος*, but they said the Son was *ὁμοιουσίος* of a like Essence or Substance with the Father. In the year 357 in a Council held there, was framed the second Creed of Sirmium, said to be drawn up by Potamius Bishop of Lisbon, without either of these hard words: and they moreover made a Decree that neither *ὁμοουσίος* nor *ὁμοιουσίος* should any more be used in Creeds, because they were not to be found in the Holy Scriptures, and they far surpassed all human Understanding *. And Here the great Hosius Bishop of Corduba was present and subscribed

* Dr. Cave's Account of this Council and Creed are in these words—In hac Synodo *Novam* Fidei Confessionem procuderunt, latine quidem scriptam, dein graece versam, quae tum *ὁμοουσίε* tum *ὁμοιουσίε* vocabula partim quod in Divinis Scripturis non continentur,

subscribed this Creed and this Decree. And now it was that the pure Arians were called Anomoeans from the Greek word *ἀνομοῖος* *different, dissimilar*: for they affirmed that the Son was of a nature different from, and altogether unlike that of the Father. Thus we see that some Christians asserted in their Creeds that the Son of God was of the same Substance or essence with the Father: others that he was of a like Substance, and others that he was of a Substance intirely dissimilar and unlike his Father: and each of these parties, in their Creed, anathematize the rest for not adopting their Opinions or rather their Words, while they are all forced to acknowledge that they did not understand them. It must therefore seem very strange to us, that they pretended thus dogmatically to determine

tinetur, partim quod supra omnem humanum intellectum sunt, non amplius esse usurpanda, Deceverunt. Hist. Litteraria.

Sæculum Arianum. Concilium Sirmiense Tertium.

mine concerning the Sameness, the Likeness, or the Difference of Essence or Substance in Distinct Beings. This was the Consequence of their admitting these Philosophical Terms *ἕσις* and *ἰσότησις* into their Creeds concerning the Deity. They produced Disputes which must continue while they remain in these Creeds. But to go on. In the same year 357, just after the Council of Sirmium, Eudoxius Bishop of Antioch, an Anomoean held a Council in his own City, in which, like the Prelates at Sirmium, they made a Creed, and a Decree, that the same words should never be used afterwards, and gave the same reasons. And Eudoxius wrote a Synodical Epistle to the Bishops of the West, particularly to Valens, Ursacius, and Germinius, returning them thanks that by their means, the Western Bishops at Sirmium had at length agreed in the same Confession of Faith with their Brethren in the East. But in the next year 358 the Bishops who were zealous for the word *ὁμοούσιος* assembled in a Council at Ancyra, and made another Creed, to declare that the Son

was of a like Substance with the Father; which Creed they concluded with 18 Anathemas, wherein they condemn these Doctrines as impious, viz. that the Son of God is not like to his Father; that he is unlike in Substance; that he is a Creature; that he is another God than God the Father, &c. and at the end of these Anathemas there is one against those who say the Father and the Son are *consubstantial*. Immediately after, in the same year, was held the 4th Council of Sirmium, composed of Bishops from the East and from the West, in which they made a new Creed different from that of Ancyra, but without the word Consubstantial, which all the Bishops signed and amongst the rest Libertus the Successor of Julius Bishop of Rome. In the next year 359 was held the fifth Council of Sirmium, where the Emperor Constantius was present. Here they made a New Creed, in which they say the Son is like the Father in all things but left out the word Substance intirely. However Basil Bishop of Ancyra added, in his subscription, that the Son of God

was like to his Father, not only by Consent of Will, but also in Substance and Essence. Here the Emperor declared his intention of holding immediately two Councils at the same time, one at Ariminum in Italy, of the Western Bishops, and the other at Seleucia in Isauria of the Easterns, for the final settling of all disputes concerning this controverted point. Accordingly there came this year more than 400 Bishops to Ariminum, who, as Athanasius informs us, first declared for the Original Nicene Creed; but were afterwards prevailed upon to draw up another leaving out the word Substance. The Account which Saint Jerome gives of this particular is remarkable. ‘ Very plausible reasons were
 ‘ given for laying aside the word *Substance*;
 ‘ because, they said, it was not to be found
 ‘ in Scripture, and scandalizes many unlearn-
 ‘ ed people by its novelty; * and therefore it
 ‘ was

* De Usæ vero nomine abjiciendo verisimilis ratio

‘ was left out. The Bishops little regard-
 ‘ ed the word, while the sense was prefer-
 ‘ ved.’ As the Deputies from the Council of
 Ariminum were going to wait on the Em-
 peror at Constantinople with the Creed which
 they had just made, they stopped a while at
 Nice a City of Thrace, where they, with
 several other Bishops, constituted a little
 Council, in which the Creed of Ariminum
 was translated from Latin into Greek and so
 subscribed by all present: and they published
 it under the Name of the Nicene Creed, as
 it was supposed, to give it the greater autho-
 rity; but this exposed them to much Censure.
 At the same time was held the famous Coun-
 cil of Seleucia where were assembled 160
 Eastern Bishops. They divided into two
 parties the Anomoeans and the Homoiousians,

E the

ratio præbebatur. Quia in Scripturis aiebant non
 invenitur, et multos simpliciores novitate sua scan-
 dalizat. Placuit auferri. Non erat Episcopis ve-
 reri de vocabulo, dum sensus esset in tuto.

the former headed by Acacius formerly the Disciple, now the Successor of the great Eusebius in the See of Caesarea, and the latter by George Bishop of Laodicea. Acacius and his party were for laying aside the old Nicene Creed intirely, and composing a new one. But the others were for retaining the Nicene Creed, expunging only the word *ὁμοούσιος* Consubstantial. These were the most numerous, and carried it so far as to depose Acacius Bishop of Caesarea, George of Alexandria, Uranius of Tyre and six others; and excommunicated nine more. The Acacians and their Antagonists immediately flew to Constantinople to give the Emperor an account of what was done. He heard them all. And at the same time arrived the Deputies with the Original Latin Ariminum Creed, and with the Greck Translation of it made and signed at Nice. And he reconciled the several contending parties by desiring them to subscribe this Creed, as containing and expressing the Common Faith,—which they all did.

But the Acacians, having remained at Constantinople and strengthened their party, held a Council there in the beginning of the next year, in which they approved and established again the Creed of Ariminum, but with this addition, that neither the word *ἐσσα* essence, nor *ὑποστασις* Substance should be used any more in speaking of God. And, under various pretences, they censured and deposed the principal Bishops who had treated them hardly at Seleucia, namely Macedonius of Constantinople, Basil of Ancyra, Eleusius of Cyzicum, Eustathius of Sebastea, Heortasius of Sardis, Dracontius of Pergamus, Sylvanus of Tarsus, Sophronius of Pompeiopolis, Elpidius of Satala and Cyril of Jerusalem; and translated Eudoxius from Antioch to Constantinople. In the year 361 there was another Council held at Antioch in which Eudoxius presided, wherein was made another Creed, in which they declare, that the Son of God is *not* at all like his Father in substance, and that he was created of nothing. In the next year 362 Athanasius, who had before seen the

death of Gregory, and lately that of George who had been appointed Bishops of Alexandria, one after the other, in his room, seized upon his former See, and held a Council there, in which it was debated how many Hypostases there are in the Deity, and it was determined that they who say there are three, and they who say there is but one, are of the same opinion, because they take the same word in different senses. About this time it was that Athanasius wrote his Book of the Synods of Ariminum and Seleucia: and therein treating of the word *ὁμοουσίος* of *the same substance* tho' he maintains it against the Arians, yet he acknowledges that they are not to be treated as Heretics who scruple to make use of it, if they confess the Divinity of the Son. But in this Council which he held at Alexandria he established several new Tenets which he found quite necessary to support his new Hypothesis of the Trinity. Thirty seven years before this, was held the famous Council of Nice in which the Homouousian Doctrine

was brought in. The only question then was concerning the Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. The Holy Ghost was not then, or in any Council afterwards, said to be of the same substance with the Father and the Son, till in this Council it was first determined: tho' it was not inserted, for many ages after, in any Creed of public Authority in the Church. I should tire myself and the Readers with recounting the various Councils which were held in the various Countries of Christendom soon after this, under pretences of establishing *new Creeds*; but the true design of every one of them was to depose, banish, and murder those who were not of their own party, and exalt themselves upon their ruin. In the year 367 Liberius Bishop of Rome died. He had in the former part of his time imitated his Predecessor Julius in supporting Athanasius and his Tenets; but at last he became one of those who subscribed his condemnation. There was one Damafus a Clergyman of Rome whom Liberius had made his Vicar, and given him

several Preferments. Upon the Death of Liberius, Damasus and Ursicinus, another of the Roman Presbyters, were Competitors for the succession; and they were both chosen Bishop of Rome by their different parties. This occasioned dreadful tumults: * for each supported his Claim by violence and force. But Damasus was either the most powerful or the most cunning; for, after much Blood had been shed, Ursicinus and those of his party were driven out of the City. When Damasus was thus left in possession of his dignity, he called a Council at Rome: and the first thing he did in it was to have his Predecessor and Benefactor, in all probability then in Heaven, censured and condemned as an Heretic, for acting against the Saint Athanasius. Damasus was too sagacious not to perceive

* Damasus, in one of these, at the head of his Partizans, beset the Church of Liberius where were many of Ursicinus's party assembled, set fire to it, and burned and killed 160 persons.

ceive that the Grandeur of himself and his See depended upon supporting the Man who had done more to aggrandize the Bishopric of Rome than any person before had ever attempted: and therefore he strictly united himself to Athanasius. And no two were ever more like one another. Both were guilty of the most turbulent and violent actions: Both were publickly accused of the grossest Crimes. Both supported their Titles to their Bishoprics against their Competitors, by the most outrageous Tumults, Massacres, and Murders: Both of them were unnoticed for any good actions in their lives, unless their furious zeal against their Fellow Christians, whom they called Heretics, may be called so: Both of them were dignified with the Title of SAINT —for doing the greatest prejudice to Christianity: and both of them now united in support of the Homousian Doctrine and all the Consequences which Athanasius and his Adherents had drawn from it. Now the grand struggle was between the Athanasians and the Arians, known under the various names of

Eusebians, Semi-arians, Anomoeans, Macedonians, Eudoxians, Apollinarians &c. Each held their Councils. And nothing now was to be seen or heard of in the Christian Church but new Creeds, with most dreadful Anathemas at the end of every one of them, consigning over to remediless destruction all who did not submit to them. Athanasius at Alexandria and Damasus at Rome, acted in perfect Concert. There was a League offensive and defensive between them, while their Antagonists were split into several denominations, who were not inclined to give quarter to one another any more than to their two powerful Common Enemies. But here I must inform my Readers of the rise and the Creed of the Macedonians who now made a very considerable figure in the Christian world. After the Nicene Council when the contending parties had worn themselves out in the most refined disputes concerning the Divinity of the Son of God, they then began to argue concerning that of the Holy Ghost. Macedonius then Bishop of Constantinople peremptorily affirm-

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ed him to be, a Spirit of higher order than the Angels, but no other than a Creature: and he gave rise to the Sect called Macedonians.

There was a dispute between him and one Paul for the Bishopric of Constantinople. The Emperor siding with Macedonius ordered the Praetorian Praefect to establish him in the Episcopal Throne. When he marched with his forces towards the Church for this purpose, they met a very great concourse of people; and supposing they had come together to oppose the execution of the Emperors order, the Soldiers fell upon them and killed above three thousand, and dispossessed Paul. But about the time of the Sardican Council Paul was restored, and Macedonius forced to keep his party together in an obscure private Church. But this did not hold long; for Paul was soon after carried by force to Cucufus in Armenia and strangled there; and Macedonius was reinstated in his place. But in the last Council of Constantinople he was again deposed, by the prevalence of Acacius,

for some pretended misdemeanor, and Eudoxius translated from Antioch to this See. Macedonius now declared and published his Opinions about the Holy Ghost more openly than ever; and was joined and assisted in supporting them by Eustathius Bishop of Sebastea, Eleusis Bishop of Cyzicum, Marathonius Bishop of Nicomedia, Sophronius Bishop of Pompeiopolis and many others: and the Party became so considerable, that in the year 381 the Emperor Theodosius convened a Council at Constantinople to judge of their Tenets, where 36 Bishops of this Party attended, who being required to subscribe the Confubstantial Faith, they all declared they never would; and wrote to those of their party in all places that they should not agree to the Nicene Creed; for which they were condemned by the Council, and Anathematized. When the Emperor Gratian soon after published a Law to allow every Sect to act according to their own judgment in Religious Matters, the Macedonians assembled themselves synodically at Antioch, and there declared

clared themselves so strongly against the Consubstantial Doctrine, that they decreed that no Christian should hold Communion with the Professors of the Nicene Faith.

Theodosius continued the Synod of Constantinople three years. In the first, the Macedonian Bishops were condemned and Anathematized, Maximus was deposed from the See of that Capital and Gregory Nazianzen fixed there in his stead. But the Egyptian Bishops who arrived after this was done, joining with several others of the Council, who were displeas'd at Nazianzens promotion, rais'd such Heats and Tumults on this occasion, as made the New Bishop soon to resign his charge. And hereupon Nectarius was consecrated Bishop of Constantinople. He presid'd the second year in the Synod, to which they invited Nazianzen whom they had deposed the year before. But he refus'd to go to this or any other Synodical Assembly: and told them in his Letter ' that Experience had
' taught him how little Good was to be ex-
' pected from Synods which usually more wi-
' den .

' den than heal up differences : where gene-
 ' rally they clash and quarrel, wrangle and
 ' make a noise more like a flock of Geese and
 ' Cranes, than an Assembly of wise and grave
 ' Prelates. At such Meetings, he says, Strife
 ' and Contention, Pride and Ambition com-
 ' monly bear the greatest sway ; and the man
 ' who goes there as a Judge shall sooner cor-
 ' rupt himself than correct and reform
 ' others ; that for these reasons he had reti-
 ' red within himself, and thought the only
 ' means of security was to live in privacy and
 ' solitude.' The next year 383 Theodosius
 resolving to have a Creed made that all
 should comply with, did what he could to
 mollify and sweeten the several parties. He
 received them all with the fondest caresses
 conniving at the Exercise of their several
 worships. But the Athanasian Bishops were
 greatly offended at this Toleration, and in-
 sisted that the Arians might be suppressed
 and banished the City. This the Emperor
 found himself obliged to comply with, and
 soon after published a Constitution against all
 Heretics,

Heretics, especially the Arians, Eunomians, Macedonians, Apollinarians &c. prohibiting them to meet together or ordain any Bishops of their several parties. But this had no great effect.—Now it was that the Athanasians finding themselves more numerous than their Opposers set themselves to form a New Creed: And out of the old Forms of Jerusalem and Nice, they made another at Constantinople, which is the very Creed that we have in our Liturgy under the Title of the Nicene Creed, one Article only excepted concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit. That the curious Reader may be fully convinced of this, I have set down, at the bottom of the page, the very Creeds of Jerusalem

The Jerusalem Creed is this. I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds,

true

lem and Nice, that he may see how the Constantinopolitan Creed is formed from them.

And

true God, by whom all things are made, who was incarnate and made Man. He was crucified and buried, and the third day he rose again from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Ghost the Comforter who spake by the Prophets. In one Baptism for the remission of sins and in one Holy Catholic Church, and in the Resurrection of the Flesh and the Life Everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed is in these words. We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible and in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, that is *of the Substance* of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not made, of the *same Substance* with the Father: by whom All things were made which are in Heaven and in Earth. Who for us

men

And this Creed, thus compounded, they called the Nicene Creed, which name it retains to this day, because the distinguishing Doctrine of the *Consubstantiality* of the Son with the Father is asserted in it.—My Readers have seen too much already of the miserable dissensions which arose amongst Christians on account of their several Creeds or Confessions of Faith. The Histories of the succeeding times abound more with them, if possible.

The

men and for our Salvation came down and was incarnate and was made Man and suffered. The third day he rose again and ascended into Heaven, and shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost. But for those who say there was a time when he (the Son) was not, or that he was not before he was, or that he was made of things which had no existence, or that affirm the Son of God to be of any other *substance or essence*, or that he was created, or is obnoxious to change or alteration, all such the Catholic and Apostolic Church of God do *Anathematize and Reject*.

