

A

COMPARATIVE VIEW

OF THE

GROUNDS

OF THE

CATHOLIC, AND PROTESTANT, CHURCHES.

BY THE

REVEREND JOHN FLETCHER, D. D.

"Look at the Rock, from which you have been separated," &c., &c.



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TO THE

REVEREND JOHN LINGARD, D. D.

&c. &c.

THIS WORK,

**DESIGNED TO SERVE THE CAUSE OF TRUTH, JUSTICE,
AND LIBERALITY, OF WHICH HE IS THE
POWERFUL, AND ELOQUENT,
ADVOCATE,**

IS DEDICATED,

FROM A SENSE OF ADMIRATION

OF

HIS SPLENDID TALENTS,

&c.

AND ABOVE ALL,

**FROM A FEELING OF GRATITUDE, AND AFFECTION,
FOR HIS LONG, KIND, AND USEFUL, FRIENDSHIP,**

BY HIS FAITHFUL, AND OBLIGED, SERVANT,

JOHN FLETCHER.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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INTRODUCTION.

THE questions, which, beyond all others, awake the attention, and excite the feelings, of society, are those, which relate to the interests, and institutions, of religion. Religion is, every where, considered, as alike important to the Christian, to the citizen, and to the man. It is, in reality, not only the great principle of virtue, and the preventive of vice; not only the source of grace, and the foundation of our future expectations; but, it is, moreover, the strongest band of social harmony; the surest support of national prosperity; and the best basis of personal, and domestic, happiness.

It is upon these accounts, that, looking into the annals of the Christian church, we remark, how great has been, in every age, the multitude of individuals, who, animated by the spirit of charity, have devoted all the energies of their industry, and all the exertions of their talents, to propagate the knowledge, in order to diffuse the benefits, of this sacred institution;—generously sacrificing, for this benevolent purpose,—at least, great numbers of them,—all the prospects of wordly honours, and all the satisfactions of domestic life;—and not only this, but even braving every kind of danger; submitting to every form of hardship; and not unfrequently, sealing their charity with their blood.

It is, professedly, for the same design, that, even at present, and in this country, we behold, if not

with admiration, at least with astonishment, the extraordinary efforts, which a large portion of its members are constantly engaged in making, for the propagation of what they are pleased to call "Christian knowledge." Hence, those societies, organised in all our cities. Hence, those subscriptions, and collections, which are regularly made in all our parishes. Hence, those prodigal distributions of Bibles in every cottage. And hence, those countless Tracts,—those Sibyl-leaves,—which are scattered by millions, all over the nation. (The number of these instruments was stated, some time ago, to have exceeded, even then, a hundred millions.) The alleged motive of all this zeal and liberality, is, again, to diffuse the knowledge, in order to promote the benefits, of religion.

Whilst, however, it is thus owned, that such, and so infinite, is the importance of this blessed institution,—still, it is certain ;—it is a fact, which no enlightened believer will contest,—that, amongst all the variety of religions, which prevail around us, there is *only one*, which is really divine ;—*only one*, which, being the dictate of the eternal wisdom, is, for this reason, *alone*, acceptable to the God of Truth ; and *alone*, therefore, established, as the principle of man's salvation. "One God," says St. Paul, "One Faith," The true religion is just as essentially *one*, as is the divinity itself. And exactly as a multiplicity of true Gods is a contradiction, so, also, under the present order of things, is a multiplicity of true religions,—or even two true religions. Wherefore, it follows,—that, precisely as it is necessary for men to know, and to cultivate, religion,—so it is necessary for them to know, and to cultivate, *that religion alone*, which is the true one,—*that religion alone*, which, founded by the wisdom of our Redeemer, is, *alone*, the rule of the Christian's faith, and the source of his sanctification.

If, then, there exist any *marks*, by which this di-

vine establishment may be known,—any sure criterions, by which, in the midst of the surrounding associations, it may be accurately distinguished,—in this case, it ought to appear,—as it certainly is,—a matter of the highest moment to be correctly acquainted with them. Happily, there do exist such marks,—instituted by the eternal wisdom, for the express purpose of pointing out the blessed sanctuary. Behold, therefore, the design, and plan, of the succeeding Treatise. Its object is to exhibit, and apply, these important *rules*. It is, to present to the hand of the prudent man a clew, which, if he follow with pious care, will conduct him from amidst the mazes of error to the asylum of real security. I have, however, adopted, for this end, *one* great principle in particular. It is a principle, admitted equally by the enlightened protestant, as it is by the catholic; and considered, not less the dictate of reason, than it is the suggestion of religion. It is a principle, too, so plain, and easy, that, in order to understand it, no other talent is required but common sense; in order to apply it, no other disposition is necessary, but the honest feelings of sincerity. It is, hence, a principle, which has always conducted multitudes, and still conducts many, from the paths of error, back again to the paths of truth.

Amongst the various observations, which I have scattered through the series of the work, it will be thought, perhaps, that I have sometimes trenched upon the rules of Christian mildness. Such objection, I am aware, will be urged against me. It is, however, an imputation, which I should be sorry to have deserved. Intemperance I consider, as an injury, always, to every good cause. In religious controversy, it is the violation of religion; and in a Christian minister, it is a piece of inconsistency. Kind, gentle, and benevolent, it is his', not to inflict wounds; but, to bind them up, and heal them.—It is true, I have spoken, sometimes, with free-

dom. But, it has been, I hope, only upon the occasions, when I condemn injustice, and blame illiberality ; or when I combat error, and censure vice. To speak freely, upon such occasions, ought not to give offence : because the exposure of injustice, and the refutation of error, are, always, in the eyes of Christian wisdom, useful, and commendable. Hence, I will flatter myself, that,—although I may have said many things, which will displease the bigoted, and the prejudiced,—I have, yet, said nothing, that should excite the displeasure of the candid, and the liberal. I should be sorry to have done this. Above all, I should be sorry to have afforded any just cause of displeasure to certain members of the established clergy. For, notwithstanding that I consider the generality of these, as the most severe, and bitter enemies of the catholic church, yet there are multitudes of them, likewise, whose virtues, and amiable qualities,—whose liberality, benevolence, greatness of mind, &c.—I very sincerely reverence, and admire :—whilst, also, there are a few, for whom I entertain sentiments of personal regard, and friendship. To have offended any one of these would be to me a source of very feeling regret, and sorrow.

Be, however, what may, the character of my work, I am, at all events, sure of this,—that I have composed it, without one feeling of hostility. I have composed it, influenced by no other view, save that of correcting error, and of lessening injustice, and illiberality ;—with no other wish, save that of pointing out the truth.

In reality, except inducements, such as these, there are none, that I can imagine,—no prospects of honours, no hopes of preferment,—which can engage *the catholic* to enter into the war of controversy. At least, except motives like these, there are certainly none, which could have induced *me* to undertake a task, which, owing to a settled state of ill health, has proved to me a constant source of

irksomeness and pain. In regard of any laurels, to these I have no pretensions whatsoever. Even any trifling praise,—if, by chance, I could obtain any,—would, now, to my infirmities, be an incense without perfume. Whence, if, amongst the various assertions, and charges, which I have made, there should chance to be any errors, or misrepresentations, *there is not one*, which, if pointed out to me, I would not, most willingly, correct;—neither is there *a single line*, which, if it contain any calumny, or unjust reproach, I would not most cheerfully expunge, and alter. Nay; there is not a line, which, if it be merely illiberal, I would not blot out, with pleasure.

I know, indeed, that there are many imperfections in the work. For, although I have written it with considerable care, yet I have written it, likewise, amidst frequent interruptions; and during a course of continued illness, or indisposition,—under the feelings, nearly always, of langour, and exhaustion. Hence, imperfections became unavoidable, and the reader will, for these reasons, make some allowance for them. However,—notwithstanding that the volume is, thus, far less perfect than I could wish it,—I will, still, venture to say this,—that, provided it be read with candour, and attention,—with minds, open to conviction, and anxious to find out the truth,—it will, in these cases, prove eminently useful. It still forms, notwithstanding its defects, a little stream, from which some weary traveller may quench his thirst;—a stream, whose waters, if used with prudence, and assiduity, may give life, and health, to some sick, forlorn, and benighted wanderer.

Weston, May 25th.

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A COMPARATIVE VIEW

OF

THE GROUNDS

OF THE

CATHOLIC, AND PROTESTANT, CHURCHES.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

“If men have merely reasons to suspect, that a religion may be true, it is their duty to examine it; because, in that case, it may be true.”—DR. BUTLER’S ANALOGY.

I. THERE existed in this country, — it is not yet three centuries past, — *one single religion*. It was a religion, which, from a variety of circumstances, — the characters of its founders; the nature of its government; the union of its members; the splendor of its establishments; the piety of its professors; even its very name, — should awaken the curiosity, and seem to merit the attention of every thoughtful man. *Its founders* were a set of pastors, distinguished, according to the acknowledgments even of several protestant writers, not only for the sanctity of their lives, but for the splendor of their miracles. — *Its government* was apostolical, — consisting of those same laws, and regulated by those same institutions, which, in all other enlightened nations, preserved the harmony of the christian church. — *Its union* was beautiful. The whole nation formed then but one great family, in which all obeyed the same authority; all believed the same doctrines; all cultivated the same prac-

tices. — *Its establishments* were magnificent. They were superior to any thing, that, either the ambition of Roman grandeur ever erected ; or that the generosity of modern liberality so much as dreams of. They were edifices, and institutions, adapted to every want, and accommodated to every benefit. And such was the multitude of them, that they rose up in every avenue of the island, like so many triumphal arches, adorning all its landscapes ; and beautifying all its scenes. Even their very ruins form still the noblest features in the nation's greatness : as it is equally the fact, that it is upon their spoils, and plunder, that are founded those gorgeous fortunes, which now feed the luxury of our richest families. — *Its members*, considerable portions of them, in every situation, and sphere of life, were remarkable for the innocence, and the holiness of their lives ; complying with all the obligations of Christian piety, with a degree of fervor, and a spirit of self-denial, of which, in these days, the public have little or no idea. — *Even its very name* (for names in religion are important things) rendered it respectable. — Such, — to say nothing of various other features, — such, until lately, was the religion of this country. It was such, until the occasion of that dreadful storm, which, breaking out in Germany, in the sixteenth century, burst early upon these islands ; and falling upon the venerable fabric, reduced it, ere long, almost to a heap of ruins ; — overturning its altars ; destroying its worship ; transferring its temples, its edifices, its riches, to a new order of men ; and introducing, by the convulsion, along with the new order of men, a new order of things, — new creeds, new laws ; new worship ; and new institutions. *Surely, then, there is here reason to suspect, that a religion, such as this, may be true. And if so, then also, as Dr. Butler infers, it is the duty of men to examine it.*

There exists in this country, now, — and so there has done, ever since the above-mentioned revolution, — a *multitude of religions*. These, too, are distinguished by a variety of features, which well deserve attention : — although, indeed, it is not by an order of features, resembling those, which I have just been etching. *Not by the exalted characters of their founders.* The founders of these more early religions were a set of discontented

priests, and licentious friars, tired of the restraints of celibacy; and violating all their vows: whilst the authors of the more recent sects were, with very few exceptions, a troop of laymen, and obscure enthusiasts.—*Not for the order of their respective governments.* These, where they have any, are heterogeneous things at best, half human, and half divine; half modern, and half ancient—the artful combinations of civil policy, or the illusive arrangements of successful fanaticism.—*Not for the beauty of their union.* Such is their disunion; and so great their number, that not all the curiosity, nor all the industry, of learning could contrive so much as to count them up.—*Not for the splendor of their establishments.* These,—with the exception of that noble reck of the ancient church, which is the monument, not of protestant, but of catholic, piety,—these are, comparatively speaking, but trifling, and insignificant.—*Not for the peculiar sanctity of their members.* We behold, every where around us, scenes of vice, and immorality, astonishing almost, as they are distressing: whilst even in the virtue itself of the moral, there is little or nothing, that is striking,—little or nothing, that resembles the examples of ancient sanctity; or that implies any painful sacrifices of human self-love,—little or nothing beyond the limits of great decency, and nice decorum.—*Not for their antiquity, and diffusion.* To these important features, which form the grand characteristics of the church of Christ, they can, of course, present no claim whatsoever.—*Not for the dignity of their titles.* These are, all of them, new; some of them, preposterous.—Such, in relation to its religion, is, now, the situation of this country,—the theatre of innumerable sects, and associations, all, and each, at variance with each other; and yet all, and each, arrogating to themselves the exclusive privilege of being the only true church of Christ. In imitation of Dr. Butler, I may justly here observe: “*There is reason to suspect, that such religions may not be true; and therefore, it is the duty of men to examine them.*”

I have said nothing, in the above description, respecting the various schools of infidelity, which, moreover, blended with the multitude of its religions, are now so prevalent in this country. But, such, too, is unhappi-

ly the case: the number of these profane institutions,—of Socinianism, Unitarianism, Deism, &c. is now, frightfully great: and what is still most awful, their disciples, for the far greater part, consist, not of the illiterate, and ignorant, portions of the community, but of its best educated, and exalted, classes. “Liberal opinions,” say the writers of the *British Critic*, the most watchful, perhaps, of all our modern observers of the general state of public sentiments,—“liberal opinions, that is, no fixed principle whatsoever, are professed in every quarter: and in spite of the apparent tranquillity, which reigns around, the day cannot be distant, in which there will be as little belief among the gentlemen of England, as there now is among the philosophers of Germany—that is, NONE AT ALL.”

II. To account for the *singleness* of religion, which once prevailed in this country, is a circumstance, which needs little or no explanation. There existed then,—this fact alone explains it,—*a centre of unity*,—which the public, all respected, and adored. They considered the church as their divinely-appointed guide; and its authority they, for this reason, looked upon, as unerring, and infallible. The consequence, therefore, was, that, hearing its voice; and revering it, as the voice of heaven, they, of course, submitted to its decisions, without hesitation; and believed, without reserve. So that thus, by means of this happy conviction, the blessings of union were preserved; the intrusion of error became difficult; and the growth of sectarism was rendered next to impossible.

To account for the *multitude* of religions, which now divide this, until lately undivided, nation,—this, too, is a subject, just equally easy as the preceding.—When that revolution took place, which introduced the new order of things, its authors discarded (it was their very first proceeding) the long-established rule of unity;—substituting in its room a principle, which is directed contrary to it. In its room they substituted *the right of private judgment*,—that is, the privilege for each individual to decide, and believe, according to the dictates of his own

* “When the protestants,” says Archdeacon Blackburn, “first withdrew from the communion of the church of Rome, the principles, they went upon, were such as these:—Jesus Christ hath, by his gos-

understanding.* This is even the leading maxim of protestantism,—its “*Magna Charta*,” as it is always called; and its “*immortal honour*.” Accordingly, I need not say it:—This principle accounts, at once, for all that variety of religions, which now divide the nation. It is the very principle of confusion. For, if men will, all, judge for themselves, the consequence must necessarily be, that as their talents, their habits, their inclinations, their perceptions, all differ, so, of course, must the opinions, which they form, differ, nearly in the same portion. “The abuse of liberty,” add the writers, above quoted, “has rendered Christian unity little more than an empty name. The generality of Christian professors consider themselves at liberty, at all times, to choose their own persuasion; and to change their opinions, as often as caprice may dictate.”

And precisely as it is thus easy to account for the *multitude* of religions, which divide the nation, so it is at least equally easy to account for that still greater calamity,—*the prevalence of irreligion*,—which now also profanes it. The confusion, indeed, of religions suffices, alone, to account for this: because thus generating *doubt*, it must, consequently, in the minds of some, produce the contempt of religion; in the minds of others, indifference. But, that same principle,—the rule of protestantism,—which explains all the various creeds of heresy, explains equally, all the various codes of infidelity. These are, all of them, contained in this same “*glorious privilege*.” Insomuch that it is *to it alone*, that the Socinian; the Deist; nay, the very Atheist himself, appeal always, as the proof, and sanction, of their respective systems; reproaching the protestant with inconsistency, and weakness, in its application.* Socinianism,

pel, called all men unto liberty, the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and restored them to the privilege of working out their salvation, by their own understandings.”

“The church of England,” says Dr. Marsh, “recognises, to the utmost extent, the right of every man to worship God, according to his own conscience. For, since we judged for ourselves, when we seceded from the church of Rome, we allow others to judge for themselves, when they secede from the church of England.”

* “Like you,” says the atheist to the protestant, “I admit no guide, but my own reason. Like you, I obey its dictates; and believe, what I understand. The Calvinist does not understand the real presence;

no doubt, and the rejection of all mysteries, are its most immediate, and consistent, dictates. For, if the human understanding is the judge, and arbiter, of men's belief, then should they believe nothing, but what the understanding comprehends. And hence it is, that the French Encyclopedists have predicted, that the sects of protestantism *must*, in time, be converted into mere schools of Socinianism. "IL FAUT" they say, "que les protestans deviennent Sociniens;" "not indeed," they add, "for the honour of their religion, but for the credit of their philosophy." This calamity,—which, also, was long since predicted by the catholics; and which, indeed, required no very prophetic spirit to foresee it,—is already become but too strikingly realised. For, looking at the state of those countries, where once the reformation was the most triumphant, we find, that infidelity, and a spirit of indifference to religion, are every where prevalent in them all. In them all, protestantism is rapidly destroying itself by its own principles,—digging its own grave with that very same instrument, which originally was the cause of all its vic-

therefore, he does not admit it. The Socinian does not understand the Trinity: consequently, he rejects it. The Deist understands no mystery: and hence, he believes none. Now, in my eyes, the Divinity is the greatest, and most impervious, of all mysteries: therefore, my reason, unable to comprehend it, cannot, with consistency, admit it. I merely claim to myself the same privilege, which you do. We have, each of us, the same rule of belief; excluding, each of us, the rule of authority. Hence, with what justice, can you condemn me? If, indeed, I ought to renounce my reason,—or if you judge me guilty for listening to its suggestions,—then do you, too, renounce yours, which is not more infallible than mine. Abjure your rule of faith; and declare honestly, that what you have taught, hitherto, according to this rule, is devoid of all foundation; and that, if the truth do exist any where, you have not yet found out, by what means it should be discovered."

"It follows from the above reasoning, that the protestants cannot refuse to tolerate the atheist, without abandoning their own leading principle. If they say, that the latter makes bad use of his reason; or that he is not sincere,—might not the same, with equal justice, be said of every class of heretics? The reproach is, certainly, inconsistent in the mouths of those sectarists: because it applies equally to them all. What the protestant says of the atheist, the atheist says equally of the protestant. And pray, who is the judge between them? Reason? But, it is precisely the judgment of reason, that is contested. To call in reason to decide the difference, is solving the question by the question itself. It is laughing at common sense."—*Abbé Menmais.*

tories, and all its trophies.* Under these circumstances, may I not, with reason, again repeat,— *It is the duty of men to examine, &c. ?*

III. But, whilst I thus state the duty of examination, let me exhort the thoughtful protestant to examine,

* The accounts, which many protestant writers have given us of the state of religion, in different protestant countries, very frightfully attest this. For example, in Germany, the birth place, and cradle, of the reformation; Starke thus describes its situation: “As for protestantism in Germany, it is so degenerated here, that, except the name, little else of it now subsists. It has undergone so many changes, that if Luther, or Melancton, were to rise again, they would not know the church, which was the work of their industry.”—“In Germany,” says Stapfer, another protestant divine,—“the defection from Christianity is almost, if not quite, general. You see there the pastor, and the professor, from their pulpits, casting doubts upon all the received doctrines of religion; and shaking all the principles of Christianity: whilst the people, meantime, are completely indifferent to it.”—Muller tells us, that “Multitudes of protestant theologians make it an absolute DUTY to drown the fundamental doctrines of Christianity in Deism.”

In Switzerland, the case is similar. Geneva, that *Protestant Rome*, as it loved to call itself,—is now, according to Grenus, Heyer, Empaytez, &c. no longer even Christian. It has become, they have demonstrated, completely Socinian. Inasmuch that its pastors, they assure us, not only laugh at the creed of Calvin; not only pity the credulity, which could ever have believed such nonsense,—but even systematically reject the most fundamental articles of Christianity. “Indeed,” says Empaytez, “such is now their incredulity, in relation to the Divinity of Christ, that it would be more easy to find in their sermons the names of Socrates, and Plato, than the name of this sacred Being.”

In France, amongst its protestant members, the case is almost equally deplorable. There too, they are, for the chief part, like those of Germany, and Switzerland, Socinians, and unbelievers. Hence, they have lately adopted the Socinian catechism of Vernes;—“which,” Maron, the arch-priest of protestant France, in his recommendation of it to the public, says, “has this great merit, that it is suitable to all communions; because it includes none of those articles, which divide them.” So that thus, the dogmas of faith, amongst these men, are nothing. Indeed, even so far back as the year 1775, the pastors of the French reformed churches, in a memorial, which they then published, thus describes the state of their members:—“We have greatly deviated from the religion of our ancestors: and Luther, and Calvin, have, now, few followers amongst us. Our society is divided into a thousand different aggregations; and is no longer now distinguishable. We neither know, to whom we belong; nor under whose banner we are walking. To-day, Theists; to-morrow, Christians. But Pyrrhonism, we believe, is the prevailing system.”—Such, too, or nearly such, is the situation of other protestant states,—Prussia, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, America, &c.—as described by other protestant writers. Incredulity, in them all, is represented, as the general malady.

above all, and with peculiar care, the fundamental maxim of his belief,—that real source, from which all those evils flow, which I have just depicted. If, indeed, that foundation be false,—then false, likewise, must be the religions, which are built upon it.

In fabricâ, si falsa est regula prima,
Omnia mendose fieri, atque obstipa, necessum est;
Prava, cubantia, atque obsona, tecta. (LUCRET.)

And can piety, then, I will only ask,—can the prudence of good sense, really believe with confidence, that the wisdom of God has indeed constituted the little tribunal of each private understanding,—the very principle of confusion,—to be the judge, and the arbiter, of Christian faith? Alas, giving to human reason all its best prerogatives; and supposing it even to be ever so well instructed; and enlightened,—what is it, after all? It is, even thus, but a very feeble, and imperfect thing,—the easy dupe of self-love, and the sport of prejudice, and passion,—its perceptions dark; its decisions wavering; its opinions replete with doubt. “*Its great property,*” says Bayle, “*is to confound and destroy.*”

Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis.

it is a real Penelope, undoing the web, at night, which it had woven, in the day. Not even do we ever find it exactly alike, in any two separate individuals. Nay; it is true, that, even in the very same individual, it is for ever varying. For, how incessantly do men find that to be false, to-day, which, but yesterday, they had considered as manifestly true? This is the case, above all amongst the learned, who, seeing constantly in objects new relations, new attitudes, and new combinations, are, for these reasons, unceasingly perplexed; and for ever altering their opinions. And then too, to allow, as protestantism does essentially,—the same privilege of judging and deciding, *to every individual*,—to the ignorant, just equally as to the learned; to the bad, as well as to the good; to the vain, &c., as much as to the wise,—surely, if any thing be absurd, and replete with mischief, it is this. Why, as Balguy observes,—“You might just as well expect mankind in general, to com-

pute an eclipse, or to decide between the Cartesian, and Newtonian philosophy, as to form a wise opinion on the doctrines of religion."* If, then, such be the nature, and such the defects, of this fundamental rule, may I not

* Neither is the difficulty at all diminished ; or the unity of truth promoted, by the use, which is made of the *Bible*. On the contrary, this divine, but insulted book, for ever misinterpreted, is rendered the very source of increased errors ; and the principle, which confirms men in their illusions. "*The Bible, the Bible, is the Religion of Protestants.*" "Yes," observes Bishop Hare, "and so say all heretics, and schismatics, that ever were." In reality, it is by the alleged authority of this sacred volume, that men have always pretended, and pretend still, to prove every thing,—to prove every falsehood, however absurd : and to refute every truth, however manifest ;—to establish every heresy, however pernicious ; and to deny every doctrine, however essential. "Show me even," says Bishop Hurd, "a single text, though ever so plain, and precise, which the perverseness, or ingenuity, of interpreters has not drawn into a different, and often quite contrary, meaning."

If, indeed, there existed but this single reason to prove, that the wisdom of God never designed the *Bible* for the purpose of private interpretation,—namely, that the public in general do not,—cannot possibly,—understand it,—this circumstance alone should, in the eyes of good sense, appear sufficient. "Even the learned," says Bayle, "cannot be sure of its meaning : whilst, as for the ignorant, it is quite impossible for them to understand it.—In fact, it is, perhaps, of all existing books, the most difficult : and therefore, the most unfit for the general interpretation of the vulgar. It is full of obscure expressions ; of tropes, and metaphors, and types, and allegories, and parables, &c. It is so hard to be understood, that St. Augustin himself, the brightest perhaps of all geniuses, informs us, that he found more things in it, which he did not, than what he did, understand. Thus Luther, too, and Calvin, with all their confidence, complain frequently of its obscurity, and of their own inability to find out its signification. The latter even,—speaking of the book of Revelations,—that book, from which, now, every enlightened parson, and inspired old woman, can demonstrate, with almost mathematical exactitude, the errors, and abominations, of popery,—speaking of this, he declares, that "he understands nothing at all about it:" so that he even rejected it from his canon.—And what an instance have we not seen presented to us, but yesterday, in the work of our immortal Milton, which Mr. Sumner has just rescued from that darkness, in which it ought always to have remained,—what an instance of the incapacity of private reason to understand the sacred text. In this work, we behold perhaps the brightest genius that ever beamed upon this nation ;—a man, too, deeply impressed with a sense of religion ; and who, daily, and with reverential awe, was wont to read, and meditate, the mysterious volume,—we behold him, not only, for ever, erring in its interpretation, but adopting, and suggesting, doctrines, as gross ; and sometimes, even as immoral, as any, that are to be traced in the records of the most pernicious heresies ;—and doing all this upon the alleged testimony of his *Bible*.

It was, therefore,—after having considered the great obscurity of the divine volume ; and contemplated the innumerable mischiefs, which

hence, once again repeat: *It is the duty of men to examine it?* For, a bad foundation cannot be the basis of a solid superstructure.

IV. But, alas! to engage men to undertake the task of examination, who have long been the dupes of error; —to induce the partial, and the prejudiced; the ignorant, and the fanatical, to resign their mistaken notions, these are difficulties, which it is next to impossible to overcome. The partial, and the prejudiced,—headstrong, and obstinate,—dislike all opinions but their own. The ignorant,—because all mental application is fatiguing to them,—are, consequently, indolent, and devoid of apprehension. Whilst, in regard of the fanatical, it is their characteristic in particular, to be blind, and violent,—to have eyes, and yet not see; to have ears, yet refuse to listen. In short, it is true, that whenever error,—no matter however gross,—has been once planted in the mind, it is difficult to eradicate it. It is *the child*, that, in such case, most commonly, imposes upon the *man*.