The Goths who soon after over-ran Europe were Arians; the Emperors for the most part were Athanasians. Each held their several Councils in which they always took care to excommunicate and curse one another most heartily: and this was the pretence for the most bloody Massacres and Wars that ever plagued the Human Race: and to this the Contentions of the Bishops amongst themselves, for jurisdiction and power, contributed not a little. In this Council of Constantinople, one of their Canons is, that the Bishop of Constantinople should have precedence next to the Bishop of Rome, who should be reckoned the first Bishop, because he presided in the first City of the world. But in the next age the Bishops in a Council at Chalcedon made a Canon, that the Bishops of Constantinople should in all respects, be equal to the Bishop of Rome, because Constantinople was then as much Mistress of the world as the other had ever been. This gave rise to endless quarrels between the Bishops of these great Cities, and to the deadly hatreds which
 have

have prevailed between the Greek and Roman Churches from that day to this. So that it is no wonder that the Gentlemen at Rome will not admit of the Canons of this Council as of any authority. But these Decisions of the Councils concerning the authority of the Bishops were asserted by their several Partisans to be as necessary to be believed and submitted to, as if they had been expressly inserted in their Symbols themselves. Thus things went on in the Christian world for several ages, when there appeared a Creed, nobody knew by whom it was composed, or from whence it came, that vastly exceeded any thing which had ever appeared before under that Title: and to this the Author, whoever he was, very cunningly prefixed the name of St. Athanasius. This Man was in high estimation in the Romish Church, for reasons which have some time agoe appeared to the Reader. They extolled him as one of the greatest of *Saints*, and greedily swallowed down any thing which bore his name. St. Athanasius's Creed soon became the
Standard

Standard of the true Faith; and every body was taught to say, Whosoever will be saved, must, above all things, believe it thoroughly; and he who did not, without doubt should perish everlastingly. All the Learned agree that Athanasius, with all his assurance, never went so great lengths in any damnatory clauses. And whether Vigilius Bishop of Tapfa, or Hilary Bishop of Arles, or Vincentius a Monk of Lerins in Provence, for all these are named, or any other, was the Author of this famous Composition, it is the most wonderful, mystical and unintelligible that was ever obtruded upon the human Understanding. I need say no more of it, for it speaks *abundantly* for itself, both in the Articles of Belief which it contains, and in the severe threatenings with which it enforces the belief of them. It is in every body's hands: Let every Man judge for himself. Thus much is certain—It was not wrote by Athanasius whose name it bears, and if it was, it would not be intitled, on that account, to any more authority than if it had been composed

fed

fed by any other of the persons whom I juft now mentioned.

I may be here thought negligent in omitting fome account of the contrary opinions, concerning the nature of Jefus Chrift, advanced by Neftorius Bifhop of Conftantinople, and Eutyches Abbot of a Monaftery in the fame City, either of which would have introduced fome alteration in the Creeds which had been eftablifhed. But moft of my Readers will not think thefe difputes of any great importance at this day. If there be any that do (as indeed their Confequences have been felt by the whole Chriftian world ever fince) they may fee a full account of this whole affair in Dupin's *History of the Councils of Ephesus anno 430, and of Chalcedon 451*, which will abundantly fhew the Humors and Manners of thefe times in contriving and enforcing their feveral Systems of Belief.

But, as I obferved before, the Bifhops who met in the famous Council of Conftantinople, in the years 381, 2, 3, and compounded a
Creed

Creed which we call the Nicene, in the Article of the Holy Ghost asserted only that he proceeded from the Father. Whereas we, who received our Creed from the Romanists, say with them that he proceeds from both the Father and the Son. As this difference between the Greek and the Roman Churches produced the most fatal Consequences, it may be expected that I should give some account of it. The precise time when this so much controverted *addition* was made (of the Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son) is not easy to be determined. In a Provincial Synod held at Toledo anno 653 we find the Creed with this addition set down in the first Canon of that Council. But this was only the particular Act of that Synod. Nor did the Creed thus enlarged generally obtain in the Spanish Churches for a long time after. About the beginning of the next age but one, the Question concerning the Procession being started by one John a Monk of Jerusalem began to be disputed in France, and a Synod was convened about it at Aix in the year 809,
and

and they sent several Bishops to Rome to prevail on Pope Leo III to admit this Clause into the Creed. But, after a long sollicitation, he told them that, tho' he liked the Doctrine well enough, he could not give his Consent that this addition should be made to the Symbol: nay to prevent all mistake or fraud he ordered the Creed without that addition to be engraved both in Greek and Latin upon two silver tables, and to be hung up behind St. Peters Altar, there to remain as the Standard of the Original Creed. But notwithstanding all this, in about four years after, the Bishops, in the Synod at Arles, published a Confession of their faith with this clause, *proceeding from the Father and the Son*; which yet was no more than their private Confession. It seems not to have gained any place in the Public Romish Creed till the time of Pope Nicholas I. who entered upon that See anno 858, and to have been discovered when the Quarrel broke out between him and Photius the great Patriarch of Constantinople: for

ſo we find Photius ſeverely charging it upon
 the Latins as κακων κέρατις the height and
 crown of all their impieties, that with an un-
 meafurable boldneſs they had taken upon
 them to adulterate the Holy Creed ratified by
 the Decrees of General Councils νόδοις λογιſ-
 μαῖς και παρηλεγμένοις λόγοις with falſe ſenſes and
 new invented terms of the inventions of the
 Devil: and then he tells us what he meant
 by all this, that theſe Addition-makers made
 the Holy Ghoſt to proceed not only from the
 Father, but from the Son alſo; and ſo goes on
 to exclaim againſt the fact and to argue
 againſt the Doctrinē. And all this he ſpeaks
 of as newly done by ſome Weſtern Biſhops
 (whom amongſt other hard words he calls the
 Fore-runners and Miniſters of the Antichriſ-
 tian Apoſtacy,) who had been ſent to ſcatter
 this and ſome other new Doctrines amongſt
 the Bulgarians who had been about two years
 before converted to the Chriſtian Faith. And
 henceforward the Difference between the
 Greeks and Latins widened every day, for
 this Innovation was ſo much reſented by the
 Eastern

Eastern Churches, that they thereupon broke off Communion with the Western; and the Pope excommunicated Photius and all who refused to acknowledge the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son as well as from the Father. These Quarrels continued between them many ages, tho' they were all, at several times, forced to acknowledge they were so far from understanding the nature of this Procession, that they did not understand the meaning of the very words they made use of in the dispute. But in process of time, about the year 1433, when the Turks had made themselves Masters of almost the whole Eastern Empire, and were swarming every where round Constantinople itself, the poor Greek Emperor John Palaeologus^I II. found himself obliged, in the most humble manner, to apply to the Christian Princes of Europe for their assistance against these Mahometan Invaders, their Common Enemies, who threatened destruction and extirpation to the very Name of Christian. But as He and all of the Greek Church were looked upon and deemed

deemed as Heretics and Schifmatics by the Pope and all of the Romish Communion, he could obtain nothing from them without uniting himself and his Subjects to the Church of Rome, particularly by renouncing their opinion concerning the Proceſſion of the Holy Spirit, and ſubjecting himſelf and all his People to the Power and authority of the Roman Pontiff. Pope Eugenius treated the Emperor in his diſtreſs with great contempt; but however, upon promiſe of uniting with the Romiſh Church he gave him hopes of ſuccour. At this time was convened the famous Council of Baſil, in order, as they gave out, to reform the diſorders of the Church both in its head and its members: and *They* encouraged the Greek Emperor ſtill more. But ſoon after, a Diſpute ariſing between his Holineſs and the Council, the Pope, by a moſt wicked trick, transferred the Council to Ferrara, and from thence to Florence. The Biſhops at Baſil highly incenſed at this behavior of Eugenius continued ſitting, and pronounced a Sentence of Depoſition againſt the Pope,

for

for being a Disturber of the Churches Peace, and a perjured hæretical schismatic. And they chose in his room Amadeus Duke of Savoy who assumed the name of Felix the 5th. While these things were doing at Basil, Eugenius was not idle at Florence. He presided himself in that Council, and darted all his thunders against the tramontane Rebels. The Princes of Europe were divided between these two contending parties. Sigismund Emperor of Germany and others took part with the Council, while the Kings of Arragon, Castile and others adhered to the Pope. Both parties did all they could to gain the Greek Emperor, by promising him mighty succours from this or that Quarter. But tho' he had resolved to go to Basil and depend chiefly on Sigismund, Eugenius, by a wonderful finesse, brought him, together with Joseph Patriarch of Constantinople and the other Greek Bishops, to Florence, where they had long disputes about the points in controversy: and poor Paleologus, from the miserable circumstances of his affairs, was at length obliged to

come over to the Pope's proposals: and He and his Greeks signed the following Declaration.

‘ In the name of the Holy Trinity Father
 ‘ Son and Holy Ghost. By the advice of this
 ‘ Holy Oecumenical Council assembled at
 ‘ Florence, We define that the Truth of this
 ‘ Faith be believed and received of all Chris-
 ‘ tians, and that *All* profess, that the Holy Spi-
 ‘ rit is eternally from the Father and the Son,
 ‘ and that He proceeds from these two eter-
 ‘ nally as one only Principle and by one only
 ‘ procession. We define also that the Holy
 ‘ Apostolic See and the Pope of Rome hath
 ‘ the Supremacy over all the Earth, that he
 ‘ is Successor of St. Peter the Prince of the
 ‘ Apostles, and the Vicar of Jesus Christ; the
 ‘ Head of the Church, the Father and Teach-
 ‘ er of all Christians, and that Jesus Christ
 ‘ hath given him, in the person of St. Peter,
 ‘ the power to feed, to rule and govern the
 ‘ Catholic Church.’ The Emperor and his
 Bishops returned to Constantinople 1st Febr-
 ary 1440 sure of being joyfully received and
 thanked for the Union they had brought about
 between

between the Greeks and the Latins. But to their great surprize they found the Clergy and People there so highly dissatisfied with what had been done at Florence that they would not admit those who signed the agreement to perform any Ecclesiastical Functions amongst them: and when the Emperor commanded them to celebrate Divine Service, the People went out of the Churches and left them alone. In short the public rage was so great against the Emperor that in most places they struck his name out of the Diptichs, * and a Civil war was raised against him headed by Demetrius his Brother. Notwithstanding this he labored all he could, during the rest of his life, to establish what he had begun. But most of the Ecclesiastics who had subscribed the Declaration at Florence retracting it publicly in

F 2

Greece,

* The Diptichs were Tables hung up in the Churches, on which were inscribed the Names of the Emperor, the Patriarchs and great Bishops whom they were particularly to pray for.

Greece, and almost all the rest of the Clergy most furiously opposing it, his design was quite frustrated ; and he died in the year 1448. Constantine who succeeded him either could not or would not make that servile Court to the Latins which his Brother John had done : and therefore when the Turks besieged Constantinople in the year 1453, the Popish Princes gave him none, or very little, assistance. The City was taken, Constantine killed, and an end put to the Eastern Empire of the Christians. The Latins in their account of this Event seem to rejoice in it, and insult over the poor Greeks as most abandoned Heretics and Schismatics. They represent God as highly incensed with them for their Heresy in denying the Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son : and observe as a proof of all this, that Constantinople was taken by the Turks at Whitsuntide the Festival particularly appointed in honor of the Holy Ghost. This is one remarkable Instance how far Prejudice, Superstition and Enthusiasm will carry People, who always suppose God to be on their side, and

and to be influenced by the same motives with themselves. Would it not be much more becoming in us, on such occasions, to say, O Lord! How unsearchable are thy Judgments, and thy Ways past finding out!

In the beginning of the next Century the scandalous Sale of Indulgences, and many other Enormities of the Court of Rome, provoked a great part of Europe to cry aloud for a Reformation in Religious affairs. But almost every Nation set up to reform, in its own way, what was thought to be amiss. They all appealed to the Scriptures as the Standard of Truth; but, according to their various interpretations of them, the several Kingdoms and States composed new Creeds and Articles of Religion. Hence were produced the Augsburg, the Helvetic, the Heidelberg and many other Confessions of Faith, on the Continent; the Articles of Religion in England; and afterwards the Westminster Confession of Faith, which hath been adopted by the Clergy in Scotland. Now all these Reformers ran upon the Rock which they should have most carefully

carefully avoided ; and so they broke into many different Sects and Parties, who soon began to hate and persecute one another with as much fury as the Papists themselves could. The Clergy every where retained so much of Popery as to declare themselves the Sole Judges of Christian Faith ; and hence the power of Drawing up new Articles was assumed by Synods, Convocations and other Reverend assemblies, who always took care to secure their own Authority, as far as the present Circumstances of Affairs would allow. Had they been in earnest in the Declaration they made, which indeed was the only justifiable ground of their separation from Rome, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were the *only* Rule of Faith, why did they all go about to make others, and, as different from one another as from Popery itself. But that imposing Spirit of making their own sense of things a Standard of Truth and a Rule for the rest of the world, which they so justly condemned in the Gentlemen of Rome, they thought very *convenient* for themselves.

themselves. They would not be subject to Rome: but others should be subject to them. But as all these Reformers declared themselves Enemies to the Authority and Power of the Court of Rome, the Pope, in his own defence, got an Assembly of his Bishops to meet in a Council at Trent; and there He and They, in the plenitude of their authority, condemned and anathematized all these new Heresies, established the Creeds commonly called the Apostles the Nicene and the Athanasian; and added a long Chain of Articles which before had never been decided, but were hereafter to be received and believed by the Faithful, as necessary to their Salvation as any of the former. Out of all these Decisions of this *Holy* Council there is a Creed composed commonly called the Creed of Pope Pius the fourth, decorated as usual with proper Anathemas and Curses, which all the Clergy of the Church of Rome are obliged to subscribe on their entering into Orders, and on many other occasions. And thus Things have continued to this Day.

Of

Of ORTHODOXY.

Orthodoxy is a Greek word which signifies a Right Opinion: and hath been used by Churchmen as a Term to denote a Soundness of Doctrine or Belief with regard to all points and Articles of Faith. But as there have been amongst these Churchmen several Systems of Doctrine or Belief, they every one assert for themselves, that they *only* are Orthodox and in the right; and that all others are Heterodox or in the wrong. So that what at one time and in one place hath been declared Orthodoxy or Sound Belief, hath at another time, and in another, or even the same place, been declared to be Heterodoxy or wrong Belief. Of this there are numberless Instances in Ecclesiastical History; some of which have been repeated in the foregoing pages: and we may only just take a transient view of the present Christian world to perceive many more instances of it subsist-

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ing at this day. What is Orthodoxy at Constantinople is Heterodoxy or Heresy at Rome. What is Orthodoxy at Rome is Heterodoxy at Geneva, London and many other places. What was Orthodoxy here in the Reign of King Edward the sixth became Heresy in the Reign of his sister Mary; and in Queen Elizabeth's time Things changed their Names again. Various was the fate of these poor words in the reigns of our succeeding Kings, as the Currents of Calvinism, Arminianism and Popery ebbed or flowed. But the boldest stroke for the alteration of the meaning of these words was struck about fifty years agoe. Before that time Athanasianism, as contained in that wonderful Creed which bears the *Saints* name, was esteemed by almost every party amongst us, to be the foundation, and the very standard of Orthodoxy; and the bare doubting of any point of it was deemed the greatest crime, and an effectual bar against all preferment in Church or State. But then Mr. Whiston and some other bold Spirits arose, who confidently asserted that A-

rius was in the right, and Athanasius in the wrong: that the Opinions of the former were the Ancient Orthodox Doctrines of Christianity, and those of the latter were New and Heterodox: and that the Athanasian Herefy was the occasion of all the Mischiefs that have plagued the Church from the time of its first appearance to the present. The Writings of these men have made a great alteration in the Sentiments of the British Nation. Athanasius hath since been losing credit every day; and the Creed which bears his name is now very far from being respected as it was a Century agoe. For altho' there have been no public declarations made against it, many of the Clergy shew their dislike by neglecting to use it; and some of the most respectable of them have, in their private opinions, declared against it: and the intelligent Laity every where shew their disapprobation of it. So uncertain and fluctuating a thing is Orthodoxy. To day it consists in one sett of Principles; to morrow in another. At Rome it is wrapped up in Mystery—

In Britain it is now set forth as the Object of Common Sense and Reason.

But so much hath been wrote upon the Subjects of Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy, and Heresy by others, that I need not trouble my Readers any farther about them. Were these words employed, as they ought, in distinguishing Virtue from Vice, and Good from Evil, they would admit of no variation and and be for ever taken in the same sense. But as they are used to denote *Opinions* concerning the most incomprehensible Subjects, no wonder that their meaning should be so often mistaken, and occasion so many endless and bitter disputes.

Of CATHOLIC CHURCH.

These are both Greek words. Church properly signifies the House or Temple where Christians meet to celebrate or perform their public worship, and is evidently formed from the word *Κυριακόν* The House of the Lord;

to

to which Original indeed the Word in our Northern Dialect (ΚΥΡΚ) comes nearer : and by a common figure in speech the People assembled here are called the Church ; just as the great Persons assembled in the Kings Court are called, The Court. Catholic is a Greek word which signifies Universal. So that when these two words *Catholic Church* are put together they naturally signify the Great and Universal Body of Christians in every Country and Nation, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the Common Head, and they are all the several Members. But both these words, by the cunning management of designing men, have been strangely perverted, and made to stand for the direct contrary to what they first signified. The word *Church* is often expressed by another Greek word Ἐκκλησία *Ecclesia* which cannot signify any thing but the Assembly or the Congregation : yet it has, for many ages, been set down to signify those particular Christians who have been appointed by the rest to officiate in Divine Things, to pronounce the Prayers of the

Congregation,

Congregation, and to read and explain the word of God to them, And these Ecclesiastics have assumed to themselves the distinguishing appellation of the *Clergy* from another Greek word which signifies Lot or Inheritance, as if they were the peculiar Lot or Inheritance of God: and from being at first the Ministers or Servants of the People, and from receiving voluntary Salaries and Stipends to support them in doing their Duties, have raised themselves, by insensible degrees, to such height of authority and power, under the name of the **CHURCH**, as to determine judicially for the rest of the Congregation what they are to believe and to do in religious affairs; and claim these wages of the People, as their own by Divine Right. But as there is not the least trace of their Name, their Authority or their Stipends in the Holy Scripture, we must look for their origin in the Councils and Decrees of after ages, when the power of the Clergy was said to be above all other powers, and they claimed to be the Lords and Disposers of both worlds, the present and the

the

the future. Nay one presumptuous Clergyman, the Pope of Rome, claims and exercifes, a very high even a divine authority over the reft of his fort, as the very Vicar and Representative of Jefus Chrift himfelf—to which, they moft humbly fubmit. And He and his Party audaciously affume to themfelves, exclusive of all others, the Name of the Catholic Church. But, by a ftrange absurdity and contradiction, they call this the *Roman Catholic Church* ; as if any particular Member could be the Univerfal or the Whole Body of the Chriftian Church. St. Paul certainly forefaw this affuming and excluding Spirit which would arife amongft Chriftians, and therefore he hath done all he could to prevent or cure it in the XIIth Chap. to the Romans, and in XIIth Chap. 1ft Ep. to the Corinthians and then in the XIIIth Chap. he fhews the moft excellent way to unite and knit together the feveral Members of Chrift's Body the Church (viz) by Charity or Univerfal Benevolence. And this Charity, Love, or Univerfal Benevolence, our Saviour himfelf fixes as the very
diftinguifhing,

distinguishing Characteristic of the true Members of his Church. By *This* shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another. How absurd should we think it if the People of any one County in Great Britain should take it in their heads that they *only* were true Britons, and on that account should assert that None but themselves are intitled to the Benefits and Privileges of Britons. Surely all the other Inhabitants of this happy Island would look upon this as the highest arrogance; and would justly say, that for that reason, they least of all deserved what they thus ridiculouſly laid claim to. This is the very part the Romanists act in calling themselves Catholics—And therefore we may fairly conclude that the more any man is a Roman, the less is he a Catholic, and that the true Catholic is he who hath an extensive Love and Charity for all Christians, yea for all Mankind.

Of SUBSCRIPTION.

This is a Latin Word which signifies Writing a Persons name under an Instrument as a sign of Authenticating or Approving of it. The sense I would consider it in, relates particularly to Subscribing certain Creeds or Articles of Religion, as an approbation of them, which have been made, adjudged and determined by those who are *supposed* to have authority for enjoining them. As soon as the Bishops of the Christian Church mingled their abstruse Metaphysics with the plain Christian Divinity, they forsook the Holy Scripture as the *only* Rule of Faith, and introduced New Philosophical Terms and Opinions into their Religion, which gave occasion to such numerous disputes amongst themselves as have done more harm to true Christianity than all the Persecutions it hath sustained from its bitterest enemies. What dreadful Wounds has it received in the house
of

of its friends. For when they thus divided into Parties and Factions, each of them, according to its Numbers and Interest in the world, met and enjoined certain Tenets which they called Symbols or Creeds, not at all to establish or confirm the Truth, for they knew that was established already in the word of God, but to affix certain philosophical explanations of their own to it: and to these Explanations they Decreed that *All* should Subscribe who should retain or be capable of enjoying any Ecclesiastical Preferment; and very often they excommunicated and anathematized all who would not subscribe these Arbitrary Decisions. By these means the conscientious meek Christians suffered, and the proud dogmatical Philosophers triumphed over them. Many brave Attempts were made by several good Men in the primitive times to reduce Christianity to its original Simplicity, as revealed in the word of God. But the world became so possessed with these mysterious Notions, which were cryed up as the Standard and Test of Orthodoxy or Right opinion,

opinion, that these Notions, and the Terms to express them, must be retained at any rate; and the whole Scripture wrested and tortured to support them. From the Council of Nice to the Council of Trent, and later, one hardly meets with any thing else in Ecclesiastical Conventions but Instances to prove this. It must therefore seem a wonderful thing to considerate men, that at the Reformation, care was not taken effectually to suppress this arbitrary imposing Spirit, which had been the occasion of *all* the Mischiefs they then so justly complained of. But instead of this, instead of recurring to the word of God as the true Standard of Orthodoxy instead of uniting together in this indissoluble Bond, the Reformers split into factions, by making, almost every one of them, a new Symbol or Creed, to which they would have the rest implicitly to subscribe. And so, instead of acquiescing in the title of Reformed Christians, they gloried in the names of Apollos, of Cephas of Luther, of Calvin &c. &c. And tho' many things were then changed for the better, the

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the Cause of the Evil was not removed, but remains amongst the most reformed Nations to this day. Every one of them has established its own System of Articles, to be subscribed: and some of them as absurd and unintelligible as those of Popery itself. Indeed Those of the Church of England are the most moderate of any that were then framed. But, Did they, or can they, accomplish the End proposed? ‘*For the avoiding Diversities of Opinions, and Stablisbing Consent touch- ing true Religion.*’ Have they not been the occasion of perpetual Disputes, and sometimes of Deprivations Confiscations, Banishments, Executions, Murders, Insurrections and Civil Wars! So true is it, and it will for ever be so, that such Pretences of Unity are Causes of the greatest Divisions. Upon passing the Act of Parlement in Q. Elizabeths Reign to oblige the Clergy to subscribe these Articles, many serious good Men refused to comply with it; and These were called Puritans, who soon became a very considerable part of the Nation——and every body knows what

what followed. But what may seem quite astonishing is, that these very Puritans, who refused to subscribe these Articles of the Church of England, should, when they became the Dominant Party, in their Assembly of Divines, compose and frame another set of Articles, much more exceptionable, and declare them, as the Standard of Orthodoxy, to be subscribed by all who should be admitted to the sacred Ministry. And this is called the Westminster Confession of Faith, as it was composed there, and is now the Form which all the Clergy of Scotland are obliged by Law to subscribe. Soon after the Restoration of Charles II, when the Episcopal Party, by the influence of the Court, got the Lead again, the Subscribing the 39 Articles and an unfeigned Assent and Consent to ALL and every thing contained in the Book of Common Prayer, with many new Additions, and the Ordinals, was required from the Clergy by Act of Parliament—which continues in force to this day. And so zealous were
some

some of the Clergy, at that time, to preserve their Benefices, that Bishop Burnet says, Many of them subscribed their Assent and Consent to this whole Book, who were so far from having then ever read it, that they *could* never have seen it; tho' two thousand of them, he tells us, were so conscientious as to relinquish their Benefices rather than subscribe. This must necessarily have occasioned great disputes and altercations concerning the lawfulness or expediency of this Subscription, especially as many Members of the Parlemt which made this law, were much against it; for the Bill was carried but by a small Majority. And these Disputes have continued to our own time. Many of the Established Clergy have undertaken to vindicate their Conduct in Subscribing to the Articles and *all things* contained in the Book of Common Prayer and Ordinals; but they do not All do this after the same manner. Some still openly declare that they Subscribe to these things in the plain and obvious meaning of the words, as they were originally intended
by

by the Compilers of them. But this Party is very small and inconsiderable, and looked upon with an evil eye by the rest, as no better than mere Calvinists, which hath been, ever since the time of Arch Bishop Laud, a term of great reproach in the Church of England. And indeed whoever attends Modern Sermons will hear very few but what seem to be upon a different System from the original meaning of the 39 Articles. Therefore most of the Clergy make no scruple of declaring that they subscribe these Articles in senses, every one as he can best reconcile them to his own sentiments and way of thinking. Some subscribe them as, what they call, Articles of Peace, more than of Belief. Others subscribe them as containing many Truths, tho' there may be some mistakes in them, which they hereby oblige themselves not, avowedly and openly, to contradict. Others subscribe them in any sense they can make of them by any grammatical figures and critical rules. And others subscribe them as old obsolete Laws, which, by age, have lost their force, and are little now but a dead Letter. And
 This

This I think is the case of Modern Subscription to the 39 Articles; I mean amongst Those who reflect upon what they are then doing. For I would appeal to my Lords the Bishops, whether they believe One young Gentleman in many, who offer themselves to be ordained, have reflected at all upon these matters, or even given themselves the trouble to read over *All* that they then take upon them to subscribe.

I cannot indeed here avoid taking notice of the Evasion that is made use of with regard to one of the Articles, viz. the 8th which is in these words. Of the three Creeds. The three Creeds, Nice Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles Creed, ought *thoroughly to be received and believed*; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture. Whoever reads the Athanasian Creed and compares it with the holy Scriptures must be surprized at this bold Assertion, that it may be proved by them which are quite silent on the distinguishing Doctrine of that
 Creed.

Creed. This the best Writers on this subject are sensible of, and therefore they put this gloss upon the matter. ‘ All that is required of us as necessary to Salvation is, that before all things we hold the Catholic Faith, which Catholic Faith is defined in the third and fourth verses to be a Belief in the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. All that follows from hence to the 26th verse is only brought as a proof and illustration of it: and therefore requires our Assent *no more* than a Sermon does which is made to prove or Illustrate a Text.’

WHEATLY and others.

What Shuffling, Contradiction and Equivocation are here! Yet This is the best Apology that the warmest Advocates for the Athanasian Creed are able to make for it. One of them believes it only to one verse—Another to another, tho’ all profess to believe it *thoroughly*, and enforce the Belief of the *Whole* on whomsoever will be saved, under no less a penalty than Eternal Damnation. Nay,
What

What is more, Every one of these Advocates
 Subscribe and declare an unfeigned Assent
 and Consent to *All and Every thing* contained
 in it!

INDEX EXPURGATORIUS.

These are Latin words. Index properly signifies that which points or directs to something sought after. Expurgatorius, what has the power to cleanse or purge. Therefore these two words together, with regard to Books, signify, a particular Pointing out some passages in Authors which are to be corrected, amended, or purged.

On the happy Day in which the Art of Printing was invented, Knowledge rose like the Sun after a gloomy night, and by degrees spread its glorious beams over a world that had long lain in a darkness which might be severely felt. What a benign influence has it had upon the affairs of Mankind, both in

Religion and Government ever since! But the Deceivers and Oppressors in both, who, alas! have always been too many, perceiving that hereby their Crafts were in danger of being discovered, soon set themselves, with all their power and cunning, to obscure or confuse this Light, by raising thick clouds about it, by hanging out false lights, or by endeavoring to persuade people that their Eyes were too weak to bear the true; and that it would be best for them to continue to go on in the same guidance and direction in which they and their forefathers had gone for so many ages; and in this design they succeeded but too well; tho' some bold Spirits, who dared to be free, asserted their right to see with their own eyes, and to make use of that light with which God had blessed them. These went on enquiring into the Corruptions of former times, and soon found out that many things which had been held in the highest veneration deserved in reality the utmost contempt. And thence proceeded such Reformations in Religion and Government as have, within

within the two last Centuries, given quite a new face to the Affairs of Mankind. But those who had so long had the gainful Leading of a blinded and deluded world could not see with patience so many Nations and People desert their government and guidance: therefore they employed the utmost power of force and every art of cunning to reclame and bring them back into subjection to their former Lords and Masters. Let the Historians give Instances of Persecution to prove the former. My Business here is only to point out one instance of their Cunning to prove the latter.

When the Reformation was spreading in the Low Countries, their Sovereign Philip the II. King of Spain oppressed them with most cruel and illegal exactions, against which they first made the most humble Remonstrances, but finding them ineffectual, they were obliged to stand upon their defense, and oppose force to force. The King being persuaded that their new Notions in
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Religion.

Religion was the chief cause of their opposition, resolved, by every method, to root that out of his dominions, and therefore ordered the Inquisition to be established amongst them. But That, instead of healing, made the wound incurable. Another method he took was to have all heretical books condemned by an Index Expurgatorius of the Holy Office which he took care to have printed. Pope Paul the IVth was so pleased with this scheme, that in the year 1559 he ordered the Inquisition at Rome to print a second Index much more copious than Philip's. But heretical Books became so numerous in the time of Pius the Vth, that he recommended this business to the Council of Trent, who made another Index; and referred that matter, for the future, intirely, to the Pope himself. Upon which Pius the 5th, Gregory 13th, and Sixtus 5th, each of them, drew up his Index Expurgatorius. But Pope Clement the 8th made the most copious one in 1596. Many others were composed, as Books of Controversy increased. But the most considerable of all is that

that of Sottomayor which was made for all the States subject to the King of Spain, and comprehends all the others, coming down as low as the year 1667. The unbounded licentiousness which the Popes, and the several Inquisitors have taken in these Indices is almost beyond belief. It is no great wonder they should purge or condemn all Books published by the Reformers against the Church of Rome. But because these supported their opinions by the authority of the Ancient Councils and Fathers the Popes found no way to invalidate this authority, but by publishing new Editions of these Councils and Fathers, purged from all heretical pravity; in which great work many of the most able Divines at Rome and other places were employed for several years, who carefully corrected, or left out, whatever appeared against them; and interpolated many things for their own purpose which were not in the Originals. Dr. Thomas James hath published a Treatise with this Title *of the Corruptions of Scripture, Councils and Fathers, by the Prelates, Pastors and*

Pillars of the Church of Rome for Maintenance of Popery, In which are numberless instances of this sort. But he says ‘ I take not upon
 ‘ me to note all their litteral Corruptions
 ‘ which either myself have observed, or
 ‘ others have noted unto me. That were
 ‘ to fill the world with huge Volumes and to
 ‘ deliver the places not by Decades, as now;
 ‘ but by Centuries or Chiliads. But so ma-
 ‘ ny are noted of each kind as may serve to
 ‘ inform your understanding in this great Mys-
 ‘ tery of Fraud; and that you may descry the
 ‘ Lion of Rome by his Paw, and learn to
 ‘ detest all such Romish Corruptions.’ In
 another place, addressing himself to these
 publishers he says ‘ You have omitted whole
 ‘ pages in some places, divers sentences and
 ‘ words in others, adding in one place and
 ‘ taking away in another; and sometimes by
 ‘ a strange kind of Metamorphosis, changing
 ‘ Negatives into affirmatives, visible into in-
 ‘ visible, &c.’