The great reason, however, which renders men in general unwilling to resign their errors, and seriously investigate the truth, is this,—that truth is rigid, and austere, condemning the self love, and restricting all the bad propensities, of the human heart. Hence, our divine Redeemer has told us, that “Men love darkness better than the light.” So that when even this great Being inculcated his heavenly doctrines,—although he did it with all the force of the most tender eloquence, yet did the public refuse to believe him. It was so, too, with his apostles. For, when these holy individuals preached, although they also enforced their preaching by the attestation of miracles,—still, St. Paul informs us, they “were every where contradicted.” The fact is, that to engage men to embrace the truth, or to resign

had always, and every where, resulted from its private interpretation, that the learned and venerable, old Selden, Puritan as he was, honestly declared: “These two words, *Scrutamini Scripturas* (search the scriptures) have undone the world.” Indeed, it is asserted by several protestant writers,—by Dr. Hook, Mr. Norris, &c.—that, ever since the late prodigal distribution of the scriptures by our modern Bibliomaniacs, not only the progress of error, but the growth also of incredulity, and vice, have increased in this country, in more than a twofold ratio.

their errors, there is required a spirit of fortitude and piety; a spirit of disinterestedness, and humility,—qualities, which, as they are extremely rare in the public walks of life, render it, hence, easy to understand, why falsehood, and illusion, prevail there so generally. It is, in short, with the understanding, when once it has been seduced by error, as it is with the will, when once it has been corrupted by vice:—exactly as it is difficult, without some peculiar impulse, to reform the latter,—so, without some great cause, it is next to impossible to correct the former. There is, usually, when the attempt is made, some obstacle or other in the way,—some fear, or interest, or self-love, or perplexity; “*vestigia nulla retrorsum.*”

However, notwithstanding the accuracy of these observations, it is, still, a proposition, which no one can call in question,—that, if indeed there does exist *but one* divine religion, instituted for the salvation of mankind; and whose profession is, moreover, ordained, as the established condition of future happiness,—in such case, it must manifestly be, not only the interest, but the strictest duty, of the public,—every partiality, and prejudice, laid aside,—to endeavour, with earnestness, to find it out; and, having done so, with eagerness, to embrace it. Well, and such precisely, is the fact. There does exist *but one* divine religion,—the work of infinite wisdom: and its sacred Author has ordained, that, whosoever wisely hopes for salvation, *must* be the member of it; *must* obey its pastors, and believe its doctrines. “He,” he has said, “that will not hear the church, let him be, as the heathen, and the publican.” “He, that believeth not, shall be damned.” Under these awful circumstances,—seeing, that thus the securities of future happiness are made to depend upon the profession of the true religion,—how important ought to appear its knowledge; and how essential, therefore, its research!

V. If, indeed, we consider attentively the necessity of religious truth, and combine it, at the same time, with the present diffusion of learning; with the facilities, which the public now possess of acquiring knowledge; and with the reflecting character of the English nation,—it ought to appear but natural to imagine, that, if an enlightened acquaintance with this divine object did

subsist any where, it would be in this country;—or at all events, that, if multitudes were ignorant of it, multitudes also would be well instructed, in its regard. Such notion should, certainly, seem obvious. Learning possesses here an empire, which, perhaps, it possesses, no where else. The public have every possible means to render the acquisition of knowledge easy,—schools, and institutions, innumerable; teachers without end, or measure; and a press, that absolutely groans under the weight, and multitude, of its publications. Whilst, again, from the greatness of the general affluence, how easily might immense portions of the community call around them every instrument, and source, of wisdom. Whence,—calculating from these considerations,—the conclusion, as I have just said, is natural, that, since the profession of the true religion is so essential to the attainment of future happiness, so the knowledge of this sacred object, or at least the study of it, should, at all events, be common, if not general. However, such, unhappily,—notwithstanding all these advantages,—is not the case. The errors, which, in every shape, surround us; the variety of sects, and associations, which divide the nation, prove incontestably, that, if the study of what men call religion, be common, the acquaintance with the true religion is very uncommon.

The ignorance, indeed, which prevails in this country, in relation to its ancient religion, is not only great, but astonishingly great: and it pervades, with very few exceptions, the whole mass of its population. Here,—upon this subject,—the protestant is completely blind;—not only knowing nothing wisely about the real doctrines of his venerable ancestors, but entertaining the most erroneous notions of them. It is so, too, not only with the vulgar, but even with the learned. The works of these men, although they are often the splendid monuments of wisdom, of talents, and industry, upon almost every possible subject, are, upon the subject of catholicity, the pitiful testimonials of the most pitiful want of knowledge,—the attestations, either of blindness, which *does not* see; or of prejudice, which *will not* see.

It is to this circumstance, therefore,—that is, to the *misrepresentations* of our writers, that the public ignorance of the catholic religion, as well as the rancour,

with which men view it, are principally to be attributed. Their pretended delineations, and portraits, of it,—of its tenets, its principles, its practices, &c. are truly curious, and astonishing. “It is calumniated,” says even the illiberal Mr. Wix, “cruelly.”—“It is insulted,” said the liberal Dr. Parr, “barbarously.”—“No religion,” adds the candid Nightingale, “is treated so unjustly.” In short, as Hume declares, speaking of the protestants, at a certain period, (and the thing is just equally true, at present,) “The protestants seem to have thought, that no truth should be told of papists.” This is, really, a correct description of the far greater number of protestant writers, upon the subject of the catholic religion. *They seem, nearly all of them, to think, that no truth should be told of papists.*

The individuals, however, of whom the catholic has here the chief reason to complain, are those very men, who, from the nature of their character, as well as from the supposed superiority of their learning, ought to be, of all others, the least capable, either of misrepresentation, or mistakes,—*the clergy*. It is a fact, that the portraits, which these men usually draw of our religion, both in their writings, and in their pulpits, are extremely incorrect. They verify those words of the great Lord Falkland, who, giving his opinion of the protestant clergy in his time, says of them: “They labour under so many passions, and prejudices, that the cause of the catholic religion was never worse stated, than by them.” Indeed, their pretended portraits of our religion are, as Dryden calls them,

“ But hideous daubs ;
Nor lines, nor looks, nor shades, nor colours, true.”

They are, general speaking, a kind of mawkin, exhibited in every odious, and fantastic, shape, and attitude, and colour, that the inventiveness of ill-will can suggest ; and crowned, most commonly, with a fool’s cap.

Thus it is, that is still treated the religion of our generous ancestors,—the religion of the saints, and martyrs ;—the religion of the far largest portion of the Christian world ;—and the religion of a body of men, who, in every form of moral, and mental, excellence,—in virtue, and in piety ; in talents, and in learning,—are at

least equal to any thing, that protestantism can affect to boast. And thus, too,—shame to such ingratitude,—is it treated by a set of men, who owe to it, and to its charities, nearly all the comforts, which they now enjoy,—both the riches, which support their families; and the luxuries, which feed, and fatten, their own sensuality.—I will not undertake to say, what may be the cause of the strange phenomenon,—that, whilst, in their writings, these same individuals treat the Socinian, the Unitarian, the Deist, &c. with candor, and civility, they are, nearly always, in our regard, whenever they undertake to combat our religion, illiberal, and severe,—not only misrepresenting our doctrines, but vilifying them by every expression of insult, bitterness, and derision.* Perhaps, may the reason be, that they deem it a duty to “*defend the cause, by which they eat and drink* :”—perhaps, because to insult popery has been always, and is still, a source of popularity;—perhaps, because it is considered the surest high road to preferment;—or perhaps, because abuse, and ridicule, are very justly looked upon as the best defence of a bad cause. However, be the reason, what it may, this fact is certain, that the protestant clergy, in their assaults of the catholic religion, misrepresent it “*cruelly*.” It has no generous adversaries. I do not even know one, (and I have read the works of multitudes of them) who combats it, either with the charity of the Christian; or with the politeness of the gentleman.

* Count Le Maître gives the following solution of the curious problem. “It is an observation,” he says, “which I recommend to the attention of all those, who think, and reason: truth, when it combats error, is never angry. Amidst the immense number of our controversial works, it requires a microscopic eye to discover one single effusion of vivacity, escaped from human weakness. Such men as Bellarmin, Bossuet, Bergier, &c. were able to combat, their whole lives, without allowing themselves to use, I do not say, the slightest insult, but even the slightest personality. This privilege the protestant writers possess, in common with the catholic, each time, that they combat incredulity. And they deserve the same praise for their liberality. The reason of this is,—because, in this case, it is the Christian, that is combating against the Deist, the Materialist, and the Atheist. And, therefore, it is still truth, refuting error. But, now, let these men turn their arms against the church of Rome: behold, every thing, at once, is altered. They insult her, with the grossest violence. And the reason is;—because error is never calm, when it combats against the truth.—This two-fold characteristic is visible, every where; as also, it is, every where, decisive. There are few demonstrations, which the conscience feels more clearly.”

But, lest I should, myself, appear illiberal in this imputation, I will refer the reader,—that is, any candid, and well-instructed, reader,—to the works of these writers. Let him consult these. And let him, too, consult, not the works of the more obscure, and puny, adversaries of our religion,—of men, who insult it, because insult, congenial to little minds, is an easy thing,—but of writers, distinguished for their talents: respected for their learning; and revered for their private virtues,—of such individuals, for example, as are the Tomlines, the Baringtons, the Burgesses, the Daubenies, the Moyseys, &c.* Consulting the works of

* *Ab uno Disce omnes.* I will cite, as an illustration of this temper, the works of Dr. Tomline,—a prelate, peculiarly amiable in private life, as he is greatly honoured in public life. His Lordship, in his principal work,—his Elements,—amongst a variety of other groundless imputations against our religion, states positively, for example, the following one. “The papists contend, that the mere receiving of the Lord’s Supper procures the remission of sins, *ex opere operato*, as it were mechanically, whatever may be the character, and disposition, of the individual.” This is, no doubt, a very awful accusation. It attributes to us a piece of absurdity as gross; and of impiety as detestable, as it is well possible for the human imagination to conceive. I do not say,—God forbid,—that his Lordship does not believe it. To do this, would be accusing him of intentional calumny. But I will say this, that, if he do indeed believe it, then both his credulity, and his ignorance of our doctrine, are truly astonishing. I am even sure, that if the frightful charge were proposed to a mere catholic child, who is but tolerably instructed in his catechism, he would hear it, either with a blush at its impiety, or with a smile at its absurdity. The fact is, that not only is the imputation groundless, but the doctrine of the catholic church is precisely the reverse. So that instead of contending, that the mere receiving of the Lord’s Supper procures the remission of sins, whatever may be the disposition of the individual,—we contend, directly on the contrary, that to receive it, without proper dispositions, of faith, hope, repentance, &c. is one of the deepest crimes, which man can commit. Thus, let the protestant reader only consult any of our catechisms, prayer books, sermons, &c. upon the subject. But at all events, ought not his Lordship to have adduced some proof or other to establish the bold assertion? Alas, he had none. He felt, probably, that he needed none: because he felt, that he was addressing himself to men, who are always willing to believe any thing, that is written against popery.

I will cite another instance of this writer’s spirit, in his Life of Mr. Pitt. In this, after having stated in the body of the work, that the catholics had protested against the following doctrines, imputed to them, namely, that princes, excommunicated by the pope, may be deposed or murdered, by their subjects; — that implicit obedience is due to the orders of popes, &c. even if they require open resistance to government; — that the pope, by his spiritual power, can dispense with the

these writers, he will find, there, very striking, and very frequent, attestations of the fact, which I have just been stating,—namely, that they misrepresent our religion “cruelly.” Nay; I could, with ease, cite passages from some of them, which are calculated to call down upon us,—if happily the temper of the times did not prevent such calamity,—all the horrors of persecu-

obligations of any compact, or oath;—that, not only the pope, but even a priest, has power, at his will, and pleasure, to pardon sins;—that faith is not to be kept with heretics;—after having stated our protestations, against these doctrines, his Lordship, in a note, subjoins: “These five doctrines are to be found in the decrees of councils, and other authentic documents of the church of Rome: and have been always considered as forming a part of the faith of papists.” This, again, like the preceding, is a very cruel accusation: affecting us, not only in our character of Christians, but calculated to do us the most essential injury, in our capacity of subjects, of citizens, and of men;—imputing to us doctrines, which are not only not ours, but which even we have solemnly *sworn*, are not ours; and doctrines, too, which, were they ours, would render us, not only undeserving of the protection, or favour, of the state, but unfit even for the common confidences of social life. But, why not at least bring forward some vouchers to attest the charge? The reason is plain:—there are no vouchers to attest it. It is a groundless calumny, invented by the enemies of our religion, and re-echoed by his Lordship, only because he has copied it from them. I have even this good opinion of the prelate, that, if he had studied, or known, our doctrines, before he insulted them, he would not have written, as he has done: for, I do not accuse him of intentional injustice. However, this fact is singular; and rather unfavourable to the notion of his liberality,—that, though, several times admonished of his error, he has again repeated it, in the second edition of the work. To account for this the only method is, to suppose, either that he never reads; or else, never heeds, what comes from the pen of a papist.