Tho' they printed these Indices Expurgatorii they durst not make them public to the world. They only gave Copies of them to those they thought they could intirely trust. But by the Providence of God, Dr. James—who was Keeper of the Bodleian Library, tells us, there are several of them now there. But to complete the villany, and authenticate these frauds, Dr. James tells us in another place, ' that in the Vatican Library, there are
 ' certain men maintained, only to transcribe
 ' Acts of the Councils or Copies of the Fa-
 ' thers Works. These Men, appointed for
 ' this business, do, in transcribing Books, imi-
 ' tate the Letter of the Ancient Copies as
 ' near as can be expressed. And it is to be
 ' feared that in copying out of Books they
 ' do add, and take away, alter and change
 ' the Words, according to the pleasure of
 ' their Lord the Pope. And so these Tran-
 ' scripts may, within a few years, (by reason
 ' of their counterfeiting the ancient Hands)
 ' be vouched for very old Manuscripts, delu-
 ' ding the world with a shew of Antiquity.

‘ The danger is the greater, because there
 ‘ may be an Index Expurgatorius (for ought
 ‘ that we know) for purging the Manuscripts,
 ‘ as well as the printed Books.’ What makes
 this extremely probable is, that these Expurgatory Indices, ever since the Council of Trent, are compiled by a Commission issuing from the Pope himself who was authorized and intreated to that office by that Council. For these Fathers perceiving the danger that was likely to happen to their Church, if Books indifferently of all sorts should be permitted to be read, solicited the Pope, who appointed certain Cardinals to be General Inquisitors at Rome, together with the Master of the Sacred Palace. And they appointed their Deputies in the several States of Christendom, to see that Nothing contrary to the Catholic Faith or good Manners, as established in the Council of Trent, should be taught, spoken, uttered or published secretly or openly, in writing or in print, &c. No wonder then that the Pope should begin this pious work in his own palace by purging the Vatican

can Library of any appearance of Heresy which might defile that sacred place. But the Corruptions in the Roman Editions of the Councils and Fathers are so well known, that these Editions are of much less authority amongst the intelligent Papists themselves than those of Antwerp and other places. Here I cannot omit mentioning that curious distinction of Gretser the Jesuit in his Apology for the purging of Books. He says, 'The Works of the Fathers, as Fathers, need no purgation ; but being considered as Sons of the Church, their words may be censured and corrected by the Church, that is by the Pope. I should here observe that before these several Editions of the Indices Expurgatorii there are rules set down which the Inquisitors are to observe in performing their holy office. Before that of Pope Clement the 8th, 1595, the first Rule runs thus : All Books published before the year 1515 which have been condemned by the Popes, or general Councils, tho' they happen to be omitted in this Index, stand as fully condemned as formerly. By

the 4th Rule the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue is forbidden to all persons—without a particular licence. By the 10th rule there are several Regulations made about the printing of Books, as, that no book shall be published at Rome without the approbation of the Pope's Vicar, or some person delegated by the Pope; nor in other places, unless allowed by the Bishop of the Diocese, or some person deputed by him, or by the Inquisitor of heretical pravity: And for their direction it is ordered, that they should *obliterate* all heretical and erroneous Positions, and any that favour of heresy; all that are scandalous, rash and offensive to pious ears, all that advance any thing against the Rites and Ceremonies of the Holy Sacraments, and all that introduce any novelty inconsistent with the *received Customs and Usage of the Romish Church*: and likewise that they should *correct* all words that are any way dubious or ambiguous, or that might mislead the minds of the Readers from the right *Catholic* Opinions into those wicked new heresies.

All these Rules and Injunctions have been now for a long time most punctually observed wherever the power and influence of the Popes extended. And the Princes of the world, being almost as much afraid of having their Subjects too much enlightned as the Priests themselves, have done all they could to keep them in the dark, and prohibited any books to be published in their respective Dominions that had not first obtained the Royal *Imprimatur*. The English Gentleman had reason therefore to make this reply to the Frenchman, who was boasting that his nation excelled all the rest of the world in fine Writing; in Poetry, History, Philosophy, &c. Ah Monsieur! Consider, There are but two Subjects worth a wise man's while to write about, Government and Religion, one to make us happy in this world, and the other in the next; and you dare not write about either of them.

We in this happy Island value ourselves, and are envied by the rest of the world, on account

count of our Liberties both Civil and Religious. What is it that preserves these invaluable Blessings to us? Surely it is the Liberty of the Press. The Crafty Politicians and imperious Churchmen tremble at this little Engine, which hath been so often and so successfully employed to defeat their pernicious projects. No wonder then that they detest it, and cry out upon every occasion against the *licentiousness* of the Press; and wish for nothing so much as an Index Expurgatorius to prevent, or blot out, every thing that exposes their Misdoings.

S O M E

REFLECTIONS,
 MISCELLANEOUS OBSER-
 VATIONS,
 QUOTATIONS AND QUERIES

On the Foregoing SUBJECTS.

I Believe my Readers are now sufficiently apprized of the importance of understanding the meaning of these words which I have undertaken to explain. How happy would it be for Mankind, if we all took them in their proper sense! Then Reason would be allowed to be the most noble of all the human Powers, as comprehending every thing in it which exalteth us above the other Animals of this terrestrial Globe. Then we should be induced to serve God with a *reasonable* service; to love him with all our hearts and souls, and our Neighbors as ourselves. If we
 depreciate

depreciate and under-value Reason, we give ourselves up either to brutish sensuality, riot, and excess; or to the Wild freaks of Enthusiasm and Fanaticism *, and it is hard to say which of these has the worst consequences. We see too many fatal instances of Sensuality every day to question the truth of its direful effects: and if we look into the present state of Mankind, or read their former history, we shall see what ravages Enthusiasm and Fanaticism make in the human mind, and what dreadful Mischiefs they bring upon the world. The Persons possessed with them pretend, or think themselves, to be under a particular divine influence. This makes them look down with contempt on all who have not attained to this high privilege. They deem the rest of Mankind as neglected or forsaken of God, while they and their party are his
only

* Enthusiasm is a Greek and Fanaticism a Latin word, and both signify a pretence to Divine Inspiration.

only favorites. They are professed Enemies to Reason. To listen to that would, in their account, be low and carnal. No! Divine Inspiration excites them to every thing; and under this pretence, they often give a loose to their vengeance, their ambition, their uncharitableness and every evil desire; and sanctify all with this plausible pretence, that they are following God's direction in despising or destroying those whom he detests and abhors. This hath always been the effect of Fanaticism wherever it hath power to exert itself. It is not confined to this or that time, nation, or condition of men. It is the same pernicious Wild-fire whether in a Brachman, a Magian, a Mufti, a Dervize, a Pope, a Friar, a Bishop, a Presbyter, an Emperor, a King, a Cromwell or a Cobler. So just is the Observation, that as true Religion is the Perfection of Reason, Fanaticism is the Disgrace and Destruction of it.

One method which Fanatics of all sorts have made use of it to justify their follies and excesses

fes has been to introduce cant phrases and hard words into Religion. Each of them has its ABRACADABRA: and these words are to do every thing. Of what wonderful importance was the word ΟΜΟΟΥΣΙΟΣ supposed formerly to be in the Christian Religion! Those who brought, and those who kept it in, represented to the people, that the very Effence of Christianity consisted in it; tho' neither the word nor the thing it would express, has any place in the divine writings; but was evidently transferred from the works of the Heathens by some learned men, who were fonder to shew themselves mighty Philosophers than humble Christians. According to Suidas in his Dictionary *ὁμοούσιος* or coessential is said of those things, which having, each of them, its particular Hypostasis or Substance, are, amongst themselves, of the same nature. In this sense of the word Aristotle has said *ὁμοούσια δὲ πάντα ἄστρα* all the stars are of the same essence. Porphyry has written *ὁμοούσιοι αἱ τῶν ζώων ψυχαὶ ἡμετέρας*, that the Souls of Beasts are of the same essence with ours: and Plato believed

believed that his three Principles were *ὁμοῦσις*, that is, coessential and of the same nature. In this sense the Council of Antioch, assembled in the year 270 against Paul of Samosata, rejected and condemned Paul's *ὁμοῦσις* as dividing the Supreme Being, and therefore contrary to the Unity of the Godhead. But however, it was in this very sense that the Council of Nice, 325, decreed, that the Son was *ὁμοῦσις* that is of the same *specific* Essence or Nature with the Father. And therefore Mr. Jackson, in his Novatian, hath asserted that the Homousian Doctrine, which took its rise from the Pagans or the Heretics, could never be truly Orthodox; and that it is to the Council of Tyre, which condemned Athanasius, that we should give the glory of TRUE ORTHODOXY.

Of all the Religious Sects that ever appeared in the world the Church of Rome hath produced the most and the greatest Fanatics. To give Instances of this would be endless. In general one may say that the Lives of all
 their

their Saints, Male and Female, are abundant proofs of it. But Saint Francis and St. Dominic are more famous for their Revelations, especially for their Intercourses and Communications with the Virgin Mary, than any of the rest. The Stories of these and their other Saints seem to us Heretics to be the most ridiculous pieces of Burlesque that were ever exhibited to the world: and happy would it be for Mankind if that were all the harm they had done—to make us laugh. But alas! These fanatical Stories, ridiculous as they seem, have been made the occasion of very serious mischief. In pursuance of these pretended Revelations it was that St. Dominic set himself, with so much zeal, to extirpate the Albigenes in France, who were the Fore-runners of the Protestants there; for the Pope, at this Saint's sollicitation, raised a Croisade against them, and destroyed by fire and sword above fifty thousand of them. However Dominic was not satisfied with this; but, resolving to prevent the growth, or the very appearance,

pearance, of Heresy in that Country for the future, advised the Pope to erect a Court of Inquisition there, of which he himself was made the first Inquisitor: and this kind of Tribunal hath been since established in diverse other Countries, to the suppression of every thing generous and worthy in human nature, and the exaltation of every thing tyrannical and abominable: and St. Dominic's venerable picture is carried in the Banners of the Holy Office, on every public occasion, with the greatest solemnity, to this day. These and a thousand other persecutions and grievances have been the blessed effects of Fanaticism, all supported by their Legendary Tales of high and spiritual Revelations, Communications and Intercourses with Jesus Christ, the Virgin and the Saints of Heaven; and sometimes with the Devils of Hell. What then does the world owe to that Fanatic who led the way in publishing such visionary Tales! And for this we are obliged to St. Athanasius himself—who in his Life of St. Anthony the Monk gave the Model of this way of writing.

ting, which hath been so well imitated in all Popish, and some other Countries, by thousands of fanatical Enthusiasts in every age since. And it is very remarkable that all these pretended Inspirations and Revelations have been calculated, by their respective Authors, to promote the Reception of their favorite Systems in Divinity. This is particularly true of Athanasius, who, by this artful management, prevailed upon the world to give up their Reason for Illusion, and their own Judgment for the Reveries which he published concerning St. Anthony. And such hath been the success of many Enthusiasts in every age since, and is now very much so amongst ourselves, in the Romantic Pretensions of some modern Sects. So that we see when once People despise or obscure their Reason, they darken the Light which God has given them as the true Guide of Life; and tamely give themselves up to be led blindfold wherever weak or designing men may find it for their purpose to carry them. And when cunning men have thus got the leading of the

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the simple, they tell them many strange stories, and inculcate this principle strongly into them, that their greatest merit consists in *believing* them; and this not only in matters of fact, but in every speculative point, which they think will tend to promote their own designs. Hence have been propagated thousands of idle and imaginary Tales, and all those absurd Systems of Belief, which have, from time to time, been foisted upon poor Mankind, as necessary to be believed, in order to obtain Eternal Salvation. Indeed some resolute thinking men have arisen at various periods, who, perceiving these villanies and frauds, bravely resisted the imposing of them upon the world. But the prevailing party who governed the Croud, did every thing to run them down; till at last the time came, at the Reformation, when Truth was able to make a stand against Error, and the Liberties of Mankind were asserted. Happy would it have been for the cause of true Christianity if the Reformers had gone a little further in their great work: but considering the circumstances of the times,

as they had to do with an ignorant superstitious and bigotted world, our wonder should not be that they did no more, but rather that they did so much. It was at that time universally believed that they should all, according to the unhappy example of the first Christian Councils, compose certain Articles or Confessions of Faith, to be assented to and subscribed by those whom they would admit to their Communion: and upon this Rock they split, as of old, into different parties and factions, many of whom vainly assumed a like authority to themselves which they could not bear in another; and this gave rise to those differences and dissentions which have prevailed amongst us to this day. Thus we see that the same Cause will produce the same Effect. The Council of Nice set the Example; and many who call themselves Protestants, as well as the Councils of Lateran, Constance, Basil and Trent, have *shamefully* followed it.

All Christians seem devoutly to wish that they ALL had the same sentiments in Religion,
and

and that some means could be hit upon to bring about so desirable an end. The Church of Rome thinks this can *only* be done by forcibly compelling all Dissenters to submit to the determinations of the Church, i. e. of her own Clergy, who, they alledge, have authority to decide and declare, What is True or False in Religion. The Protestants, on the contrary, *profess* to maintain that the *only* means to bring about an Union amongst Christians is to confine themselves *intirely* to the Scripture as the Rule of Faith. But as all these do not agree in the sense of this Scripture, the Question recurs who shall judge between them concerning the Sense of this Rule. Those who reject the authority of the Roman Church cannot substitute their own instead of it: for it would be ridiculous in any of them to clame that authority to themselves which they despise in her. The only possible way to unite them then is, really and bona fide, to *act* upon the Principle which they all profess, to make the Scripture alone *in its own words*, the Standard of Truth,

Truth, and acquiesce in a Profession of that, without confining its sense to this or that particular System of Metaphysical Divinity which each Sect has formed to itself. Surely every party should grant to others the same liberty they take to themselves. If they will form explanations of their own, other people should not be blamed by them for doing the same. And methinks All should agree in acknowledging as Brethren *All* who profess the Faith of Christ crucified as it is revealed by God himself. The great design of the Christian Religion is not to make men more skilful in Philosophy, or more subtil in disputations: but it is to make them more holy and more virtuous than they could be without it. I know very well that this way of speaking will give offence to some Gentlemen who value themselves upon what they call *Orthodoxy*, and give out, with the highest assurance, that the very Being of Christianity depends upon their particular System. But this pertinacious adherence to their own schemes is what hurts Christianity, by exposing it to the contempt

contempt of Infidels, and destroying that brotherly love and charity amongst Christians themselves, which is their greatest glory, and should be the certain mark and characteristic of their being the Disciples of Christ indeed, a Virtue of more worth than all the Faith in the world, and without which, Faith will be so far from standing us in stead, that it will be the cause of our greater condemnation.

O but, some will say, we should take care to secure the FUNDAMENTALS of Christianity and have *them* believed. But this is a word of no certain signification. I will venture to affirm, that a Person who believes the Bible believes all the Articles of the Christian Revelation. But if we take the several Expositions of these Articles which the several Sects of Christians give us as the Fundamentals of Christianity, where shall we stop! Every Absurdity becomes a Fundamental: and the twelve Articles, added to the Creed by Pope Pius the IVth, become, every one of them, as fundamental as the twelve Articles of the Apostles; and the belief of them enfor-

ced with the *same* dreadful Anathemas. Happily for us there are no Disputes about the Practical Parts of Christianity. All agree in acknowledging, that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our Neighbor as ourselves; that we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this world, that we should visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world, &c. These are the great ends of Religion; and all the speculative Doctrines of Christianity are only means to bring about these ends. But if, instead of this, We regard these Means as the Ends themselves, or use them as the means to contrary ends, whatever may be our preference, we pervert the design of Christianity, we turn our backs to true Religion, and run after a vain Phantom that will lead us away from the plain and delightful paths of Love, Unity and Concord, into the inextricable and thorny Labyrinths of Variance, Hatred, and every evil work.