It is pity, I will just remark, that men, who enjoy a great reputation, and who probably expect, that their reputation will long outlive them, should have the weakness to risk it, by advancing falsehoods; or to tarnish it, by the illiberal attempt to impose upon the credulity of the public. It is pity, that they should abuse their own characters; and lessen their, otherwise, just claims to admiration, by making themselves the vehicles of ill-will, and prejudice.

“Qu’on ait le talent d’être grand, on n’a pas le droit d’être injuste.”

Posterity may be more clear sighted, and if the flame of religious bigotry die away,—more generous, and equitable, than the present generation. In this case, it will avenge the injuries, offered to insulted truth: and, although men may still continue to admire the talents, that could do mischief, yet they will condemn the authors, that have employed them, so improperly. They will, in relation to the insults, and misrepresentations, of the catholic religion, be astonished at the virulence, which could have reviled it so indecently; and at the prejudice, or ignorance, which could have depicted it, so unfaithfully.

tion ; and to revive, once again, all the barbarism of our penal statutes. Where even do we find, here and there, an individual, who,—because a somewhat more liberal, or a something better instructed,—describes our religion, with a certain degree of temperance ; still it is true, that even their delineations of it are replete, almost always, with great inaccuracies — confounding together incessantly its abuses with its doctrines ; its ceremonies with its substance ; and the follies, and superstitions, of a few simple, and ignorant, members, with the conduct, and practices, of the whole community.

I had, therefore, reason to assert, that the protestant public are, in relation to the catholic religion, ignorant, and illiberal. For thus, those fountains, from which they daily drink ; those streams, from which they imbibe all their notions of it, are poisoned, and corrupted. I think, indeed, that, owing to this unhappy circumstance, (although the protestant is, every where, prejudiced against his parent church) there is, no where,—in no state, or nation,—a body of men, so bigoted, so illiberal, and acrimonious, in its regard, as are the protestants of this country. I speak of them, of course, in general. For, there are exceptions, and even very striking exceptions, from this spirit. Such are the noble-minded prelate of Norwich, with the group of his generous-hearted clergy ;—such the venerable bishop of Rochester, Dr. King ;—such the eloquent Sydney Smith ; the amiable archdeacon Glover ; the learned Valpy ; the polished Vernon ; the intrepid Jones, &c. To these heroes of Christian liberality may some voice, more eloquent far than mine is, pay that meed of praise, which they so justly merit!—Such, too, mixed here and there in all the walks of society, are a few excellent, and illustrious, individuals ;—such, above all, a certain portion of our best, and wisest legislators,—those real statesmen, the Lansdowns, the Greys, the Canning, the Broughams, &c. who now form the brightest ornaments of our senate. And may, too, the names, and the monuments, of these men be, for ever, hung round with the best eulogies of catholic gratitude ! But these, and a small number like these excepted,—the nation, I repeat it,—the great herd of its population, its clergy, and its government,—are most illiberal in our

regard ; not only treating us with insult, and injustice ; not only bolting against us the temple of the constitution, but depriving us, not unfrequently, of the common civilities, and charities, of social life. Insomuch, that, famed as this country is, and indeed very justly famed, for the splendor of many noble qualities,—for its generosity, its benevolence, its wisdom, its love of justice, &c.—yet is it still, at the present day, in relation to the catholic religion, the most bigoted, and persecuting state in Europe. This is even a declaration, which was reported to have been made, but yesterday, in our senate ; and this, too, by one of its own prelates. “If their Lordships,” said Dr. Bathurst, “would examine the history of their own times, they could not find a single Christian state so disgraced by persecution as England.” Such are the effects of ignorance, and prejudice, produced, almost wholly,—if not wholly,—by the illiberality, and injustice, of the pulpit, and the press.*

* So, for example, let a man, in this country, be what he may,—let him believe, or disbelieve, whatsoever his fancy dictates,—let him be Calvinist, Lutheran, Socinian, Deist, or even Atheist :—let him be, still farther, the most immoral of human beings ;—let him be, in short any thing, except a catholic,—and behold, all the avenues to distinction ; all the paths to offices, and honours, are laid open to him. But, let him be a catholic,—although the most honourable, and virtuous, of men,—although loyal as an Eldon, and brave as a Wellington,—still he is deemed undeserving of any share of the public confidence ; the government frowns upon him ; he is denied the benefits of the constitution ; and the doors of the senate are fast-locked against him. All these are his punishments, because, forsooth, he breathes sometimes a prayer to ask the intercession of the saints ; and adores, in the Eucharist, that adorable Being, who, according to the doctrine of the established church, is “truly, and substantially,” present in this mystery. These are his only crimes. But, let him, falling away from his piety, and his honour, think proper to become an infidel, and a profligate ;—or else, forswearing himself, abjure, in words, the religion, which, in his heart, he believes ; (and we know from experience, that this is the general case with our catholic renegadoes) that is, let him render himself undeserving of any confidence, or trust,—and behold, at once, the change !—All confidence is given to him : the state smiles upon him ; and all its benefits are his.

In like manner, in society, let a man become the member of any sect, he may chance to fancy,—let him become Methodist, Baptist, Moravian, or what not,—no notice whatsoever is taken of his conduct : perhaps, indeed, is his piety applauded. Let him even become, if he please, the disciple of any antichristian sect,—Unitarian, Socinian, &c.—still there is little or no blame awaits him. He continues equally to

VI. Amongst the various apologies, which we hear constantly urged in favour of religious error, there are two in particular, which contribute, most powerfully, to its support: and which, therefore, it may be well to notice among the preliminaries of an investigation like the present. The first of them is *sincerity*,—that is, the notions, which, in the walks of life, men generally entertain, respecting this amiable qualification; and their application of it to the belief of their respective creeds. Sincerity they look upon,—as it most certainly is,—a great, and essential, virtue. Therefore, they conceive,—applying it to their different religions,—that, provided they be really sincere in the belief, and profession, of them, their belief, and profession, are, hence, not merely lawful, but even sanctified. Such, in substance, is a system, which, now, we find every where defended; and defended often, (so flattering it is to self-love, and fa-

enjoy the affection of his family; and the confidence of his friends. But, let him become a catholic;—and see the alteration! All around are in arms against him: his family persecutes him; his friends shrink from him; his neighbours insult him; and although, by his conversion, he may have been changed from a libertine into a virtuous man, still nearly all deem his conduct an unpardonable crime. This is a fact, which may be witnessed, every day.

I have said, too, that, owing to this spirit of bigotry, the catholic is sometimes refused even the common charities, &c. of social life. This is an assertion, which some readers may deem incredible. Let, however, the following instances, related by Dr. Daubeny himself, serve to illustrate its too great truth. A few years ago, he informs us, *himself* called upon certain respectable protestants to solicit a trifling relief, in favour of certain suffering, and distressed, catholics. His application, he tells us, was treated by them, thus: "What! give any thing to Papishes? No," they, each of them, said, "I have nothing to do with them. Christ never died for Papishes: and, therefore, I will give them nothing," &c. Feelings, such as these, although not general, are, certainly, in this country, not unfrequent. And if Dr. Daubeny, who relates the above facts, would reflect upon the character of many of his own writings, he might trace in them the causes, which account very easily for such effects. For, what is there, in reality that is horrible, and vile, that this very benevolent arch-deacon himself does not impute to "Papishes?" His own accusations, if well-founded, would seem almost to sanctify the very hatred itself of "Papishes."

It might, indeed, be remarked, that the very name of "Protestant," or protester, is a term of hostility, and uncharitableness; implying no kind of religion whatsoever,—for the Deist, and the Atheist, are equally Protestants, as are the believers in the thirty-nine articles,—its only import is that of dissent, and opposition;—and therefore, (considering the general character of men) of rancour, violence, and injustice.

natacism) with a very considerable share of talent, ingenuity and eloquence. It is, in fact, the great bulwark of every class of our Dissenting sects : whilst, also, it is but too congenial to the leading maxim of the Reformation.

Sincerity, it is contended, renders the belief of any creed, or the profession of any religion, lawful.—But, where, then, is there any proof of this ? or, where, in the sacred Scriptures, is there to be found any text, or passage, which, wisely interpreted, can appear to sanction such a privilege ? Referring to these sacred volumes, we find there, that, if any thing be expressed with peculiar care, and energy ;—if any thing be there ordained under strict, and severe, injunctions,—it is the obligation of true belief ; and the duty of rejecting error ;—it is the necessity of obeying the true church, and the indispensableness of avoiding sects, heresies, and schisms. These are points, which are inculcated frequently ; having the promises of salvation attached to the observance of them ; and the threats of reprobation to their neglect. In reality, there is not, in the whole series of the divine pages, so much as one single text, that can seem to justify, either the admission of heresy ; the rejection of the true church ; or the belief of falsehood. There is not even, in them, so much as an apology for those disorders. In short, this, in the holy Scriptures, is the case :—exactly as they ordain, that men, if they hope, prudently, to be saved, shall *act right*,—so do they also, and equally, command, that they shall *believe right* :—and just as they hold out no privilege, or excuse, for *sin*,—so neither do they present any justification, or plea, for *error*. The circumstance, in fact, is but consonant to the dictates of enlightened reason. For, if God has imposed a law upon mankind, it is their duty to follow *it*. If he has established a church, it is their obligation to obey *it*.

But, supposing now, that sincerity be an excuse for the belief of error, and a sufficient apology to conciliate the divine favour,—what, then, must, in such case, be the consequences ? Why ; the consequences must then be, that all the injunctions, and prohibitions, which I have been referring to ;—all the promises, relating to

truth; and all the threats, relating to error;—all the commands concerning the true church; and all the prohibitions, concerning heresy, are of little or no signification whatsoever: and that, between the belief of truth, or error; between the submission to the laws of God, or their rejection; between the circumstances of being a member of the true church of Christ, or its enemy, there is no very material difference. These consequences are indeed manifest, if the alleged supposition be once admitted. Because, in that supposition, it follows, that it is not from the import of the divine commands, and prohibitions;—not from the nature of truth, or error;—not from the divinity, or character, of any church, that the fate of the Christian, and the securities of salvation, are to be determined,—but from the notions, and opinions; or from the feelings, and apprehensions, which men may chance, or think proper, to cherish upon these awful subjects. Surely all this is preposterous; and alike repugnant to good sense, as it certainly is to every wise idea of religion. It is even hostile to Christianity itself, as it is to every established form of Christianity. For thus, the false opinions of mankind; the dreams, and delusions, of a disordered fancy; the fears, and feelings, of a feeble, or ardent, mind, are made to supersede the authority of the divine commands; and to render every thing *right*, that men may chance, or choose, to consider *right*.

Whence, as the writers of the established church, very justly, and very frequently, observe, upon this subject, — it is not only difficult, but impossible, to shew, in the alleged supposition, how there can really exist any material difference between the sincerely true believer, and the sincerely false believer; between the sincere martyr, and the sincere persecutor; between even the sincere Christian, and the sincere infidel. “If we admit,” says Mr. Faucett, in his Bampton Lecture, “the vague, and indefinite, ideas of sincerity, which now prevail, we are inevitably involved in conclusions, not more hostile to any particular form of Christianity, than to Christianity itself: since, on such principles, it would be difficult to show, why a sincere heathen, or a sincere infidel, should be in less favour with God, than a sincere chris-

tian.”—“Sincerity,” says Law, “is, no doubt, a necessary principle of religion : and without it, all the most specious appearances of virtue are worth nothing. But still, neither common sense, nor plain Scripture, will suffer me to think, that, when our Saviour was on earth, they were as much in his favour, who sincerely refused to be his disciples, as those, who sincerely followed him. If so, what becomes of that blessedness of believing, so often mentioned in the Scripture? Or where is the happiness of the Gospel revelation, if they are as well, who refuse it sincerely, as they, who embrace it with integrity?”

The obvious, and legitimate, conclusion, therefore, which results from these observations, is this,—that sincerity, properly and wisely, understood, is not that loose, and indefinite, thing, which its defenders, and the public in general, are pleased to make it. It is not a mere conviction of mind ; not a mere feeling of confidence ; not a security in error. When wisely understood, sincerity is a *relative* thing,—an assurance and sentiment, *compared, and connected, with the law of God.* For, as it is the law of God, that, *alone*, constitutes the Christian’s rule ; so, of course, *that sincerity alone*, is a virtue, and entitled to the divine favour, which is conformable to that sacred instrument. Indeed, as I have already said, there is something preposterous in the notion, that, when God has positively determined the way, in which he chooses to be worshipped, men should still, upon the alleged grounds of their own private convictions, have the liberty, without any crime, to violate it. Just as well might it be said, upon the same pretext, that men may lawfully, or without any sin, violate the law of morals. So that sincerity, properly understood, is nothing more or less, than the wise application of the Christian rule ; or that correct, and prudent, judgment, which, —*as compared with this rule*,—the individual forms, respecting any revealed truth, or essential duty. Why, if even in human things, the laws of the state are binding upon *the citizen*,—why, too, in religious things, should not the laws of God be binding equally upon *the Christian*? And if, before civil tribunals, the pretext of sincerity is never admitted, as the justification of disorder, or as an apology for disobedience,—why should it be

deemed admissible, or as the plea for such disorders, before the tribunal alone of Heaven ?

But, not only is it true, that sincerity is, by no means, always a virtue,—it is, on the contrary, very frequently, a vice. It is a vice, when it is grounded,—as too commonly it is grounded,—upon any abuse of our faculties ; upon any culpable indolence, and inattention ; upon passion, prejudice, partiality,—in short, upon any wilful misconduct, or the neglect of the proper mediums of accurate information. In cases such as these, sincerity, as it is called, so far from being a virtue, and a principle of justification, is precisely the reverse,—a disorder, and a source of condemnation. It is even a punishment, not unfrequently inflicted, by the divine severity. Thus, do not the Scriptures tell us, that, in punishment for sin, “God sends upon men a strong delusion to believe a lie ?” Do they not tell us, that “There is a way, which seemeth right ; but whose end are the ways of death ?” Do they not say, that “Men *sin* ignorantly, in unbelief,” even at the very time, “when they verily think within themselves, that they are rendering God a service ?” Accordingly, what innumerable instances might I not easily adduce to illustrate these frightful texts ! For, is it not a fact, that the grossest errors have been broached, and the most atrocious crimes committed,—nay, even the very crime of Deicide itself,—under the illusive pretext of *sincerity*.

For these reasons, therefore,—making every allowance for sincerity in error ; and supposing, that there may be a sincerity of this nature, which acquits the believer from sin ; and renders him unamenable to any future punishment,—making this supposition, it still follows, at all events, that it can only be, under circumstances, such as these,—namely, that he has employed all the means within his power to obtain the knowledge of the truth ;—that, in his rejection of the old religion, or in his adoption of that, which he now thinks proper to adore, he has been influenced by no passion ; guided by no prejudice ; conducted by no interest ; biassed by no party. He should have read ; studied ; reflected ; consulted ; prayed ;—no sloth withholding him ; no apprehension intimidating him ; no partiality warping his

judgment. If ever sincerity in the profession of falsehood be a virtue, or the justification of such misfortune, it can certainly be, only under circumstances such as these.*

VII. The other pretext, to which I have alluded, is very similar to the preceding,—a mere appendage, and subsidiary, to it,—but contributing, at least equally with it, to nourish the illusions of error. It is that alleged *peace, and tranquillity of mind*, which men experience in the belief, and profession, of their respective systems. “These,” it is again said,—“these delightful sensations, are the fruits of grace, and the testimonials of the divine approval. So that it would, consequently, be wrong,—even exceedingly wrong,—not to acquiesce in their suggestions.” Such is that second, and very general, motive, under which, in society, men live on, easy, and contented, in the belief of all their various, and contradictory, creeds; not merely considering their confidence as rational, but, just like their sincerity, virtuous.—Let the few following observations suffice to point out its illusion.

* There are few subjects, upon which the members of the established church have written better, than upon this. They refute very ably, and very eloquently, the arguments of the dissenting sects in favour of their fallacious sincerity; and show even, that they are destructive of the whole order of the Christian religion. However, I must still remark, that there occurs here a very awkward difficulty, which always takes place, when protestants combat protestants. The reasonings, and demonstrations, of the established clergy, are, certainly, *in themselves*, most correct and true. But, *as coming from them* they are complete inconsistencies. They are even the violations of the most essential rule of protestantism. For, according to this rule, is it not the undeniable right of every Christian to judge for himself; and to be the arbiter of his own belief? And how, then, following this principle, can the believer of any creed, or the professor of any religion, be, with consistency, condemned for his opinions,—and above all, if he believe them with sincerity? Such condemnation,—this principle once admitted,—is, certainly, both inconsistent, and unjust. The very men, who urge it,—if they be consistent protestants,—condemn themselves. For, if they be consistent protestants, then their belief, just equally with that of the dissenters, must repose solely upon the sanctions of private judgment, and the convictions of their own sincerity. Real protestant faith has no other basis. So that, although the arguments, which the established clergy urge, so victoriously, against the dissenting sects, be really wise and true, yet they are,—speaking *relatively*; and *as coming from them*,—very striking inconsistencies.

That there is a peace of mind, which is the fruit of grace, and the testimonial of the divine approval,—and therefore, too, the justification of men's belief,—this is a truth, which cannot be contested. There, no doubt, is such a blessing. However, this is not here the question. The question here is, to know, whether that peace of mind, which the individuals, above alluded to,—who believe, and profess, almost every form of error,—whether their peace of mind be of this description. Alas! so preposterous is such idea, that it hardly deserves discussion. — God cannot approve of error. It is insulting his wisdom, to suppose it. Therefore, that ease of mind, which men experience under error, cannot possibly be the effect of his divine inspirations.—But, what, then, is it? Why, the effect of presumption: and the offspring of false consciences. Its general sources are ignorance, reposing upon indolence; partiality, founded upon self-love; fanaticism, created by the illusions of the imagination;—in short, some wrong, or incompetent, cause or other,—perhaps, pride, interest, misrepresentation, habit, education. Such as these are the ordinary causes of that false security, which is now, every where so common. So that this unhappy feeling, so far from being the fruit of grace, is, in reality, but the effect, and the stamp, of human weakness. Its chief source is sin, and the artifices of the spiritual enemy. For, our Redeemer tells us, that, when once this artful being has taken possession of the human mind, his great care is to keep it at rest: “*when the strong-armed guardeth his palace,*”—that is, the heart of man, “*his goods are at peace.*”

Accordingly, just cast a look upon the little theatre of society around us; and remark how strikingly, there, this awful sentence is fulfilled. There, indeed, “the strong-armed” does really keep “his goods at peace.” There, we see immense multitudes of men, composedly at rest, under the grossest errors, and delusions. We see them, in this frightful situation, calm, tranquil, and secure; and not unfrequently, the more calm, tranquil, and secure, in proportion as they are the more deeply plunged in the darkness of the abyss. For, is it not so with all those hosts of fanatics, and enthusiasts, that crowd the nation,—no matter how false, or absurd, their

tenets? Do not all these live on, contentedly secure, and confident? Is it not so, too, even with our unbelieving sects themselves? For, do not the Unitarian; the Socinian; nay, the very Deist himself, appear, all, and each of them, at rest? Such, unhappily, is the fact. But, surely, rest, such as this, is not the rest of grace:—it is not the sign of God's approval; nor the justification of men's belief. It is the rest of sin,—a mortal lethargy; and the sleep of death. So that when I hear a man say,—as I do sometimes,—that “his conscience is at rest; that he has made up his mind to believe as he does; and feels confident, that he is right,”—it is then, that I pity his unhappy courage; and tremble at his danger. He is hanging over a precipice, which he does not see, because he will not see;—the more insecure, because he considers himself quite secure. The general property of grace is to inspire fear;—the best property of human wisdom, to insinuate caution.

Wherefore, seeing thus, that neither the pretext of alleged sincerity, nor the plea of supposed security, are sufficient to justify men in the belief of error,—it, hence, manifestly should seem to follow, that it is their bounden duty,—every partiality laid aside,—to examine, with Christian care, the character “*of that faith, which is in them.*” This, indeed, ought to appear peculiarly necessary to every protestant: because *his* faith, in order to be consistent, should essentially repose upon examination, discussion, and comparison.—*His* conduct, if he refuse to employ these, is, according to his own maxims, criminal. He will be condemned,—not, if you will, because he was sincere: or because his conscience was at rest,—but because he had not consulted those means, and mediums, of knowing the truth, which would, by enlightening his reason, have rendered his sincerity wise; and his peace of conscience, an act of prudence.

VIII. Respecting the various dispositions, which men ought to bring with them to the investigation of the true religion, I shall say little. I have, perhaps, sufficiently expressed these, in the series of the preceding paragraphs. They are—candor, attention, industry; and above all, a spirit of piety, humility, and prayer. Yes; let a man be but truly pious,—anxious to find out the will of God, and to follow it,—and he will not long re-

main ignorant of the important secret. “*He, that doeth truth, cometh to the light:*” or, as the Psalmist says: “*He, that shall seek the law, with sincerity, shall be filled with it.*” If, indeed, men would “*seek the law,*—that is, the true religion, “*with sincerity;*”—if they would be humble, and submissive suspecting their own judgments, and listening to the wisdom of antiquity,—with these dispositions, soon would the happy discovery be made. There would then be very little need of controversy: and those disputes, which have so long occupied the catholic, and the protestant, would be hushed; subsiding, if not in general union, at least in general good-will. But, where such is not the case;—where, instead of listening to the voice of piety, and prudence, men listen to little else than the noise of insult, and declamation;—where, instead of candid, and calm, comparison, they study only one side of the question; and that, too, which is the most flattering to their self-love,—thus drinking in all the poison, and neglecting the antidote,—where such is the case,—and it is the common case in life, in relation to the parent church,—there, there can be no hope of illumination: and the warnings of prudence are completely thrown away. “*It is,*” as the proverb says, “*just like trying to fill a sieve with water.*”

However, it is not to men of this description, that I address these pages. I address them to the thoughtful, and the candid,—to those, who, feeling for the infinite importance of professing the true religion, seek seriously to make it their’s. And should such as these, by chance, peruse them carefully,—I will not pretend to say, what may be the ultimate consequences of their industry,—but I am sure of this, that they will, at all events,—after having read them, in this manner,—entertain very different notions, both of their own, and of the parent, church, from what they had done, hitherto. Wherefore, let such read them, with attention. Let them read, imposing silence upon their passions, their partialities, and their prejudices. Let them read, aware, that the time is not far distant, when the Eternal Judge will ask them “*the reason of that faith, which is in them;*” and why,—upon what pretexts, or excuses,—they had abandoned, or neglected, the religion of their ancient fa-

thers. These, no doubt, on the awful occasion of that great assize, will be amongst the various questions, that will be then proposed unto them. Because it was upon the circumstance of their having been, or not been, the members of the true church, that the securities, or the insecurities, of their salvation were made, and declared, to be dependent. "We know," says Dr. Daubeny, "from Scripture, that all the promises, which relate to the Gospel, were made to the church of Christ: and we have no authority from Scripture to say, that any, but those, who are members of that church, are interested in them." But, if so,—how urgent, then, should appear the search; and how essential the discovery, of this sacred institution! If here any allowances are to be made for ignorance,—as, doubtless, many allowances will be made for every species of human weakness,—still, these allowances will not be made for that ignorance, or for those delusive convictions, which are the fruit of passion, indolence, and prejudice. These, it is greatly to be apprehended, are apologies, which, ere long, will prove of little or no avail. In short, it is here, if any where, that men's knowledge should be enlightened. So that no one should desist from its pursuit, before he has prudently assured himself, that he enjoys the happiness of having attained it.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

“The ministry of things divine is a function, which God himself did institute. So neither can men undertake the same, but by authority, and power, given to them, in a lawful manner. For, since priests are Christ’s ambassadors, and his labourers, who should give them commission, but he, whose inward affairs they manage?”

HOOKE, ECCL. POL.

IN the discussion of many of those subjects, which either engage the interest, or excite the attention, of the learned, there exist certain grounds, upon which, as upon their real bases, they are, each of them, respectively founded ; and which sustain the whole superstructure, that is reared upon them. It is so with several of the branches of philosophy, and morals ; as well as with some of the arts, and sciences. There are in these certain fixed *principles*, upon which the whole system, in each, is dependent ; which regulate all their order, and mechanism ; give consistency, or evidence, to their conclusions ; and by the light of which, therefore, they ought always to be investigated. For this reason, whenever there is question of any important discovery, the very first object, to which wisdom directs its care, is to find out, if possible, this useful clue. This discovery, once made,—the discovery of other truths becomes obvious. The process of reasoning is, thus, rendered easy ; arguments range themselves in order under its guidance ; conclusions present themselves spontaneously ; and as for objections,—although these may, not unfrequently, be perplexing, yet is their solution always satisfactory.

If, then, in religion, as in the subjects, here alluded to, there exist any of these important guides,—any wise, and fixed, criterions, by which we may discover the true church of Christ; and be enabled, without any perplexity, to distinguish between it, and the conventicles of men,—in this case, it is evident, that the first aim of Christian prudence, commencing the search, and pursuit, of truth, should be, if possible, to find these out. Their discovery, more valuable far than the discovery of any earthly treasure,—since they are the conductors to eternal happiness,—would prove the solution of all doubts, and perplexities; the conquest over error, and illusion; and the foundation of wise security. They would unfold to the eye at once that real sanctuary, which was erected by the hands of the apostles.

Now, that in religion, as well as in other subjects; and even much more than in other subjects,—there do,—and indeed, *must*,—exist certain principles to enlighten, and conduct, the mind,—this is a truth, too manifest to be called in question. For, since God has established religion, as the parent of salvation;—since he has formed a church, and ordained, under the pain of reprobation, that men *shall* be the members of it,—it, for these reasons, becomes evident, (both his justice, and his mercy, prove it) that, of course, there do, and *must*, exist criterions,—certain beacons,—to show, where the blessed asylum stands.

The same reasons, too, which establish the necessity, and existence, of these guides, show equally, what, moreover, ought to be their qualities and peculiar features. Designed to conduct the ignorant, as well as the learned; the simple, equally with the wise, they ought, consequently, to be measured to the capacities of the former, as much as to the abilities of the latter. Intended *for all*, they should be adapted *to all*. Landmarks to every individual, they ought, hence, to be visible to every eye. That is, in other words: Those principles, and motives, which point out the true Christian church, and which are designed by the divine wisdom to be the guides of mankind in its investigation, ought necessarily,—since they are alike established for every one,—to be *plain, and simple*. A difficult, or complex, method of ascertaining the sacred object,—for example, the investigation of the

Scriptures, or the discussion of mysteries,—would be a very gross incongruity. Men in general, and at least half the world, are incompetent to such a task: whilst, also, it is unsuited to their time, their occupations, and their circumstances. At the same time, this, again, is the case,—that, although the above principles ought to be,—and, therefore, *are*,—thus plain, and simple, still should they likewise, and even essentially, be *strong, and incontestable*. This, too, is manifest:—because they are the motives, which render “*the obsequiousness of faith reasonable*.” They are the platforms, as it were, of Christian stability; staying all the fluctuations of doubt, and apprehension; and giving to the mind those feelings of conviction, which no illusions of error, nor artifices of sophistry, are able either to weaken, or to disturb.