If Men would content themselves in being wise to Salvation, without desiring to *penetrate*
into

into things which all acknowledge to be above our comprehension; or if they would suffer others to acquiesce in what God Almighty hath been pleased to reveal of himself, then we should see Peace and Charity every where prevail, and our divine Religion become the happiness, the glory, and the universal Profession of the whole Earth. But alas! There is nothing that Christians less agree in than in understanding and pursuing their *common* Interest. Every Sect is so surprizingly fond of its own System, that rather than give that up, they would sacrifice the great Interest of Christianity itself, which can only be advanced by giving Glory to God in the highest, and promoting Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards men. I cannot help wishing that our Governors would seriously consider the state of Religion in this Country. It is at present in a very declining condition; and I am persuaded nothing will recover it but returning to its first principles. The world was converted to Christianity by the holy Scriptures; and true Christianity can only be supported by

adhering to them, and to them *alone*. Every Addition, or Imposed Interpretation, weakens the authority of the Divine word by making human decisions equal to it. There is no way of defending the Christian Religion against the violent attacks that are made upon it, but by removing the many absurd out-works which have at several times been raised by very unskilful builders, and which have proved only Coverts and Retreats to its assailing enemies. Cranmer in a speech in Convocation, the beginning of Edward the VIth's reign, exhorts the Clergy to give themselves *much* to the Study of the Scriptures, and to consider seriously what things there were in the Church which needed Reformation, that so they might throw out all the Popish Trash that was not yet cast out. Indeed he was much overseen in agreeing to the 42 Articles. But this was owing to the prejudices and humors of those times which were much set upon making such distinguishing and exclusive Creeds or Confessions. However, had he and that good King lived together

together

together a few years longer, the Reformation would have been gloriously advanced by them. But Queen Mary's reign stopped it for a while; and Elizabeth was, like her father, too fond of Show in Religion, and made not that progress in Reforming which she might and ought to have done. Nay she new modelled and confirmed the Articles of Religion, as Supplements or Explanations of the Scripture; which was like the doings of the Church of Rome, and the foundation and support of all the Evils complained of in it. Her Successor, in the very beginning of his reign, gave great cause of offence to many of his Protestant Subjects, by confirming Canons which obliged the Clergy to Subscribe, not only to Queen Elizabeth's Articles, but likewise, to the *whole* Book of Common Prayer. So that Elizabeth and James were so far from *desiring* to bring *all* their Protestant Subjects into the Established Religion, that they raised insuperable fences to keep many of the most deserving out of it; and were really the

Authors of that *schism* which has so grievously afflicted this Country from that time to this.

It is told of the great Chillingworth, that in the year 1635 Sir Thomas Coventry, Keeper of the Great Seal, presented him to a Benefice.—But he refused to subscribe the 39 Articles, as the Law required, and so rendered himself incapable of it; tho' it is certain that, in three years after, he accepted another Benefice and did Subscribe. Mr. Maizeaux says that now Mr. Chillingworth considered these Articles more as Articles of Peace than as Articles of Belief. But this is a Distinction that implies so much unfairness and equivocation that it does no great honour to Chillingworth's sincerity. For as that Argument for Peace proves too much, it proves nothing at all. At that rate a Man in Rome might subscribe Pope Pius's Creed, in Constantinople the Coran of Mahomet, or in a Jewish Government the Talmud of the Rabbies. It is certain that the Church of England, in her public declarations, hath always
represented

represented her Articles as a solemn and honest Profession of the Faith which She requires *in* all her Ministers. Indeed Some of her most illustrious Divines have declared for a large and comprehensive sense of them. But in this they have more considered what *ought to be* than what *really is*. For the Canon of 1603 requires that they should be subscribed voluntarily and *ex animo*, from a full conviction of mind: and does not leave it to the Subscriber to put any other sense on them than what is fairly and obviously expressed. Chillingworth, restrained by this rigorous Canon, chose rather *at first* to refuse the Benefice which was offered him than do what his Conscience could not approve. Maizeaux tells us that his Scruples chiefly related to the Athanasian Creed, the Anathemas of which appeared to him both very unchristian and very improperly applied, as indeed they must to any considerate Christian, especially to *him* who expressed himself in a Letter to one of his friends in these words, ‘ Any man who
 ‘ examines the disputes for and against Aria-

' nism shall not choose but confess, or at least
 ' be very inclineable to believe, that the
 ' Doctrine of Arius is either a Truth, or at
 ' least no damnable Heresy.' But, as he said
 upon another occasion, ' He had changed his
 ' Profession of Religion twice, and he did
 ' not know how often he might change it
 ' again; for *That* should *always* be according
 ' to the conviction of his mind.' And agree-
 ably to this, Chillingworth palliates his Sub-
 scribing after this manner, ' I do verily be-
 ' lieve the Church of England a true Mem-
 ' ber of the Church [Catholic], that she
 ' wants nothing necessary to Salvation, and
 ' believes nothing repugnant to it. And I
 ' thought, adds he, that to think so had suf-
 ' ficiently qualified me for a Subscription.'
 But to us, at this distance of time, this seems
 to be mere Shifting. How like is he to the
 great Eusebius in the Council of Nice! No
 body else could deceive Chillingworth in an
 argument: But how artfully does he deceive
 himself! He intirely changes the Question.
 He Subscribes the *Whole*, in general, but
 dares

dares not descend to particulars. He subscribes the ALL tho' he refuses the EVERY THING. How would he triumph over a Popish Adversary that dealt so disingenuously! I dare say if Chillingworth's *Terms* were *only* insisted on in Subscribing, very few would refuse it. But alas! How different are they from the *only* Terms to be used in that case by the Act of Parlement! Chillingworth was a great and a shining light, and I honour and reverence his memory. But as he was no more than a Man, he *might* be mistaken; and I think he was so in this. But I will presume to offer it as a Conjecture, that he would have acted a very different part, if any other Person than his God-father Arch Bishop Laud had been at that time the Chief of the Clergy. Chillingworth fell in the great Rebellion for steadily adhering to the Royal Cause. The Spirit of Faction and Party then excited People on both sides, to perpetrate the most outrageous cruelties; and the extraordinary merit of Chillingworth could not exempt him from being treated like one

of the common sort, but in many things worse, as his Character was better. No wonder that this furious Spirit, which then manifested itself in so many fatal instances, produced such effects as it did at and after the Restoration. Mens minds were sharply set against each other; and the Royal Party thought more of raising themselves and depressing their enemies than of promoting the common cause of Protestantism. There was then a noble opportunity of enlarging the Church and taking in almost the whole Nation into one Communion. But instead of this—Instead of promoting the happiness of the whole by some Comprehensive Scheme, the Passions of men intervened; Party prevailed, and the King by joining with one, helped that to exclude and suppress all the rest. Now another *Act of Uniformity* was made, and such Subscriptions required as were never heard of in a Free Country or a Protestant Church—and which indeed they were so far *ashamed of* at the Revolution, that the governing party of that time were forced, in their own defense, to repeal in part. Oh that

that they had then gone a little farther, and settled the Religion of Great Britain upon as generous a plan as they did the Civil Government! Then there would have been no difference between that of England and Scotland. None would have delighted to distinguish themselves as Episcopalians or Presbyterians; but All would have rejoiced in the more glorious appellation of Reformed Christians. But alas! tho' King William was very desirous to promote this great and noble design, he found himself unable to accomplish it; yea he was hated and vilified for seeming to attempt it: and many People who called themselves Protestants, would have brought King James back again, who was the common Enemy of them all, rather than suffer any Protestant, who differed from them in the smallest ceremony, to enjoy any honours or preferments in the state, or even any exemption from the persecutions they had long labored under. And the same factious Spirit, exerting itself *furiously* in the latter end of
 Queen

Queen Anne's reign, by crying out *The Danger of the Church*, had almost put an end to the Protestant Religion in England, which the Papists then, as always, heartily labored at, as they knew this would be the most effectual means to root out the *Northern Heresy*. For had *this* succeeded, all Europe, by this time, would have been reduced to as low a state of Vassalage to the See of Rome as they groaned under five hundred years agoe. Some People indeed still affect to say that the Church was, at that time, really in danger. But I never could find out any Symptom of danger, but the Prospect we then had of the Protestant Hanover Family succeeding to the Crown of Great Britain upon the demise of Queen Anne. People of all denominations indeed expected that when this Succession should take place, a great Reformation in Ecclesiastical affairs would be brought about: and This many of the Churchmen greatly dreaded, who even disliked former Reformations, and so they raised the Cry of the *danger of the Church*. But let us consider

Consider a little what is the meaning of this word *Church* amongst us. In our common Idea of the English Church the Body of the People is hardly included. It is supposed to consist of the King as Supreme Head [and I heartily thank God that he is so] of Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Deans, Archdeacons, Convocations, Chancellors, Treasurers, Praeceptors, Prebendaries, Canons, Petty Canons, Rectors, Vicars, Curates, Chaplains, Choristers, Organists, Parish Clerks, Vergers, Sextons, &c. Now in a large sense these are all supposed to belong to the Church. But in a more confined sense, the Church commonly signifies the Clergy alone as distinguished from the Laity : and when it is said the Church is in danger, the Meaning is, that the Clergy are afraid that there is some design in agitation to *reform* them. But as they are sure that they never stand in need of this, they do all they can to prevent people from giving themselves this unnecessary trouble. But what they seem chiefly to be apprehen-

five of is, the curtailing or taking away their Honours, Privileges, Lands, Possessions, Tithes, Offerings, Dues, &c. But tho' I declare myself warmly for a further Reformation in the Ministration of Holy things, and in our Ecclesiastical Polity, yet I would most religiously preserve to those Ministers of Religion all their Honours, Privileges, Lands, Possessions, Tithes, Offerings and Emoluments of every kind: tho' I submit it to themselves, whether many of these might not be better disposed of than they commonly are. These noble Endowments were formerly given by our Ancestors to the Clergy, who, they thought, had Eternal Salvation at their disposal, and that they would certainly do most for those, in this great affair, who gave them most for their Interest and Trouble. But, thank God, Things stand at present upon a different footing. They have now these large possessions secured to them, as the Servants of the State, to promote true Religion in love, reverence, and obedience to the Supreme Being, in observing all our Blessed Saviour's Com-
mands;

mands; in promoting the happiness of the world, by recommending the duties of humility, peaceableness, justice and Charity to Mankind; and by setting a *remarkable* example in all these particulars to the rest of the People. Where they fail in performing these duties, they wrong their Country of the wages they receive, and are little better than Robbers. But where they do perform them, their Rewards and their honors cannot be too great. They should be regarded as so many Angels sent from Heaven to live on Earth, to shew Mankind what an amiable thing Virtue is.

Many of the Evils that we have long complained of proceed from a distinction which we commonly make, when, talking of our Constitution, we divide it into Church and State, as if the Church were something quite different from the State; whereas by our Constitution, the Church, both in its Ministers and the Ministration of its Offices, is as much a part of the State, and as subject to it, as the

Lawyers

Lawyers and the Law, as the Merchants and their Trade. Indeed in Popish Countries, *that* would be a very consistent way of talking, where the Ministers of Religion clame and exercise a Jurisdiction and a Government distinct from the State and independent on it, and which, they say, is conferred upon them immediately by Heaven itself: whereas our Kings and Parlements have often made our Ecclesiasticks know that they are intirely subject to them, and derive their Offices and Revenues from them. Queen Elizabeth deprived several Bishops; and, in her polite phrase, threatned to *unfrock others*. And King Edward VI. granted Patents to Bishops to continue and act in that Office, *while they behaved well*. And many Instances are not wanting since, of Bishops suffering Capital Punishments for Crimes committed against the State. So that the Popish Doctrines of the Divine Rights of Episcopacy, of uninterrupted Successions, and indelible Characters, have been long agoe quite exploded in our Church. Indeed there is one thing in the ap-
pointment

pointment of our Bishops which gives great offence to considerate men in our Communion, as well as to Dissenters. When the King sends his *Congé d'elire* to a Dean and Chapter to ELECT (forsooth) a Bishop, with an Order to chuse A. B. they in their Assembly upon this occasion, sing or repeat with great solemnity that awful Hymn *Veni Creator*, as if they were invoking the Holy Spirit of God to assist them to *elect* a proper person to this sacred Office, tho' they know, at the same time, there is no choice left them, and that they are *only* to return to the King the name of the Man whom he had chosen before. Whereas in our neighbouring Island, by Act of Parliament, the Kings Letter's Patent are sufficient to make a Man a Bishop without this mockery of an Election. This, and some other things, pointed out in the Free and Candid Disquisitions, seem to require a Review and Amendment.

But some will say, Is Religion a Thing of so uncertain and variable a nature that in every
age

age it stands in need of being reviewed and amended? So many Alterations in it are every day proposed,

As if Religion was intended
For nothing else but to be mended.

The Poet was very witty in this Distich, and justly lashes the presumption of those Fanatics, who, in his time, were for introducing their own *conceits* into the Religion of their Country: for in *these* every Sect would have it thought that the very Essence of Religion consists, and accordingly employ their utmost zeal to promote them. This Temper and Conduct produce Confusion and Uncertainty, which are always put to the account of Religion. Whereas True Religion, like God the Author of it, is, at all times and in all places, the same, without variableness or shadow of turning. God hath given us a *perfect Law* which may indeed be abused and disobeyed, but can never be mended. And this consists in these two short plain Precepts, That we love the Lord our God with all our heart
and

and soul and strength, and our Neighbors as Ourselves. On these two Commandments hang *All* the Law and the Prophets. The Excellency of these is the great *Internal* Evidence which proves the Divinity of the Religion of Jesus. And the true merit of any Profession in Religion consists *intirely* in promoting the Practice of them. Every Duty to the Supreme Being, and Every Duty to Ourselves, and our Fellow Creatures, in all the various relations we stand in to them, necessarily flow from these Fountains. These afford the true Waters of Life, which if a Man drinks he shall never thirst. They will refresh and cheer him in all possible Circumstances, and be his highest Cordial, even in the Paradise of God. These are the Laws which our Saviour came, not to destroy but to FULFIL, and from which one Jot or one Tittle shall not pass—for ever. All Christians profess to admit this Truth; and yet how does almost every Establishment of Christianity avowedly violate it, in making Laws for the Excluding from the great Privileges

of

of Society, yea from Christian Communion itself, and, in many places, for devoting to immediate and utter destruction, the unhappy persons who differ from them in the Additions which they have presumptuously made to the Doctrines of our *only* Lord and Master.

And what is now the Consequence of knowing and considering these things? We in this happy Country remarkably see and feel it. Here, thank gracious Heaven and our just Laws, We are allowed to reason on Religious as well as other Subjects. This opens Mens minds for the Reception of Truth. Authority and Custom are no longer infallible Guides. The gravest and the most received Doctrines may be ridiculous; and this we are discovering every day. These Additions, however ancient, which have been made to Primitive Christianity, are no longer venerable. The Assemblies where they are continued are but little frequented: and many People *unfairly* taking these for the Christian Religion,

Religion, are apt to have but a low opinion of the Religion itself: and, which is extremely lamentable, to throw off a regard for all Religion, and give themselves up to a dissolute and abandoned life. So that some weak People trusting in a firm belief of these Additional Articles for their Eternal Salvation; and others not believing the Original, upon the account of these Additional Doctrines, Both throw off all regard to Morality which is the principal part of Religion, and give themselves up to such Licentiousness in opinion and practice as an old heathen Greek or Roman would blush at. But how shall all these dreadful Evils be prevented or cured? I answer, By RELIGION. By the CHRISTIAN RELIGION. By Studying and Establishing That, Not as it is contained in Articles, in Confessions, or in Systems of Divinity; but as it is simply and fairly represented in the Holy Scriptures. Not as it is obscured and confounded in abstract metaphysical Disputations, but as it shines out in the Doctrines, the Example and the Sufferings of our Blessed Lord
and

and Saviour, This would soon reconcile Mankind to it—would strike all opposition dumb; and would raise human nature to as high a state of perfection as it is capable of in this world. Let us lay aside those gaudy Trappings that have been hung about Religion, which are now so far from appearing as its ornaments, that they are looked upon as the Scandals and Disgraces of it; and then it will appear in its original beauty. I would not propose to *Change* or to *Mend* RELIGION. That can never be done. But I most heartily wish that we would change its DRESS. The Times require it. It is of itself the most lovely and the most venerable of all Objects; but its present Garments diminish from the Respect we should otherwise pay it. They are better calculated to enrich the Workmen than to set off her beauty: and she pays too dearly for those Trappings which do not become her. But these Workmen may say, Our Craft is in danger. This was a Speech worthy of Heathen Craftsmen, who laughed at the People for believing the Importance of those

those things which they dealt in. But the Apostles generously made a sacrifice of all worldly advantages to promote the Truth, and honestly worked with their own hands, that they should not be a burthen to the People. And sure we might expect, if there was occasion, as it is to be hoped there never will, that these Men who call themselves their successors would imitate their Example *even* in this. But, all their Honours and Revenues being safe, it is humbly proposed that all Modern Creeds, Articles and Confessions of Faith be intirely laid aside: that the Holy Scriptures *alone* be mentioned or subscribed as the Rule of Faith; that a thorough Review and Amendment be made of the whole Liturgy; that hereafter all points of Controversy between Protestants and Papists, and every other Sect, be carefully avoided in it: and every thing expressed in the *most general terms*, in order that no offence may be given to any, and that the *only* thing proposed in this great work should be to promote the
Worship

Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth, thro' the Blessed Mediator whom he hath appointed between God and Man.