I am not going to state the precise characters, or the number of these happy instruments of security. There are,—such is the divine goodness, several of them; and the character of them all is invariably this,—that they are plain, and obvious, but yet strong, and striking, *facts*,—external demonstrations, which, addressed, both to the senses, and to reason, require little else, in order to be understood, than that men should have eyes to see them; and a will to consider, and apply, them. Of this nature are those characteristics of the true church, which, suggested by our divine Redeemer, and laid down in the Nicene Creed, have been, likewise, adopted as its evidences by the protestants themselves. These guides to the holy asylum are but simple *facts*, which every individual may easily comprehend; and every capacity, with equal ease, apply;—*its unity*, exhibiting the spectacle of one fold under one shepherd;—*its sanctity*, possessing the saints, and saint-like beings, for its members;—*its catholicity*, stretching out its vast empire over a multitude of nations; and extending its duration through the long unbroken chain of ages;—*its apostolicity*, presenting one regular succession of pastors, the heirs of the apostles, and coming down to the present day. Such as these,—plain, easy, things,—are the clues, provided for us by the divine wisdom, by which men, if candid, and in earnest, might, very soon, discover, where the true church exists. The wise ap-

plication even of any one of them,—since they, each, belong exclusively to the true church,—is, alone, sufficient to do this. Whence, I recommend this simple process to every protestant.

It is not, however, to the above criterions,—important, and easy, as they are,—that I propose to appeal in the succeeding pages. It shall be to one, which is, if possible, still more definite than they are; and at the same time, just equally clear, easy, and decisive. It shall be to that vital object, which, by the acknowledgment of all Christian societies, and sects, forms the *real grounds* of the true Christian church; is the sole source of all spiritual power; the principle, which gives validity to the exercises of the pastoral ministry; and the instrument, which imparts efficacy even to the sacraments themselves.

The reader already understands, that the object, to which I am alluding, and which produces these great effects, is that *divine commission*, which, once, our blessed Redeemer conferred upon his apostles; when, sending them to establish his kingdom, and to rule his people, he invested them with the character of his agents, and ambassadors. It was this,—this grand delegation,—that constituted the sole basis of all their influence, and authority; and that communicated grace, and value, to all their functions. For, without this, to have undertaken to conduct the faithful; or to administer the sacred mysteries, would have been acts of the most daring presumption; and as to their effects, completely devoid of every spiritual benefit.

The above maxims being manifest, serve, therefore, as evidences, which render equally plain, and undeniable, the following ulterior propositions, which are indeed parallel to the preceding, and immediately connected with them,—namely, that since it was the *divine commission*, which, alone, made the apostles the pastors of the Christian church,—so it is only the inheritance, or possession, of this same sacred diploma, which, now, or at any time, invests any set of men with the same awful character:—and precisely as the apostles themselves would, without this sanction, have been the usurpers of holy things,—so, in like manner, now, whoever, not enjoying this same prerogative, pretends to perform the

sacred functions, is a mere profaner in the eyes of religion. These conclusions, too, are certain. Whence, the learned Hooker remarks, that, in relation to the church, the *commission* of its pastors is “the very chiefest thing.” It is, in reality, *every thing*; inso-much that Archbishop Brett very justly says; “I have no occasion to examine men’s doctrines; but to inquire, whether they have authority to act as the ministers of Christ: for, otherwise they are no better than intruders, and usurpers.” Thus, is the whole business of ascertaining where the true church subsists, reduced to the discussion of this one simple fact:—*Wheresoever the divine commission still subsists, which was once granted to the first apostles, there subsists the true church of Jesus Christ. Wheresoever this is wanting, there is no church at all, but a mere human conventicle.*

The necessity, indeed, of this important charter must at once appear obvious even to the most superficial reasoner, if he could only be induced to consider, for a few moments, the general character, and the general duties, of the Christian pastor. For, what are these? The real pastor of the real fold of Christ is the guide, and ruler, of the faithful; the guardian of the instruments of grace, and the agent of the Almighty,—possessing even the power to sign covenants in his name. He is the dispenser of the sacraments: the preacher of the divine word; the offerer of the purest of sacrifices; the performer, in short, of many holy functions, which are placed, both beyond the control, and competency, of any earthly tribunal, and out of the sphere of all human things. With these, and such like, ideas present to the mind, who does not feel at once the truth of the forestated inferences,—that a divine commission is indeed essential; and that for any individual to set himself up to act as a Christian pastor, without such diploma, is, in fact, as Archbishop Brett asserts, to become “an intruder and an usurper?” Accordingly, it was upon these accounts, that St. Paul declared:—“No man taketh to himself this honour,”—the exercise of the pastoral duties,—“but he, that is called of God, as Aaron was.” Nay; the same apostle tells us, that not even did Christ himself assume this honour, until he had been exalted to it by his Eternal Father:—“So also Christ glorified

not himself to be made a High priest." He adds, still farther, that no one should presume so much as *to preach*,—the least awful, perhaps, of all pastoral duties,—unless he have been lawfully commissioned so to do:—"How," he says, "shall they preach, unless they be sent?" Such is the necessity of this sacred charter; which, thus, constitutes the very essence of all spiritual government.

But, let us now refer to that important occasion, when our holy Legislator was pleased to establish; or rather, to impart, this grand investiture.

This divine Being had already, during the course of his sacred ministry, arranged, more or less, the order of the constitution of his kingdom; and organised several of its laws. He had, too, selected, as the future agents of his authority, and as the instruments of his mercy, a small portion of individuals,—his apostles. To these, at different times, he had granted several distinguished privileges. He had authorised them to preach, and to baptise; to offer up the holy Eucharist, &c. But, he had not, as yet, communicated to them that great credential, which was intended to give effect to all their future conduct; and to be the real basis of their pastoral ministry. It was after his resurrection, that he did this; and just before he ascended to his eternal throne.—I have already observed, that this divine Being himself, when he came to reform, and instruct, his creatures, had brought down with him from heaven a commission, which had been delivered to him by the hands of his own Eternal Father; and by virtue of which alone, he had been engaged, as himself declared, to undertake the important task. Wherefore, it was *this*,—this very same sacred charter,—that he now solemnly transferred into the hands of his apostles. Having given them his peace, he now presented the blessed instrument to them, saying:—"As my Father hath sent me, even so do I send you."—These are words, too plain to stand in need of any commentary. They very manifestly imply, and express, the conveyance of a divine commission from the hands of Christ to those of his apostles, giving authority to these holy men to govern his spiritual kingdom, and to perform all the functions of their sacred ministry;—and founding, at the same time, their right to do this

upon the grounds of that very same sanction, from which the great Pontiff himself had derived his own pastoral delegation ;—“ as my Father hath sent me, even so do I send you.”

But, the important commission, thus given by Christ Jesus to his apostles, was not designed to be confined to the persons of the apostles only. It was not a personal honour ; nor a temporary institution. On the contrary, it was intended for the general benefit of all mankind ; and, for this reason, established, by a kind of perpetual entail, to subsist for ever. In reality, the same causes, which rendered it useful to a certain portion of society, render it equally necessary to all : and the same motive, which made it necessary, at one period, makes, and will always make, it, necessary, at every period. In short, since it constitutes the real grounds of the government of Christ’s spiritual kingdom,—so, of course, it must, just like this immortal institution, be imperishable, and perpetual. Accordingly, this, too, is manifest, not only from the nature of things, but from the positive assurances of our Redeemer. Thus, for example, on the occasion, when this divine Being deputed his apostles to go, and teach, and baptise,—he said to them : “ All power is given to me in heaven, and on earth, Go, therefore, &c. and behold, I am with you, all days, even to the end of the world.” These words again, like the text, which I cited in the preceding paragraph, need little or no explanation. Like it, they are clear, and easy,—expressing, as it does, a divine delegation, imparted to the apostles ;—a delegation, not confined exclusively to those individuals ; but intended, just equally, for their successors ; and appointed even through the medium of these, and of the successors again of these, to be regularly, and constantly, perpetuated, till the end of ages. Such is their obvious signification. Because it is only by these means, that Christ Jesus can possibly be conceived “ to be *with* his apostles, teaching &c. to the end of the world.”

The import, indeed, of the above passage, as well as that of several others similar to it, is so plain, that there are few protestant writers, either ancient, or modern, who have not assented to it. Thus Dr. Daubeny says : “ The commission, by which the apostles, and their suc-

cessors, became governors of the church, originally proceeded from the head of the church. It, consequently, conveyed an investiture of authority from that holy fountain, from whence all authority in spiritual matters is to be derived. *As my Father hath sent me*, said Christ to his apostles, *so I send you*. And from the circumstance of the original delivery of the apostolic commission being accompanied with a declaration, which plainly imported the continuance of it to the end of the world, the church has reasonably, and *universally* concluded,—as might be proved from unanswerable evidence,—that it was the divine intention, that *this same commission*, for the accomplishment of the same divine object, should accompany the church, through every stage of its progress.”*

“Should it be objected,” says the Bampton Lecturer of 1817, “that this commission was merely personal; and that it ceased with the lives of those, on whom it was bestowed, it may be answered, that we have the same evidence to prove the continuance of the commission to the successors of the apostles, as to substantiate the fact of its having been originally granted to them. For, he, who is the source of all power; and from whom alone, whatever is done by the governors of the church, derives its sanction, expressly declared, that the authority, with which the ministers of his word were invested, was not temporary, but permanent; that it was granted, not to the apostles only, to enable them to build the

* If, in the series of these pages, I am observed to cite the authority of Dr. Daubeny, more frequently than I do that of any other protestant divine,—I will here remark, that my motive for doing so, is this,—not that I entertain any peculiar esteem, either for the learning, the talents, or the character, of the man; (I in fact, entertain no opinion of any of these qualities, that could, in any degree, flatter his vanity) my motive is this, that he is now considered, by what is called “the orthodox” portion of the established clergy, as their leading oracle, and as the best champion, and defender, of their church. Whence, he is so loudly praised by the reviewers of this party;—honoured, by them, with every flattering term of praise; denominated sometimes, from his age and wisdom—“*another Nestor*;” sometimes, from his strength, and valour,—“*another Hercules*,” &c So that thus, by citing the authority of this redoubtable theologian, I consider myself, as citing that of the great body of the established clergy. Such is my sole motive for introducing, so often as I shall do, the words of Dr. Daubeny.

church; but to their successors also, throughout *all ages.*"

Having, therefore, ascertained these two important facts,—first, that the great Founder of the church has established in it a divine commission, as the real basis of all pastoral power; and secondly, that he has ordained, that this sacred charter should always, through the medium of succession, be perpetuated, and preserved,—having done this, it cannot appear necessary for me to describe, what the precise nature of this order of succession ought to be. The reader, if once impressed with the foregoing truths, will easily comprehend this. For, feeling, that, since every thing here is sacred,—so, of course, every thing must be conformable to the character of the holy institution: "*No one can build upon any other foundation but that, which Christ Jesus hath laid.*" Hence, he will feel, that the line of succession ought essentially, in order to correspond with this great design, to be *lawful, regular, and direct.* It should be *lawful*;—that is, it should be a succession, not founded upon violence, and usurpation; not upon fraud, and injustice, but upon the strictest claims of right. It should be *regular, and direct*;—that is, it should be, not a broken, interrupted, lineage, but a series of inheritance, immediate, and unimpaired,—presenting a chain of pastors, in which not a single link is wanting, and reaching from the hands of the apostles down to the hands of the present priesthood. Without this, the consequence would be, that neither could the divine charter be preserved; nor could the faithful ascertain, who, in reality, their true pastors are. So that even this, too, is, again, admitted by a multitude of protestant writers; and particularly by the members of the established church. These, all, allow, that the right to exercise any of the pastoral functions is founded essentially upon the claim of legitimate inheritance. They even assert, that a mere *defect* would be, here, a fatal circumstance. "A defect in the mission of the ministers of the gospel," says Dr. Daubeny, "invalidates the sacraments. Where the commission, delivered originally by our Saviour; and by his authority, continued in the church, does not *actually* subsist, there the sacraments are not the seals of the divine covenant, but must be considered in the

light of *human* ordinances.” Whence, the Doctor very justly concludes, that the consideration of this subject is, “of *primary and essential* importance to every professor of Christianity.”*

It is therefore, true, that, by the application of one single principle, and of a principle plain, and simple, as it is important,—the mere verification of *a fact*,—it is easy to decide at once the whole controversy between the catholic and the protestant churches; and to discover, where actually subsists that divine sanctuary,—the only asylum of security,—which was reared by the hands of the first apostles. For, it is thus, certain, and acknowledged, that wheresoever that sacred credential is now preserved,—*there, and there only*, exists this blessed institution. So that if the sacred instrument be now vested in the hands of the catholic ministry, then it is also certain, that the fold which they govern is exclusively divine:—as, in like manner, if it be the property of any one of the communities of the reformation, then also it is equally certain, that this fortunate society is, alone, the genuine temple of the Christian religion. Without it, churches are not churches, but mere human fabrics, which, cumbering the ground upon which they

* “If there be no uninterrupted succession,” says the acute reasoner, W. Law, in his Answer to the Bishop of Bangor, “then there are no authorised ministers from Christ. If no such ministers, then no Christian sacraments. If no Christian sacraments, then no Christian covenant, whereof the sacraments are the stated, and visible, seals,” “If there be not,” he adds, “a succession of persons, authorised from Christ to send others to act in his name, then both episcopal, and presbyterian, teachers are, equally, usurpers; and as mere laymen as any at all. For, there cannot be any other difference between clergy, and laity, but as one hath authority, derived from Christ, to perform offices, which the other hath not. But, the authority can be, no otherwise, had, than by an uninterrupted succession of men from Christ, empowered to qualify others. For, if the succession be once broken, people must either go into the ministry of their own account; or be sent by such as have no more power to send others, than to go themselves. And can these be called ministers of Christ; or received, as his ambassadors? Can they be thought to act in his name, who have no authority from him? If there be no succession of ordinances from Christ, every one is equally qualified to ordain: The administering a sacrament is an action, we have no right to perform, considered, either as men, gentlemen, or scholars, or members of civil society. Who, then, can have any authority to interpose, but he, that has it from Christ? And, how it can be had from him, without succession, is not easily to be conceived.”

stand, are alike injurious to man's salvation, and insulting to the God of truth.

It was accordingly upon these accounts, that,—referring to the conduct of the fathers and early pastors of the Christian church,—we find, whenever there was question of schisms, or sects, or innovations, those enlightened men used always, and beyond every other argument, to instruct their flocks to put the following, or such like, interrogatories to the authors and abettors of these evils: “Who are you? Whence come you? Who gave authority to you? Who bade you preach, and administer the holy sacraments? Who made you pastors?” These and such as these are the questions which the enlightened wisdom of the fathers of the church, not only for ever asked, themselves; but put constantly into the mouths of the faithful,—thus guarding them against the artifices of seduction; and enabling them by this easy expedient to preserve, or if lost, to recover the knowledge of the true church. There is indeed no better clue that the hand of prudence can lay hold of to find out the blessed sanctuary. Accordingly it is still as it was anciently the great principle which the wisdom of catholicity continues to recommend to the public,—exhorting both her own children and her adversaries to consult it constantly; putting to themselves those same questions which I have just repeated; in order that by this means, distinguishing between the true and the false pastor, they may thus distinguish equally between the true and the false church. Would only that the useful process were employed more frequently than it is! But, alas, such in these days are the indolence and the ignorance of the public, that seldom does even an individual give himself the trouble so much as to reflect upon it. Whilst also it is perhaps too true, that even we, as catholics, do not, so often, and so urgently press forward the useful subject as we might do.* If

* Speaking of the period of the Reformation, Rousseau condemns the catholics for not having then sufficiently urged the subject upon the feelings of the protestants. His words are remarkable; and as they are equally applicable to protestantism, now, as they were, on the occasion of its introduction, so I will, for this reason, here transcribe them.

“Let us go back to the first origin of the protestant religion. At the time, when the first reformers began to raise their voices, the

pressed with wisdom,—provided only that men would study it,—it would always produce some effect; either pointing out where the guilt of schism lurks—or bringing back its victims,—as it has done often,—to the pastures of the ancient fold.

I have said, that such, in these times, are the indolence, and the ignorance, of the public, in relation to this momentous subject, that seldom does an individual amongst them give himself the trouble to reflect upon it. Indeed, not only is this the case, but we hear the clergy of the established church lamenting, every day, that, either from indolence, ignorance, or indifference, men appear, now, to have lost all notion of true religion; and all ideas of the real character of the Christian church,

whole church was at peace. All sentiments were unanimous; and not a single essential dogma was contested amongst Christians. In this state of calm tranquillity, behold, two, or three men came forward; and raised their voices. They cried out aloud, throughout all Europe;—‘Christians, beware of yourselves. You are imposed upon, and seduced. Men are leading you on in the road to hell. The Pope is Antichrist. His church is the school of lies; and you are lost, if you do not listen to us.’

“At these first clamours, Europe, astonished, remained, for some moments, in silence, awaiting the event. At length, the clergy, awaking from their first surprise; and seeing, that these innovators drew followers after them, felt the necessity of coming to some explanation with them. They began, by asking them, at what they aimed, with all this uproar? ‘We are,’ they boldly answered, ‘the apostles of truth, sent to reform the church, and to lead back the faithful from those ways of perdition, in which the priests are now conducting them.’

“‘But,’ (it was again asked them) ‘who gave you this fine commission to come, and disturb the peace of the church, as well as the public tranquillity?’ ‘Our consciences,’ they replied; ‘—our reason; an interior light; the voice of God, which we cannot, without sin, resist. It is He, that has called us to this holy ministry: and we but follow our vocation.’

“‘You are, then,’ observed the catholics, ‘the envoys of the Almighty? In this case, we certainly do allow, that it is our duty to preach; to reform; and to instruct. And it is ours to listen to you. But then, in order to obtain these rights, begin by showing us your credentials. Prophecy; heal the sick; give sight to the blind; perform miracles. In short, display the proofs of your mission.’

“‘We are the envoys of God,’ replied the reformers; ‘but, our mission is not an extraordinary mission. We do not bring to you any new revelation. We confine ourselves to that, which has been delivered to you; but, which you no longer understand.’

“If the catholics, without amusing themselves in cavilling with the proofs of their adversaries, had confined themselves to the question of contesting their right to preach, and instruct, they would, in this case,

—of the nature, and sin, of schism; and of the obligation of true belief. “All correct knowledge,” says Dr. Daubeny, “upon a subject, which made the strongest impression upon the minds of the primitive Christians, appears, at this time, so lost, amid the confusion of religious persuasions, as to render any attempt to replace the subject in question on the ground, in which it stood, in the early ages of the church, almost an useless undertaking. The spurious liberality of the day has, in a manner, brought every thing to the same level, by giving the world to understand, that all religious persuasions are equally acceptable to God, provided they are sincerely professed; and that provided men give the name of religion to their respective professional opinions, they are left at full liberty to fashion them, in what shape, they please. The ideas, which now prevail, are such as never yet prevailed in the Christian world.” These observations are, certainly, but too well founded: and it is a melancholy fact, that all the notions, which, now, the great mass of the public entertain, respecting both the nature of the Christian church, and the charac-

have perplexed them. In the first place, they would have said to them:—“Your manner of reasoning is but merely begging the question. You say, you are the envoys of God; and you require, that we should believe you, upon your own word: because you give us no other sign, except new interpretations of the scriptures, which have always been understood in a different sense from yours. You do not preach, you say, new doctrines. But, what, then, do you do, by preaching to us your new interpretations? Giving a new sense to the words of the scriptures,—what is this, but establishing new doctrines? Is it not making God speak otherwise, than he had spoken? It is not the sound, but the sense, of words, that has been revealed. And to change, therefore, that sense, which has been acknowledged, and determined, by the church,—this is changing revelation. What title, then, have you to oblige us to submit our common judgment to your private spirit? You declare open war against us. You blow the fire of sedition every where. And to resist your lessons is being, you declare, rebels, idolaters, and deserving the fires of hell. What! *you*, a set of innovators;—*you*, merely upon the authority of your own opinion, supported by a few hundred individuals,—*you* burn your adversaries! Whilst *we*, with fifteen centuries of antiquity; and the voices of a hundred million believers, are wrong in opposing you! Either, then, cease to speak, and to act, as apostles; or else, show us your credentials.”

“To this discourse, what solid reply could our reformers have made? For my own part, I cannot see it. I think, that, either they would have been reduced to hold their tongue; or else, to have performed miracles.”

ter of the Christian pastor, are preposterous almost, as they are irreligious. They now look upon any thing as a church, where a sermon is preached; and any one, as a pastor, who preaches it. Under these circumstances therefore, I can flatter myself with very little hope, that a treatise, like the present,—although now peculiarly important,—will produce any beneficial effect. If, happily, it should chance to do this, it can, at all events, be only upon the minds of a very small portion of thoughtful, and prudent, individuals. May such, then, read it, with candor, and attention:—as it is merely for the sake of such, that I have been induced to undertake it.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE FORM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

“The ancient writers, all, agree, with unanimous consent, that the order of Bishops was made by the divine appointment.”

BINGHAM.—ORIG. ECCLES.

IN the preceding chapter, I have stated a series of propositions, which, though little attended to, as I have said, by the great herd of society, are yet such,—so plain, and obvious,—as not even to be contested by the learned, or enlightened, Christian. The church is the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ:—*therefore*, like all other kingdoms, it has its government. It has its government: *therefore*, it has also, its governors. It has its governors: *and therefore, again*,—since these are the ministers of divine things,—their commission must be divine.—Such are the propositions, which I have established. The subject is, thus far, clearly understood; and there is little or no dispute concerning it.

However, it is here, that the general agreement ends. It is here,—from this point,—that begins a series of controversy, which, ever since the era of the protestant revolution, has divided Christian Europe; and has even, perhaps beyond any other religious question, been carried on, with peculiar ardor; and sometimes, indeed, with peculiar art, and eloquence. The reason of this is obvious. The sects of protestantism are various. And since they, all, and each, acknowledge the indispensa-

ble necessity of a divine commission, as the real grounds of all pastoral power; and as the sole title, that can justify men for acting as the ministers of the faithful,—so, of course, it became incumbent on them to establish, each, their supposed claims to the great prerogative; and to show, by what means, they had made it theirs. The task is, no doubt, difficult. And hence, the multiplicity, and sometimes ingenuity, of their respective expedients; and the zeal,—not to say, animosity,—with which they are found, so constantly, to have defended them.

The method, by which, during the uninterrupted course of fifteen hundred years, the church had accounted for the possession of the pastoral power; and for the rights, and prerogatives, of its sacred ministry, had been always, and every where, the same;—being also, at the same time, peculiarly plain and simple. It was this, that our divine Legislator, arranging the constitution, and order, of his spiritual kingdom, had been pleased to confide the government of it, not to the ordinary priesthood in general, but to a class of men, distinct from these, and superior to them; and designated, under the separate title of *Bishops*. Upon these, it was always taught, the divine commission of governing the faithful had been entailed. They were regarded as the direct successors of the first apostles; and as the heirs of their authority.—Such was the method, by which, until the era of the Reformation, the wisdom of Christianity had explained the government of the church; and such the means, by which order, submission, and harmony, had been maintained amongst its members.

The Reformation came. And behold, for the first time, the sacred institution was now called in question. Men, now, in great numbers, departed from the parent church: and by way of justification of their conduct; and to excuse their schism, they denied the episcopal power;—contending, that it was founded upon artifice, and usurpation. All this, besides being a necessary preliminary to their own subsequent pretensions, was, at the same time, but a natural piece of consistency. For, if men will rebel; and reject the authority of their superiors, the most natural vindication, which they can offer, is at once to deny the legitimacy of such authority. To

admit this, and yet refuse to submit to it, is a contradiction. Hence, therefore, it was, that, both at the epoch of the Reformation, and since that period, immense portions of the protestant community have always contended,—and do so still,—that the divine commission to rule the Christian fold is not vested exclusively in the hands of the episcopal order. Such is the opinion of all the Calvinistic, and of various other, sects. These, all, maintain, that such even is the only wise, and consistent, defence, both of themselves; of the Reformation; and of protestantism. “For, if the government of the church,” they say, “be essentially vested in the hands of the episcopal order,—then, at the period of the Reformation, it was vested solely in the hands of the catholic prelacy. *Therefore*, to have disobeyed these must have been, in reality, an act of rebellion.” “It was vested in their hands,”—they again add,—“at the time of the Reformation: *and therefore*, it must remain there still. So that the admission of the divine, and exclusive rights of the episcopacy is equivalently,” they conclude, “not the defence of protestantism, or of any protestant prelacy, but the proof at once, and the strongest vindication, of popery.” For these reasons, the question, in the eyes of every prudent protestant, ought to appear,—as it certainly is,—an object of the deepest interest.

In the investigation of any of those objects, which, in religion, are the positive institutions of our divine Legislator, it is not to mere human reasonings; not to comparisons with political conventions; not to analogies with civil things; nor, much less, as is done too frequently, to conjectures, and suppositions,—that the prudent Christian should have recourse. Respecting all such things, recourse should be always had to the dictates of the will of God,—to the testimony of the holy Scriptures; and to the best of all commentaries upon these,—the belief, and practice, of the church, during the best, and brightest, ages of its fervor. The reason is plain: it is, because, in relation to all such institutions, the sole basis of their establishment; and the only principle of their form, and order, is the will,—the revealed will,—of their sacred Founder.