But methinks I hear a voice come out of the Croud, Hey day! What an Utopian Scheme is here! Shall we set the Gates of the Church wide open to let in all sorts of Heretics, Arians, Eunomians, Macedonians, Sabellians, Nestorians, Eutychians, Socinians and all the motley crew which have been condemned by so many Councils, Popes, Fathers, and Acts of Convocation and Parliament? But before I answer this important Question I would beg leave to ask one which I think is previous to it, and that is, What was it that made all these People Heretics, i. e. Dissenters from the Established Religion? Was it not these Holy Councils, Fathers, Popes-Bulls, Convocations and Acts of Parliament themselves? If They had not interposed about these Speculative Opinions which these People are charged with, Christianity would have gone on in its original design

sign of promoting all the virtues which are comprized in Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards Men. But the Decrees of these Councils, the Works of these Fathers, the Bulls of these Popes, the Acts of these Convocations, &c. bred all the mischief by pretending to define and determine points confessedly above their comprehension; and which they have rendered still more uncertain by often defining and determining in these matters quite contrary to themselves. And now I return to answer the Question, Shall we open the Gates to these People? I say, *Yes*. And for this reason, That assoon as we let them in, they lose their names, and become One with us, by joining in the public worship, to which they can no longer have any objection; and moreover, employ all their power in defending the Establishment which would so generously support them. What their particular speculative opinions may be, as long as they remain quiet in the state, concerns not Thee or Me to know; no more than it does at present to know the private Sentiments

of every Clergyman in the Established Church, who have, I believe, as different notions of Religion as they have faces; and yet All is Peace amongst them, by agreeing in the great practical Duties, and by joining in the Worship that is established by Law. If the Establishment then was in more *general* terms, it would be more *generally* embraced. And I think a Liturgy might be composed, and expressed in such a Manner, that there would be very few Dissenters in Great Britain. As for those names of Arians, Nestorians, Socinians, &c. tho' indeed I do not belong to any of them, they do not terrify me. They are generally used, like Bug-bears to frighten Children; as the name of Malborough, in the height of his Conquests, was, to terrify the Infants of France. I am very sure, that, of an hundred persons who are taught to be afraid of these names, there is not *One* who knows their Opinions or the reasons with which they supported them. But WORDS more than *Things* have always been used to govern

govern the Multitude. This is an Art which Every Party hath made use of in its Turn.

But who art Thou, will Many say, that thus presumeſt to propoſe ſuch mighty alterations? and who hath given thee Authority to do ſo? To which I humbly anſwer, That I am One of the Eſtabliſhed Clergy, who, by reading and thinking, particularly on the Free and Candid Diſquiſitions, have been convinced that there are many things in our preſent Church Eſtabliſhment which might, by our returning to the Original Standard of the Scripture, be altered much for the better; that I have here preſumed to mention ſome of them, which I take to be of the higheſt importance; that I think this becomes my Character as a Lover and a Preacher of Truth. That the Conviction of my own mind, ſupported by the happy Liberty of my Country, authoriſes me to do ſo. That I appear in this Cauſe, not only for Myſelf, but in the behalf of Millions, who call aloud for a Reformation in the things which I have menti-

oned: and that as I am persuaded such Alterations would tend to promote the happiness of my Country and all Mankind, I think it my Duty to propose them, to his Majesty, the Rest of the Legislature, to all my Fellow Subjects, and to all Mankind. I hope this will be accepted as a sufficient Apology for troubling the world with my thoughts on this occasion. I mean *Nothing* but their happiness. I cannot expect that my Proposal will tend to my own private emolument; for Mankind are generally so attached to one party or other that they neglect, to say no worse, all who are not on their side. I have already lost considerable Preferments by refusing to Subscribe the 39 Articles again, to qualify myself for great things which a most powerful and generous Patron offered to me. And to whom now can I fly! I do hereby declare that I will not attach myself to any party or faction in Religion, unless that may be called a Party which is truly Catholic, by declaring a Love to All. The *Honestum* is my Philosophy: And Love to God and Man is my Religion.

ligion. I know that I am looked upon, by People who professed a friendship for me; and even by Many of great Station in the world, who think as I do in Religious Affairs, as very imprudent for carrying things, so far. God knoweth who are prudent or imprudent in this case. If sacrificing all worldly considerations for acting according to my inward persuasion is a proof of Imprudence, I am indeed chargeable with it. But if thinking men were so *prudent* as to be always silent on these occasions, there never would be any Reformation brought about in them. Thousands are desirous that Some should speak, yet almost every Particular, frightened at the danger that must attend himself, most carefully avoids it. Who am I then, that I should offer to stand out in this Cause! I, that am the least in the House of God! He knoweth that I presume not on my own strength or abilities, but rely intirely upon Him who is the Common Father of all Mankind, and who is therefore desirous to promote the hap-

pinets of All these his intelligent Creatures.
And to his Will I desire to dedicate All my
Thoughts, Words, and Actions now and
for ever. Amen.

Q U O.

QUOTATIONS.

DR. Garnet Bishop of Clogher in Ireland, in the Dedication of his Book on Job to the Duke of Newcastle, says, How considerably the Public Interest has been advanced, both in Church and State, under the comfortable Doctrine of Free Enquiry, let the Advancement of True Learning and Religion in these Kingdoms since the Reformation speak. Who were the Persons that brought about this glorious Revolution in both, let our own Annals testify. They were all along the friends of Liberty; and in that character the friends of Mankind. *And in proportion as such friendship shall be cultivated, we may fairly promise ourselves to see the great Truths of our Religion maintained with equal fortitude and literature; and, what is more, with zeal tempered by Charity.* This, My

Lord, were a State of the world devoutly to be wished. For sure I am, Whatever the Points in debate amongst Christians are, there is no Truth so certain, and I conceive there are few Truths so important as this one, That the Love of our Fellow Creatures and Goodwill to All Mankind are *the very Soul and Spirit of Christianity*.

Sir Richard Blackmore, in the Preface to his fine Poem on the Creation, says, Whoever shall set about to mend the World, and Reform Mens *Notions*, as well as their Manners, will certainly be the Mark of much Scandal and Reproach; and will effectually be convinced, that it is possible, that the greatest Lovers and Benefactors of Mankind may be represented by the Multitude, whose Opinions they contradict, as the Worst of Men. The hardy Undertakers who express their zeal to rectify the Sentiments of a prejudiced people in Matters of Religion, who labor to stem the Tide of popular Error, and strike at the *foundations* of any ancient Estab-
lished

blished Superstition, must *Themselves* expect to be treated as pragmatistical and insolent Innovators, Disturbers of the Public Peace, and the great Enemies of Religion. The Observation of all Ages confirms this Truth: and if any Man who is doubtful of it, would try the Experiment, I make no question but he will very soon be *thoroughly* convinced.

Mr. Foster in his Answer to Tindal's Christianity as old as the Creation, says, It must be owned that *Revelation* has been very much darkened by *Mysterious Comments*, and straining single Texts to countenance *Established Opinions*, and support the Jargon of *School Divinity*. And when People take it for granted that this is the Religion of the Bible, All they have to do is, in the best manner they can, to accommodate Scripture to it. But the point in controversy is, Whether the Christian Revelation, however it is in fact understood, be not in *itself*, in all matters of real importance an easy and intelligible Rule. Christianity is plain in all its *practical Doctrines*, and as a *Moral Rule*, which, without

Doubt must be the *chief design* of any Revelation, and not to amuse the world with *abstract* Controversies. For as God never would have given a Revelation if the Errors of the world had not been of a practical nature, but consisted only in absurd Theories, so Differences about such things may always continue, and yet all the Ends and Uses of the Christian Revelation as a standing Rule be completely answered.

Concerning Positive Institutions he says, That they have been used *superstitiously*, and that Men have laid an *equal* stress upon them as upon *Morality* itself, cannot be denied: nay that they have resolved the *Whole* of Religion into *External* Observances: and instead of making it consist in the necessary duties of *Piety, Justice and Charity*, have placed it not only in the *Instituted means appointed by God*, but in *trifling Ceremonies, useless Speculations and incomprehensible Mysteries, of Mans Invention*: and that their *zeal* for these things, animated by *blind* Superstition, and under the influence

of

of *interested* and *designing* men, has transported them beyond all bounds, even to despise and trample upon the *sacred and eternal Rules* of Natural Religion: and of *this* we have many sad Examples. But let this wild *Enthusiasm* be exposed to the utmost. Let the Craft and Knavery of *Politicians or Priests*, who have debauched the Consciences of Men and perverted their natural sense of Good and Evil, be represented in the most *odious colors*.

Mr. Benson, who is one of the ablest Defenders of our Religion, in his Answer to *Christianity not founded on Argument*, represents the Doctrines contained in the Gospel in these words, That there is only one God, that he is a pure Spirit and consequently invisible, that he hath almighty power, infinite knowledge and unerring wisdom, that he is eternal and immortal, and that, in one word, he is every way perfect. That this great Being created the world and continually presides over it, supporting and preserving it in that order and regularity which we behold. That

he

he is not only the Governor of all Intelligent Beings, but takes care of all the smallest and inferior Creatures, and that none of them are below his notice, or thought unworthy of his constant regard. That he created Men in his own image: and that when Mankind degenerated into ignorance, idolatry and vice, he sent amongst them his only begotten Son, a person of great eminence and dignity, that by his own bright example and most familiar and excellent instructions, he might recover the world to the knowledge of the true God and the practice of everlasting Righteousness. That the Son of God, when he, with this view, appeared amongst men, chose a state of Poverty, Self-denial and Mortification, neither seeking Riches, temporal Dominion nor sensual pleasures: but kept free from all suspicion of such low and ignoble views. That notwithstanding the great opposition he met with from the ignorance and prejudice, the malice and wickedness of Mankind, he unweariedly went about doing good, and rather submitted to sacrifice his life than

than deny or betray such important truths as he delivered, (*for surely no possible condescension could be too great to promote the moral virtue and happiness of intelligent Creatures, and recover a fallen race*) that this great and eminent person was in a most remarkable manner rewarded for his extraordinary humiliation and sufferings (which was honoring and rewarding virtue itself in the most virtuous and excellent person that ever appeared amongst men; and thereby in the strongest manner encouraging us to be virtuous) and that as by him God made the worlds, so by him he now governs all things. That he will at last by him raise the dead and confer rewards and punishments upon men according as they behaved. Now, adds Mr. Benson, Are not all these things in themselves highly reasonable? It is evident that God makes us the daily Ministers of Good to one another, and chooses in this manner to govern the world, not immediately, but by the Mediation of other intelligent Beings. The Mediatorial Scheme, therefore has nothing absurd in it; but

But is most wise and reasonable, as the Person honoured with that Commission is the most lovely pattern of all Moral Perfection. Thus far Mr. Benson. Had the Christian Religion been always represented in this light, I believe it would have few Enemies now, if any at all.

Those Persons who are commonly called Free thinkers can never be brought again into the Pale of Christianity but by Men of Free Thoughts.

DE LA ROCHE.

Upon Constantine the Great his professing the Christian Religion, it assumed a different aspect: for the Church, which, till now, had been perpetually exposed to troubles by the Emperors, not only obtained a respite from them, but began to raise its head, many following the example of the Emperor. But this external advantage was followed, as is but too often the case, by a depravation of manners, and a departure from the true primitive

mitive simplicity. The good old Humility disappeared by degrees, and a certain *haughtiness* unknown till now, began to shew itself. This Age beheld the Christians turning their arms against themselves; and Orthodox and Arian, by turns, hurl their Anathemas, in different Councils, at each other.

Formerly the Clergy were distinguished into three orders, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons; to whom were added the acolytes, exorcists, readers, chanters, door-keepers. There were very few ceremonies, few religious rites, and the censure of the church against heretics, and those that fell off in times of danger, consisted only in a *separation* from them. But no sooner did Religion appear dominant than new and splendid dignities began to arise, and Archbishops, Metropolitans, Exarchs, Primate, Archdeacons, &c. were appointed; sacred rites are multiplied, and severer punishments, as of death and banishment, are inflicted on those that err.

HOLBERG'S *Introduct. to History*, p. 255.

Upon

Upon which Dr. Sharpe has this Note.

Constantine in his old age, is said to have turned Arian: and he is thought to have carried the Council of Nice by management, the Members seeming to be of a different opinion in the morning from what they were in the afternoon. However, the Arians had their Council too, of Rimini, held under Constantius, who gained a Subscription to the Arian Opinions: and in this Council there were 400 Bishops. [Whereas there had been but 318 in the Council of Nice].

Dr. Middleton, in his Introductory Discourse to the Miraculous Powers, says, It has always been considered as a fundamental Principle of the Reformation, *That the Scriptures are a complete Rule both of Faith and Manners, and as such are clear and intelligible in all fundamental points to every private Christian.* In this all Protestant Churches agree, how much soever they may differ in any other Article. And if this be true, then
 whatever

whatever be the Character of the Ancient Fathers, or whatever they may have taught and practised in any age of the Church is a matter wholly indifferent, and makes *no part* in the Religion of a Protestant; and consequently no Difference of judgment with regard to these Fathers ought to be any cause of offence or hatred amongst the Members of that Communion. For if the Scriptures are sufficient, we do not want these Fathers as Guides, or if clear, as Interpreters. Every one therefore may enjoy his opinion of them with the same liberty as of any other writer whatsoever, with this caution only, that an Esteem of them is apt to carry us too far, and has actually carried many into great and dangerous Errors: whereas the neglect of them cannot be attended with any ill consequence, since the Scriptures teach every thing necessary either to be believed or practised. I cannot Illustrate this Principle so effectually as by the following words of the excellent Chillingworth, who of all men best understood the real grounds of the Controversy
between

between the Protestants and the Papists.
 ‘ The Bible, I say the Bible only is the Reli-
 ‘ gion of Protestants. Whatsoever else they
 ‘ believe besides it, and the plain irrefragable
 ‘ indubitable consequences of it, well
 ‘ may they hold it as a matter of opinion;
 ‘ but as matter of Faith and Religion, nei-
 ‘ ther can they with coherence to their own
 ‘ grounds believe it themselves nor require the
 ‘ belief of it in others, without most high
 ‘ and most schismatical Presumption. I, for
 ‘ my part, after a long and (as I verily be-
 ‘ lieve and hope) impartial search of the
 ‘ *true way to Eternal happiness*, do profess
 ‘ plainly that I cannot find any Rest for the
 ‘ Sole of my foot but on this Rock only. I
 ‘ see plainly and with mine own eyes that
 ‘ there are Popes against Popes, Councils
 ‘ against Councils, some Fathers against
 ‘ others, the same Fathers against themselves,
 ‘ a Consent of Fathers of one age against a
 ‘ Consent of Fathers of another age. Tra-
 ‘ ditive Interpretations of Scripture are pre-
 ‘ tended, but there are none to be found.

‘ No

‘ No Tradition but only Scripture can de-
 ‘ rive itself from the fountain, but may be
 ‘ plainly proved either to have been brought in
 ‘ in such an age after Christ, or that in such
 ‘ an age it was not in. In a word there is no
 ‘ sufficient certainty but of Scripture only for
 ‘ any considerate man to build his Religion
 ‘ upon.’ And Dr. Middleton adds, The Er-
 rors of the Fathers afford an useful and profi-
 table Lesson to us. For the many Corrup-
 tions which crept into the Church in those
 very early ages are a standing proof and ad-
 monition to all the later ages, that there is
 no way of preserving a purity of Faith and
 Worship in any Church, but by *reviewing*
 them from time to time, and reducing them
 to the ORIGINAL TEST and Standard of
 the *Holy Scriptures*.

Lord Lyttleton, that acknowledged fine
 Genius, in the 16th Letter of his second Vo-
 lume on the History of England says, At pre-
 sent, when the Learned of Europe are turned
 to the English Writers for instruction, All
 Spirit

Spirit of Learning hath ceased amongst us. So little has been GOT by Literature for more than an age, that None chuse to turn to it for Preferment. Church Preferments which were once given as the Rewards of Learning, have, for some time, deviated to the intriguing, venal and base. All desire of Novelty in Thinking is suppressed amongst us; and our Scholars, more pleased with security and ease than honor, undeviating follow the Reasonings of their Predecessors, and cautiously walk within the Circle of former discoveries.

In the History of the English Language lately published, it is said, The Common Prayer Book was compiled gradually, and by men who many of them, either secretly favoured Popery, or had great doubts concerning some controverted points; the greatest part of the Liturgy being no other than a Translation from Popish Books of Worship, the Compilers of which had tinged their Latin with a strong Cast of Superstition and Enthusiasm.

thufiasm. The fame Expreffions were *faithfully* conveyed in the Tranflation; and this is the true caufe of the *many* exceptionable paffages that in fome late Writings have been objected to our Liturgy, and which have even flumbled fome rational Wellwifhers to the Worfhip of our Church.

In the History of the firft Seffion of the prefent Parlement, the Author fays concerning the Oath of a Freeman in affairs relating to the Corporation of which he is a Member, The Rule of Evidence eftablifhed in this and fuch like cafes, fhews how cautious our Lay-Anceftors were of allowing any man to fwear in a cafe where his Intereft is concerned. But I cannot fay fo much in favour of our Ecclefiastical Anceftors. For the Regulations made by them have produced, and do now *daily* produce, an infinite number of Perjuries, if it can be called Perjury in a Man to fwear to his opinion, upon a Matter which he hath never maturely and impartially confidered.

The celebrated Dr. Hutcheson, my ever honoured Master, in his Introduction to Moral Philosophy, says, Where Perjuries in serious Matters grow frequent in any state, the Magistrates or Legislators are generally chargeable with much of the guilt. If they either frequently exact Oaths without any necessity in smaller matters, or when the Oaths give no security in the point in view, when the Engagement designed may either be impracticable, or appear to the persons concerned to be unlawful; or if Oaths are required where there are great temptations to Perjury. Thus Engagements by oath to adhere to certain Schemes of Religion, which may afterwards appear false——or about a Man's secret opinions, generally have no great effect.

Selden in his Table Talk says, Now Oaths are so frequent, they should be taken like Pills, swallowed Whole. If you chew them you will find them bitter. If you think what you swear, it will hardly go down.

In the year 1689 when the House of Lords were upon a Bill for bringing the Protestant Dissenters into the Church, Bishop Burnet moved, that the Subscribers to the Common Prayer, instead of expressing *Affent and Consent* should only *submit*, with a Promise of Conformity.

Acontius in his seventh Book of the stratagems of Satan hath this observation, That in the Jewish Church, Pious Princes often restored the Jewish Worship to its primitive purity, not by making a new Confession of their Faith, but *always* by reading the Scriptures to the People; and *thus* they abolished all the footsteps of Idolatry and Superstition. And why, says he, should we think our wisdom greater than the wisdom of those Religious Kings whose Proceedings God so well approved of. For, says he further, What we Christians, forsooth, once admit as part of the Confession of our Faith, we cleave so stiffly to, that we chuse rather to offer violence to the Word of God than suffer such

opinions

opinions to be contradicted. And so we make the *Words* of Men of more authority than is the Word of God. Therefore, in my judgment, saith he, We had best ALL return to the Scriptures themselves, to which every Party appeals for the support of their own opinions, and make that *alone* the Symbol of Agreement. Every other Scheme of Uniting fails us——This cannot.

Harrington in the first Preliminary *to his OCEANA* says, 'There is a meanness and poorness in Modern *Prudence*, not only to the damage of Civil Government, but of Religion itself. For, to make a Man in matters of Religion, which admits not of sensible demonstration, (*jurare in verba Magistrum*) engage to believe just as MY LORD BISHOP or GOODMAN PRESBYTER, is a Pedantism that has made the Sword to be a Rod in the Hands of Schoolmasters: by which means (tho' the Christian Religion is the farthest of any from countenancing war) there never was a War of Religion before Christianity appeared

peared in the world; for which we are beholden to the Pope. For the Pope not allowing Liberty of Conscience to Princes and Commonwealths, they cannot give that to their Subjects which they have not themselves. Whence both Princes and Subjects (either thro' his instigation or their own disputes) have introduced that execrable custom, never known in the world before, of fighting for Religion, and denying the Magistrate to have any jurisdiction concerning it. Whereas the Magistrate losing the power of Religion, loses the Liberty of Conscience, which, in that case, has nothing to protect it.

Bedel Bishop of Kilmore writing to Waddefworth, says, All those Opinions and Abuses of the Church of Rome which we reform and cut off are not of the Faith, but superfluous and foreign, yea hurtful and noisome to it, as the Weeds are to the Corn which overgrow and choak it. And to follow this Similitude, The State of the Church under the Roman Obedience, and that part

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which

which is Reformed, is like a Field overgrown all with Weeds, Thistles, Tares, Cockle : some part whereof is weeded and cleansed, some part remains as it was before, which makes such a difference to the view, as if it were not the same Corn. But being better considered it will be found that all the difference is from the weeds which *there* remain and are *here* taken away : yet neither *here* perfectly nor every where alike, but according to the industry of our Weeders or conveniency of the work with care of the safety of the good Corn.—It is as impossible to make the Weeds and Corn friends, as the Romish and Protestant Doctrines agree. There is no other Remedy in this case, but that of our Savior, Every Plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out.—As for Wickliff, Hus, and the rest, if they have any of them born record to the Truth, and resisted any innovation of Corrupt Teachers, even to blood, they are justly to be termed Martyrs tho' they saw not *All* Corruptions, but, in
some,

some, were themselves carried away with the stream of Error.

A Gentleman of Eminence talking one day with the late Bishop of L—— concerning Dr. Clarke, said, that he was surprized the Convocation had set themselves to persecute, with so much violence, a Man that was an Ornament and Honour to their whole Order by his great Learning and Sense. Sense! Cryed the good Bishop. Indeed I think Dr. Clarke is very deficient in that : for if he had but *Common sense* he would take more care of himself. O My Lord, I understand you. But if neglecting a Man's worldly interest proves that he wants Common Sense, I fear it will be found that the Apostles and our Blessed Savior himself had no great share of it.

Private Memoirs, 1715. p. 86.

To which the Author adds these Lines from Mat. Prior.

By Every Party, 'tis confest
 That those Opinions are the best
 Which in their nature most conduce
 To private Ends——not public use.

And then refers us further to Prior's Poem
 Intituled *Merry Andrew*.

I own that there have been many Wars and
 Tumults raised in the world upon account of
 Religion. But I would have it observed,
 That this has not happened from the different
 opinions of Mankind in this affair, but from
 that cursed Spirit of *Intolerance* which has
 been inspired into almost every party——To
 Bear with None but Themselves.

Persian Letters.

Mr. Jones, in his Answer to the Essay on
 Spirit, asserts, that Every Particular Church
 now subsisting in the World is more or less Or-
 thodox, in proportion as it approaches nearer
 to, or is more remote from, the Apostolic
 Times. And he says, If any Human Errors
 have crept into the Church, any Position con-
 tradicting

trading the Word of Truth, let them, in God's name, be reformed. But as to the Essential Articles or Substance of the Christian Faith, it must for ever remain fixed and unmoveable as that *Scripture* upon which it depends.

And in his Preface to Catholic Doctrine he says, The Jews readily granted the Law of Moses to have a Divine Authority, but as it would not serve their turn in its *own proper words* they put a false glass of Tradition upon the face of it, to hide its true Complexion, and then complained that the Scripture was not clear enough; and added *strange and new Doctrines* of their own to explain it.

In many cases an unaccountable Tyranny has for many ages compelled learned men to employ their whole skill and abilities, not in getting a right understanding of things, but, in defending implicitly what ignorant, unlearned and designing men have decided for them before.

Dr. S. CLARKE.

Selden in his Table talk says, It is a vain thing to talk of an Heretic, for a Man cannot, for his heart, think otherwise than he does think. In the Primitive times there were many opinions. One of these Opinions being embraced by some Prince and therefore received into his Kingdom, the Rest were condemned as Heresies : and his Religion, which was but one of the several Opinions, declared to be Orthodox and derived from the Apostles.

Before a Jugler's Tricks are discovered we admire him and give him money : but afterwards we despise them. So it was before we discovered the Jugling of the Church of Rome. Ditto.

Disputes in Religion will never be ended, because there wants a Measure by which the Business would be decided. The Puritan would be judged by the Word of God— But he means his own Explication of it, tho' he is ashamed expressly to say so. Ben Johnson satyrically expressed the vain Disputes of
Divines

Divines by *Inigo Lamborne* disputing with his Puppet in Bartholomew Fair, *It is so. It is not so. It is so. It is not so.* Crying thus one to another a quarter of an hour together. It is to little purpose to labor to reconcile Religions—It is well if they could be reconciled so far, that they should not cut one anothers Throats! Ditto.

It seems not more impious to question the Existence of God than to measure it by our scale. But as in the search and consideration even of things natural, our Talent, I fear, is to talk rather than to know, so we may be allowed to enquire and reason upon all things, while we do not pretend to *certainty*; or call that undeniable Truth which is every day denied by ten thousand; nor those Opinions unreasonable which we know to be held by such as we allow to be reasonable men.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.

Bishop Burnet speaking of some things which had not been reformed in King Edward's time makes this Reflexion. These Errors or

Overights in the first concoction have, by a continuance, grown into so formidable a strength, that it is now easier to see what is amiss, than how to rectify it. And he says, In the year 1558 there were in the Churches some images of a very strange nature. Such was the image of the Blessed Trinity. How this was made can only be gathered from the Prints that were of it at that time, in which the Father is represented sitting on one hand as an Old Man, dressed up like a Pope, with a Triple Crown and Rays about him: the Son on the other hand, as a young Man with a Crown and Rays; and the Blessed Virgin between them: And the Emblem of the Holy Ghost, a Dove, spread over her head. The taking the Virgin into this scheme was done in pursuance of what had been advanced by some Friars, that she had been assumed into the Trinity. Thus far the Bishop. And a Friend thus observed to me on this Passage. I make no doubt, if it had not been for the Art of Printing and the Reformation, the Church of Rome would have managed it so, that

that St. Peter, with his pretended Successors, would have been, before this time, brought into this honor; and that all the Bishops of Rome would have been represented as hanging at his girdle, like so many links of a Chain reaching from Heaven to Earth, so that Every Pope, by a close concatenation and dependance, would be necessarily esteemed as a Substantial part of the Divinity. But what do I say! Have they not done the same thing in effect long agoe! Have they not attributed to the Pope the powers and honors of the Deity, in saying that he governs the Church, forgives sins, dispenses with the divine Laws, and that he even grants *indulgences* (scandalous word) for sins to be hereafter committed: and wherever he appears, they fall down and worship him. What Bishop Bedel quotes from the Popes Decretals is, in this case, very observable, that in the Explication of this text, Mat. xvi. 18. *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc Petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam*, the Decretal says, The Lord taking Peter into the fellow-

ship of the undivided Unity would have him to be called that which he was himself.

The Spectator N^o 367, after relating the Story of the Day Watchman and his Attendant Goose, makes this reflexion, Under the Symbol of this Goose, you may enter into the Manners and method of Leading Creatures, with their eyes open, thro' thick and thin, they know not where, nor they know not why.

The same Spirit which appeared so remarkably in the first Council of Nice, in publishing their own Articles of Religion as a Standard for the rest of the world, has appeared in almost every Assembly of the Clergy ever since. The Ecclesiastical History of the last 1400 years contains little else. And it is very observable how soon after the Reformation *This* shewed itself even among the Protestants, who separated from the Church of Rome upon this very account. In Queen Elizabeth's Reign, Cartwright and Whitaker, who had come from Geneva, sowed the Seeds of Calvinism

vinism in Cambridge, which flourished wonderfully under their cultivation. But there were some men of Sense who disliked these novelties : and Dr. Barret, in the year 1595, preached a remarkable Sermon before the University, in which he opposed Calvin's favorite hypothesis concerning Predestination and Universal Grace. But, as it is difficult and dangerous to swim against the stream, he found himself soon prosecuted for Heterodoxy by those who should have defended him, on this account, before Arch Bishop Whitgift : and Whitaker was the Person employed by the University to draw up and manage the accusation. Tho' the Arch Bishop was not thoroughly pleased with this Prosecution, Barret's opinions were condemned ; and he was obliged to sign a Recantation. And to confirm effectually the Calvinistic Doctrine, they *very wisely* drew up, at Lambeth, Nine additional Articles of the most refined Calvinism, all composed by Whitaker, which they declared they would make *all* the Clergy of England subscribe. But the Queen and her
Ministers

Ministers said the Articles already established were sufficient ; [as indeed they were full enough fraught with Calvinism before] and prevented this new Ecclesiastical Imposition.

We have a very recent Instance of the same spirit in the Assembly of the Clergy of France : for in August 1765 they passed an Act, that the Constitution *Unigenitus* is an irrefragable Law of the Church in matter of Doctrine, and to which all the Faithful must adhere, under pain of Mortal Sin. All the Bishops present at the Assembly signed it without the least opposition ; and Copies were sent to the Absent Bishops, that they might likewise give their adhesion in writing, which None refused but two, the Bishops of Alaix and Lescar.

It is well known that the Council of Trent added twelve Articles to the Ancient Creeds. Why then might not another Council of the Clergy add as many more ? So that at this rate, they may, by such improvements, continue adding to the Christian Religion to the
end

end of the world. And if this be allowed, it will be no easy matter to refute Mahometism itself, which pretends to be nothing else but an *Improvement* on the Religion of Jesus.

Firmilianus Bishop of Cesarea writes to Stephanus Bishop of Rome that he had made himself a *Schismatic* by separating himself from the Communion of the Ecclesiastical Unity: for while he thinks he can separate all from his Communion, he hath only separated himself from all.

I might here quote a great deal to the purpose from a very remarkable Pamphlet, intitled *Difficulties and Discouragements in the Study of the Scriptures*, said to be wrote by Dr. Hare Bishop of Chicester. But as I think the **WHOLE** Pamphlet is well worth the Perusal of every Protestant, I refer it to their leisure.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

IN just Reasonings our Conclusions will be according to our Premises. From possible Premises we can only draw possible Conclusions; from probable Premises probable Conclusions, and that in proportion to the degree of probability; and from certain Premises *only* we can draw certain Conclusions. To instance in the distinguishing Doctrine of the Athanasian Creed. We cannot form any notion of the possibility, probability or certainty of it without understanding the meaning of the terms in which it is couched. But these I think no body can explain. But let us suppose that we understood them well; and that the Doctrine contained in them was *probable*, which

which is the utmost that the most sanguine Advocates for that Creed contend for, and therefore that it is probable the Belief of this Doctrine *thus* explained was necessary to Salvation. Is it just Reasoning, from these probable Premises, to draw certain Conclusions, and to say that whosoever does not believe *thus* of the Trinity shall, *without doubt* perish everlastingly.

Had Constantine the Great taken the good advice which he gave to Alexander and Arius (see p. 35.) and quashed the dispute between them, he would have prevented all the Controversies which have arisen amongst Christians concerning the Consubstantial Doctrine, and all its Consequences.

Ever since the Council of Nice, or rather the Council of Constantinople (for indeed the Council of Nice did not decree this whole affair) the Consubstantiality of the Trinity hath been made the grand Criterion of Orthodoxy or Right Thinking, i. e. of not thinking at all. For to pretend to think on what we confessedly

edly do not understand, nor can ever understand, and not to think at all, seems to me much the same thing.

It is surprizing that Mankind should suffer themselves to be mocked, abused and insulted by certain dealers in hard words, who, when they are driven, by men of Spirit, out of every other fort, retire to the impregnable one of MYSTERY, where they think themselves secure, and impudently defy all the attacks of human understanding and common sense. Like the Philosophers of old, who, when they were puzzled to account for any phaenomenon in nature, resolved it easily by the convenient term of OCCULT QUALITY.

Some understand by three Persons in the Deity, three distinct Beings or Minds united together, in some mysterious and ineffable manner, so as to make but One. And this is the common notion of the Trinity, founded on the common meaning of the word Person. Others say, that the three Persons in the Trinity signify three Qualities, Modes or Distinctions,

tinctions in the same Divine Being or Mind, viz. Divine Intellect, Divine Self knowledge and Divine Complacence: and a great deal of Critical Learning hath been employed to prove this meaning of the word Person. And yet these two very different and contrary Opinions are both deemed *Orthodox*, *very Orthodox*, (witness South and Sherlock.) But how so? Why, Because both parties agree in using the same words to express their different sentiments of what they both call a great *Mystery*. And so it would seem that it is not a Right Opinion, but the using a certain set of phrases, whether they signify This, or That, or No body knows what, that is required to denominate a Man Orthodox.

The Fathers the nearer they lived to the times of the Apostles are supposed, in proportion to such nearness, best to understand and expune the Doctrines of the Apostles: and therefore the more ancient any Father is, he is supposed to be of proportionable authority. But Mr. Whiston hath proved, by irrefragable

ble testimonies, that the Fathers of the first 300 years after Christ, had notions of the Trinity very different from Athanasius. And if Antiquity in Councils produces a proportionable authority, the Council of Antioch, Anno 270 which rejected the Term *Consubstantial*, is greater in authority by more than 50 years, than the Council of Nice which established it.

Men may innocently err in what they may be ignorant of without the hazard of Salvation. I acknowledge that I am ignorant of the nature of Substance, and cannot pretend to compare Substances with one another, so as to find out the sameness, the likeness, the difference of Substances; yet I hope, thro' the mercy of God, I may be saved notwithstanding. I am sure that if I should, from malice, or obstinacy, or worldly Interest, profess to believe Opinions contrary to the conviction of my mind, I should, by such false profession, very much endanger my salvation.

The Bishops (*Ἐπίσκοποι*) by their very office, are supposed to be Overseers or Guardians of the Peoples *Virtue*. This was the design of their Institution. But, for some ages, they have, especially in the Church of Rome, looked upon themselves, and desired that others should look upon them, as Guardians of certain *metaphysical, unintelligible Doctrines*, which have no relation to the Peoples happiness. Where Bishops employ themselves in the first design, they cannot have too much power; where, in the latter, they cannot have too little.

God knows, we have continual occasion for Reformation in Religion and Government. Of the latter our Parlements give us fresh instances every Session. Of the former, the lives of most people give us fresh instances every day. Because then we have the greatest need of it, shall we hate Reformation and treat even the very word with abhorrence! Because noxious Weeds grow up in our gardens, must we *therefore* let them remain, to
the

the destruction of the most useful plants, which we should cultivate with the greatest care. But the truth of the matter is, Few people study to promote the public happiness, unless, by that means, they can promote what they call their own. The Affluence and Splendor procured by any Profession is apt to make the Possessors think, at least assert, that the Profession, with all these Appendages, ought to be maintained, and preserved, just as it is. Elevated on the Mount of Honor, and surrounded by such a blaze of Glory, they say it is good for us to be *here*, and cannot bear the thought of descending to the lower world any more.

The Light of the Gospel came to us thro' the Medium of the Church of Rome. That Church was grossly corrupted when they sent their Missionaries to England, about the year 600, to bring this Nation into their Communion; and became more and more corrupt every day, by their avarice, superstition and tyranny, as they sent others from that blessed nursery.

nursery. So that we need not wonder that this Light, coming thro' such a gross corrupted Medium, should be so far refracted from its strait direction, as to make us see Religion in points where it is not, and should make us quite lose sight of it, where it *really* is.

Happy would it have been for the world, if Men had rested in their Enquiries about Religion where God rested in his Revelation of it.

An ambitious or avaricious mind may force a Man to belye his own sentiments.

Ever since Force and Temporal punishment have been used to propagate *Notions*, they have been ten times, I may say ten thousand times, used to propagate Falshood for once they have been used to propagate Truth.

The Spirit of Party is the Madness of the Many, for the Gain of the Few.

Conscience is the Fairest and the honestest guide of Life: and it is only when we are influenced by some low and base motive that

we cast about for distinctions and evasions, whereby to justify or excuse ourselves in acting contrary to her dictates.

It is a most miserable slavery to submit to what you disapprove, and give up a Truth for no other reason, but because you had not Fortitude enough to support you in asserting it.

Let a Man studiously labor to cultivate and improve his abilities in the Eye of his Maker, and with the prospect of his approbation. Let him intirely reflect on the infinite value of that approbation; and the highest Encomiums that Man can bestow, will vanish into nothing, at the comparison. When we live in this manner, we find that we live for a great and glorious end.

Only the clear and steady Light of Truth can guide Men to Virtue. The Doctrines which are dark and uncertain, can only lead men to Darknes and uncertainty.

There

There is an high Mob as well as a low, that is, a People who do not think for Themselves, but are LED by Others.

It has been said that if a Man entertains peculiar Notions contrary to the Received Opinions, he would act wisely to keep them to himself. But the admitting of this Principle will suppress Truth rather than Error; would have prevented the Propagation of Christianity at first, and the Reformation of later years.

Learning, like Money, is not an End but a Means : and it is as blameable to possess one as the other, without using it for the Good of Mankind.

What harm is it to us, if Fools condemn us ! They have always, from the beginning of the world, exclaimed most against those who would do them the greatest Good.

The stupid World most honor pays to those Who on their *Understanding* most impose.

Some *Prudent* People are so cautious of giving offence, that rather than do it, they suffer even known Errors to be retained, and will not admit of any alteration in them. But to whom would they give *offence*? To the ignorant, the superstitious, and the Bigots. So that by retaining these Errors they give encouragement to these sort of People; and give *offence* to God, to Truth and to Reasonable Men.

Socrates's Maxim was, that No man is to be regarded before the Truth.

The Disputes amongst Christians, concerning the Doctrines of their Religion, are every whit as ridiculous as those which happened some time agoe amongst the Patients in a certain Hospital. The attending Physician, who was a very eminent man in his profession, went amongst them, and prescribed according to their several cases. As soon as he was gone out, a Dispute was raised by one of them about the color of the Doctor's hair. Another asked what his Coat was made of.

Then

Then they began to enquire concerning his Country and his Ancestors. There was no end of these disputes, as several Champions took several parts in them. Others then started Questions concerning the Phials which contained their Medicines, some alledging they were glafs, others chrystal, and others something else. Till at last they were seized with such a madness of *wrangling*, that from words they fell to blows, which soon occasioned so much confusion, bloodshed and Outcries amongst them, that an Officer of the House rushing in, and perceiving the cause of this fracas, cryed out to them aloud, O Ye Simpletons, leave off these idle disputes, and be content in taking the Medicines prescribed to You. This Outrage, instead of Curing, will effectually destroy you all. But what was the consequence? Instead of listening to this wholesome advice, their utmost rage was raised against him that gave it, they attack him as their common enemy, and he hardly escaped out of the Door with his life.

We laugh at the violent disputes there were in former times concerning the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, and the Day of celebrating Easter, about the cut of a Priests Beard, about the fashion of a Franciscans hood and the Property of the Bread he eat, and many other Questions as important as these. But let us take care, that Posterity wont have their reasons likewise to laugh at us, for disputes as insignificant and as ridiculous.

The Clergy of the Church of Rome subscribe to 24 Articles of Religion. The Clergy of the Church of England, as more Orthodox, subscribe to 39.

It is observed by witty men that the difference between the Church of Rome and the Church of England is this, that the former *cannot* err; and the latter is *always* in the right.

All Divinity is comprehended in two Books, the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture.

ture. A Divine should only be employed in consulting and explaining these : and if as much pains were taken to clear up what is obscure in these two Books, as there is taken to darken what is clear, so much Light would soon shine out, as to make us see, that All things in the Word, as well as the Works, of God are very good.

Q U E R I E S.

1st. Q. **W**Hether the Socratic Method of asking Questions, be not a proper Method to find out Truth ?

2^d. Q. Whether it be a Sufficient Reason, Because a Man was of one Opinion on Monday, that he should not, upon better information, be of another on Tuesday ?

3^d. Q. Whether Unchangeableness be not a DIVINE Attribute ?

4th. Q. Whether it is not high Presumption, in any Creature, to pretend to it ?

5th. Q. Whether it is not *becoming*, yea *honorable*, in a Man, when he finds that he has been in an Error, to acknowledge and retract it ?

6th. Q. Whether Conscience ought not to be the grand Director of Life ?

7th. Q. Whether Sincerity is not at the bottom of All true Religion ?

8th. Q. Whether Every Man who continues to act in the Affairs of Religion, contrary to his inward persuasion, is not an *Heretic*, in the worst sense of the Word ?

9th. Q. Whether Every Member of Civil Society has not a Right to profess what Opinions in Religion appear to him to be true, which are not inconsistent with the Good of the State ?

10th. Q. Whether a Man may not be a good Subject in Great Britain, a good Christian, and an useful Member of Society, tho' he do not give his *Affent and Consent to ALL and EVERY THING* contained in the Book of Common Prayer, Ordinals and 39 Articles ?

11th. Q. Whether there are an hundred People in the whole Island, who do give an *unfeigned* Assent and Consent to them ?

12th. Q. Whether the *only* reason the Clergy have for Subscribing their *unfeigned* Af-

sent and Consent to All and Every thing contained in the Book of Common Prayer, Ordinals and Articles, is not the Act of Parliament which makes this Subscription necessary, in order to enjoy Ecclesiastical Preferment ?

13th. Q. If another Act was made, by the same power, obliging All the Clergy to subscribe the Negative of this, in these words, I do *not* give my Assent and Consent to ALL and EVERY THING contained &c. under penalty of *forfeiting* their Preferments, whether there would be One Forfeiting Person amongst them, from His Grace of Canterbury, to the last Collated Vicar ?

14th. Q. Whether the Clergy would not be able to give to themselves, and to the World, much more *satisfactory* Reasons for this last Subscription, than they have ever been able to give for the former ?

15th. Q. Whether Granting Ecclesiastical Preferments upon the present hard Terms, is

not

not *gilding* the Pill, which would never otherwise be swallowed?

16th. Q. Whether this Pill does not often occasion terrible, and sometimes mortal, Convulsions in the stomach?

17th. Q. Whether in this case, Emetics or Opiates are the most effectual Medicines?

18th. Q. Whether Human Creeds and Articles are not more the Tests of a Party, than Standards of Truth?

19th. Q. Whether the several Persecutions and Destructions which Christians have brought upon one another, from the Council of Nice to the Council of Trent, and so on, have not been occasioned by Articles and Creeds of Human Invention?

20th. Q. Whether out of every hundred Instances of Punishment upon account of Religion, Ninety nine have not been inflicted upon the Professors of the Truth?

21st. Q. Whether Creeds, Articles &c. are not allowed by all, to be only the *Means*, and not the *Ends* of Religion?

22^d. Q. Whether the true Ends of Religion be not to promote Glory to God in the highest, Peace on Earth, and Good Will towards Men?

23^d. Q. If Means are found, by experience, to defeat the End, instead of accomplishing it, whether these Means ought to be used any longer?

24th. Q. Whether the Holy Scriptures are not a Complete Rule of Faith and Manners?

25th. Q. If They be, What Necessity is there for any Addition?

26th. Q. Whether there be any end of these Additions?

27th. Q. Who are the best Friends to the Church, They that would remove Errors out of it, or They that would keep them in?

28th. Q. If the Athanasian Creed had never been inserted in our Liturgy, Would it be now inserted?

29th. Q. Whether the *only* Pretence for *keeping it there*, is not, Because it is there already?

30th. Q. Whether Many Things which gave offence to Good Men, have not been formerly removed?

31st. Q. Whether Offensive things ought not *always* to be removed?

32d. Q. Whether there was *ever* any thing in our Public Worship, that gave more or juster offence, both to Christians and Infidels, than the Athanasian Creed?

33d. Q. Is not Popery most dangerous, even to the Liberty, and Political Constitution of Great Britain?

34th. Q. Is not the firmest Union amongst Protestants, the most effectual Means to prevent its progress, which is at present very alarming?

35th. Q. Is not fixing the Protestant Religion upon true Protestant Principles, the most effectual way to UNITE Protestants?

36th. Q. Are not the Protestant Principles the same, by which Christianity prevailed at first in the world?

37th. Q. Is it not the fundamental Principle of the Reformation, as of Christianity itself, that the Word of God is the *only* Rule of Faith?

38th. Q. Does not the Existence of the true Protestant Religion, and consequently of true Christianity, amongst us, depend upon adhering firmly to this Principle?

39th. Q. Ought not ALL *particular* Systems to give place to this GENERAL one?

40th. Q. Are not the Papists themselves sensible, that a steady adherence to this one Principle, would overthrow their Tyranny and Superstition, and that *Nothing* else can?

41st. Q. Are They not therefore more afraid of this **SWORD** of the Spirit, than of **ALL** other Weapons that can be employed against them?

42^d. Q. Are not these things worthy of very serious **C**onsideration?

F I N I S.

E R R A ' T A.

- P. 34. l. 5. *for* At read As
61. l. 14. *for* p̄fefs *r.* profefs
71. l. 16. *for* Libertus, *r.* Liberius.
108. l. 11. *for* Country, *r.* Age.
197. l. 11. *for* glafs, *r.* glos.

T O T H E
R I G H T R E V E R E N D

T H E

Lord Bishop of *FERNS*, *DUBLIN*.

Ravilly, Jan. 15, 1760.

My Dear Good Lord!

SINCE I did myself the honor to write to you last, I have been very unwell, occasioned by a violent Agitation in my Mind, upon a Subject of the highest Importance to me. But now that my Resolution is fixed, and my Mind a little settled, I find myself, in some Measure, capable of writing to you. And first, My Lord, suffer me to return you all the Thanks that can flow from the most grateful Heart, for Your great Goodness to me.

T H A T

THAT You should not only offer me the Parishes of *Tullimoy* and *Balliquillane*, but assure me, in Your last Letter, that You would accommodate me in the best Manner You could! How then must I lament, in the second Place, that I find myself incapable of receiving Your Lordship's Favors. I beg leave to inform Your Lordship that last October a Book was put into my Hands, which (tho' it had been published many Years) I had never seen before, called *Free and Candid Disquisitions, &c.* I set about reading it with some Prejudice against the avowed Design. But upon considering Matters seriously, I was brought over to be of the Author's Opinion in several Particulars. So that I find I cannot now bring myself to declare an unfeigned Assent and Consent to ALL Things contained in the Book of Common Prayer, &c.

IN debating this Matter with myself, besides the Arguments directly to the Purpose, several strong collateral Considerations came in upon the positive Side of the Question. The Streightness of my Circumstances pressed me close: A numerous Family, quite unprovided for, pleaded with the most pathetic and moving Eloquence.—And the Infirmities and Wants of Age, now coming fast upon me, were urged feelingly. But one single Consideration prevailed over all these. — That the Creator and Governor of the Universe, whom it is my first Duty to worship and adore, being the God of Truth, it must be disagreeable to him to Profess, Subscribe or Declare, in any Matter, relating to his Worship and Service, what is not believed strictly and simply to be true.

THUS, My Lord, I have presumed to represent to you the present State of my Mind. And now, I fear, I must take my Leave of Your Lordship. Suffer me then to do it, with assuring You that I am, with all Gratitude, Esteem, Respect, and Affection,

My Dear Good LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Most Obliged, most Dutiful,

And most Obedient, Humble Servant,

W. ROBERTSON.

P. S. I am quite at a Loss what I shall say to my good Lord Primate. If your Lordship will please to make my most grateful Acknowledgments to him, you will oblige me much.

F I N I S.



1708

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