Referring, then, in the first place, to the Scriptures,—I am not going to contend, that the passages, which

are adduced from these, in favour of the episcopal form of government, are, all, of such a nature,—so completely clear, and explicit,—as not to leave room for cavil; or not to be open to misconception. This is not the case. Insomuch that there are, perhaps, few parts of the holy volume, which the refinements of modern criticism, and the spirit of modern independence, have treated more artfully; and distorted, with greater plausibility, than they have done some of these. The reason, however, is not surprising. For, besides that the Scriptures are, in regard of many of the articles of faith, open to difficulties; and hard to be understood, it is, at the same time, the fact, that, as they were not composed, in order to describe all the forms, and relations, of the divine economy, which Christ had established in his church,—so neither do they point out distinctly all those rules of government; and all those gradations of office, which must of course, as the appendages of a perfect system of administration, have been created for its regulation. Thus, not even do the sacred pages so much as allude to the most evident of all the institutions, erected by the eternal wisdom,—the substitution of the Sunday in room of the Jewish Sabbath. Upon this, and upon subjects such as the above, the holy Legislator had fully instructed his apostles; and as, too, they were plain, and public things,—the objects of daily practice, and observation,—so there was not any necessity of consigning the proofs of their establishment to the pages of the Scriptures.

However, although I have said this; and even acknowledged, that there are passages in the sacred volume, relating to the government of the church, which men may speciously controvert, who love to controvert every thing, that is displeasing to their own prejudices, or partialities,—yet, I must now, likewise, add, that there are passages, too, referring to the same divine institution, which are of such a nature, that,—provided men sought for the truth with real candor, and simplicity of heart,—they would find, in them, little, either to cavil at, or to contradict;—little to excite, either doubt, or misapprehension.—I will just refer only to a few of them.

It is a circumstance, I might, in the first place, observe, which, although it may not amount to a decisive proof of the proposition, which I am now establishing, is yet forcibly calculated to engage the mind to admit it,—namely, that, in the sacred pages,—that is, in every ancient version of them,—the nature of the pastoral government of the Christian church is, in various places, expressed by the very title of *episcopal*:—its rulers being denominated by the inspired writers,—“*Bishops.*” Thus addressing the elders of Miletus and Ephesus, St. Paul says to them: “Watch over the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you BISHOPS.” Thus, writing to Timothy, he says: “He, who desires the office of a BISHOP, desires a good work;”—adding, at the same time,—“A BISHOP should be blameless.” He uses the same appellation, also, upon some other occasions.

The mere name of “*Bishops*” may not be, of itself, sufficient to establish the supreme regimen of the episcopal order. Because names are often susceptible of various interpretations; and are open, therefore, to the arts, and artifices, of controversy, and criticism. However, the mere name is here important. It is expressive of dignity; and conveys the idea of some peculiar power. Insomuch, that, upon these very accounts; and aware that such are the notions, which men generally attach to its import, the enemies of the episcopacy, in all their versions of the Scriptures, have, every where, suppressed it; substituting in its room some vulgar term or other, unadapted, as they conceived, to awake such dangerous feelings.

In order, then, both to understand the real import of the term; and to ascertain the superior prerogatives,—if any,—of the episcopal order,—the method is, to consult those passages, in which the title is made use of; and to examine, whether or not the individuals, to whom it is applied, did indeed enjoy any superior dignity, and exercise a degree of power, beyond the general members of the pastoral ministry. These points, once decided, should seem, in the eyes of piety, a sufficient evidence to remove every difficulty upon the subject.

In the passage, therefore, which I have cited from St. Paul, addressed to the elders of Miletus, and Ephesus,

the apostle, we remarked, had said to them: "Watch over the flock, over which the holy Ghost has made you BISHOPS." Then he adds the cause: "In order,"—he continues,—"TO GOVERN the church of God." Can these words seem to require any commentary?—In his epistles to his favourite coadjutors, Timothy, and Titus, the same apostle, instructing them concerning their pastoral duties, reminds them, not only of their general authority over the body of the faithful, but even over the members of the priesthood itself. Addressing the former, he tells him, "not to receive an accusation against a priest, except before two or three witnesses." Writing to the latter, he reminds him, that he had left him in Crete, "to set in order the things that are wanting; and to ordain priests in every city." It is from such passages, that the wisdom of Christian theology infers the authority of the episcopal order; and that there are in the spiritual kingdom of Christ,—precisely as it is the case in all well-organised governments, for the purposes of civil subordination, and harmony,—a rank of rulers of a superior dignity, and power, to the rest of the clerical body. Thus, it is from the above texts, that St. Epiphanius, for example, establishes these truths against Aerius. "Bishops," he says, "give priests to the church by the imposition of hands. The priest gives to it children by the grace of baptism. And how could the apostle have recommended to a bishop not to reprove a priest with harshness; not lightly to receive an accusation against a priest, if the bishop were not superior to priests?"

However, if even the case were such, that the texts of the Scripture might, or do, leave room, either for uncertainty or cavil,—the uncertainty is at once removed, and the room for cavil should appear completely done away, by appealing to the best and clearest of all commentaries, both upon the sacred pages and upon the will of God,—*the universal belief and practice* of the church during the purest and most enlightened periods of its duration. An universal belief and practice of the whole Christian church, particularly during those happy eras, respecting any given article of religion, are alone sufficient to evince that such article must be divine. "*What all believe, and practise,*" (this is the maxim of all the holy fathers, and is admitted even by the protestants them-

selves : as it is, indeed, but the dictate of common sense) “*what all believe, and practise, cannot be an error.*” But, if so,—then, if we adopt this rule, and judge by it what the real truth of revelation is, respecting the present subject of our investigation, every difficulty at once is done away ; and the point decided. For it is even true, that in the whole series of religious controversies, there is not one that is more completely devoid of difficulty ; or that presents less room for doubt or misconception.

Referring, then, to the belief, and practice, of the Christian world from the origin of Christianity down to the period of the protestant revolution, we find that there existed but one and the same opinion respecting the constitution of Christ’s spiritual kingdom,—namely, that it is essentially *episcopal*,—having for its chief rulers, *Bishops*, as the heirs and successors of the apostles ; and subordinate to these, a body of clergy, exclusively ordained *by Bishops*. Such was the system, which in every nation, and in every age, until the epoch just now assigned, the Christian public had constantly entertained concerning the nature of the government of the church. The evidence of this fact is even such, that I need not appeal,—as we do in the generality of controverted questions,—to any of the vouchers of antiquity to establish or confirm it. The most learned protestants, although interested to deny, are yet candid enough to acknowledge it.

It is acknowledged, of course, by the members of the established church ; because this calls itself *episcopal*. “For the first fifteen hundred years,” says Dr. Daubeny, “no church of Christ in any part of the world was known to exist under any other government. And it is only since that period, which unfortunately gives date to a different form, that episcopacy has met with opposition from those who have found themselves obliged to write it down, as the only way to discharge themselves from that sin, which must otherwise attach to a needless separation from it.—We can venture,” he adds, “to say, that no historical fact in the annals of mankind is capable of equal demonstration with that of the original constitution of the Christian church.” Similar to these, and inculcated forcibly in their publications, every day, (for which reason I shall not here cite them) are the sentiments of the whole body of the established clergy,—or at

least of all those who are considered its orthodox and consistent members. The general maxim of all these is,—“*no Bishops, no church.*” And hence it is, (cruel sentence from protestant upon protestant!) hence it is that these men consider and condemn all the multifarious sects of dissenters that crowd the nation as mere human associations,—their churches, no churches; their sacraments, no sacraments; their pastors, a set of laymen, and profane intruders into the sacred fold. “As the apostles,” observes the writer just quoted, “could not become stewards of the mysteries of the gospel, till our Saviour thought proper to make them such, so the sacraments cannot, in the judgment of the church of England, be duly administered, but by those who are lawfully called, and sent into the Lord’s vineyard.—And she exclusively appropriates the title of a true church to the society of Christians assembled under episcopal government; and determines separatists from it to be schismatics.”

In the next place,—referring to the opinions, both of the first reformers, and of various distinguished leaders of the protestant sects at different periods,—it will be found that although they nearly all rejected the ancient government of the church, as a necessary piece of consistency with their rebellion against it,—yet did great multitudes of them do this with extreme reluctance; urged to the awful deed, not by their own sentiments and desires, but by the passions and fanaticism of their deluded followers. “The Reformation,” says Bishop Sherlock, “gave such a turn to weak heads, that had not weight enough to poize themselves between the extremes of popery, and fanatacism, that every thing older than yesterday was looked upon to be popish and antichristian. The meanest of the people aspired at the priesthood; and were readier to frame new laws for the church than to obey the old.” It was this spirit; and the aversion and rage infused into the public mind by the first preachers of protestantism against their ancient pastors, that formed one of the principal reasons for their suppression of the episcopal order of government; and that even rendered this suppression,—the reformers themselves have said it,—a necessary piece of policy. Thus, Calvin himself (it was, of course, before he had

firmly established his own usurpation,) went so far as to declare, that “no curse is too heavy for those, who do not revere; and with entire submission obey, the episcopal hierarchy.” The language of Beza is almost equally strong and expressive. Speaking of the retention of the episcopal government in this country, the fierce reformer says: “Let her enjoy this singular blessing of God. And may she never,—this is my wish,—be so unhappy as to lose it. God forbid that any individual possessed of common sense, should be guilty of such madness as to reject it.”† Melancton, it is well known, entertained the same opinion; and long and earnestly contended for the preservation of the episcopacy. “Bishops,” he says, “are necessary, for many reasons. They are necessary in order to provide ministers for the church; to confer ordinations; to be the judges in spiritual causes; to watch over the orthodoxy of the priesthood,” &c. Even the great reformer himself, spite of all his violence and opposition to his episcopal superiors, entertained still so high an esteem for the sacred institution, that he frequently recommended it; and even took upon himself to consecrate,—in order to preserve it amongst his followers,—his friend, Armsdorf, bishop of Naumburg. Such as these, for a certain length of time, were the opinions; and such as this the conduct of many of the leading heroes of the Reformation;—approving in terms the most unequivocal of the episcopal order of the pastoral government, and recommending its preservation as the necessary and only source of religious harmony.

It is true, however,—for nothing was ever more varying than the language; nor more unsteady than the conduct of these men; changing constantly with each change of circumstances; and bending always to the temper of the times,—it is true, that, hereafter, (a new system of policy urging them to it,) they abandoned the above

* *Talem si nobis hierarchiam exhibeant, in quâ sic emineant episcopi, ut Christo subesse non recusent; et ab illo, tanquam unico capite, pendeant; et ad ipsum referantur; in quâ sic inter se fraternam societatem colant, ut non alio modo quam ejus veritate sint colligati. Tum vero nullo non anathemate dignos fatear, si qui erunt, qui non eam revereantur; summâque obedientiâ observent.*”

DE NECESS. ECCL. REF.

† *Fruatur sane istâ singulari Dei beneficentiâ, quæ utinam sit illi perpetua.*—TRACT. DE MINIST. ECCL.

stated maxims; and even condemned with the fiercest ardor, what they had before with almost equal zeal defended. "They, ere long," says Lesley, "thought proper to eat their own words; to stifle as much as they could, and to carry on the war against the episcopacy itself."*

In this country the opposition to the episcopal order of government has been carried to greater lengths; and attended with greater excesses than in any other. These are facts with which all are acquainted who have read the history of that frightful revolution, which, conducted by the puritans, succeeded for a time in overturning the constitution, not only of the church, but that also of the state.† However, if we appeal even to this eventful occasion, we shall find that it was not without the greatest difficulty,—so deeply were the minds of the public still impressed with veneration for the episcopacy,—that the leaders of the storm, with all the efforts of their industry, and all the artifices of their intrigues, were enabled to overthrow it. If, ere long, they did so, their success was the effect of violence, excited by the views of interest; and of fanaticism, inspired by misrepresentation and abuse. It is true, there were, perhaps, amongst the conductors of the faction, several individuals, who, possessed certainly of distinguished talents, and erudition, were pushed on by motives which they considered laudable, and by principles which they revered as true.—But, again, referring to the subsequent writings, and lives of these men, we discover that many of them,—and these too the most learned,—repented of their former conduct; and lamented seriously the part which they had acted in the work of destruction. Thus some of them have left apologies for their previous errors and excesses. It was the case with Cartwright, the most eminent, perhaps, amidst the

* "The establishment of Presbyterianism," says Mr. Le Mesurier, in his Bampton Lecture, "originated in motives, not very dissimilar to those of the apostate, Jeroboam. Calvin found that episcopacy was unfavourable to the republican forms of government. He desired, therefore, a system of greater purity, to suit his political ideas."

† "In the great rebellion," says the author just quoted in the preceding note, "it is evident, that the adoption of a similar system (Presbyterianism) was made instrumental to overthrow the monarchy. And it is equally notorious, that the preference which Cromwell afterwards gave to the Independents, had for its motive the strengthening himself in his usurpation."

whole host of the revolutionary fanatics. Sir H. Yelverton informs us, that "he lamented seriously the schisms which he had caused in the church by the rejection of its lawful government." It was the case, in like manner, with Baxter,—a man, who, if second to any amid the band, was second to none but Cartwright. "I own," says Baxter, after he had witnessed the mischiefs which resulted from the suppression of the episcopacy,—“I own, that bishops should be revered.” It was so, too, with Sparkes, Ellis, Sprint, &c. These heroes of the revolution, hurried on by the fury of the torrent;—alarmed, it may be, by the noise of threats; or allured, possibly, by the invitations of interest and ambition,—or else, seduced by false maxims,—had composed a variety of works against the episcopal form of government. But, ere long, just like Cartwright, and Baxter, they regretted their former conduct, and endeavoured, although now too late, to make a certain atonement for it. They now acknowledged their past error, and condemned those disorganising doctrines which they had just before defended with so much obstinacy. The case was,—that,—independently perhaps of various other considerations,—they had now discovered that they led to consequences far more pernicious, and had produced mischiefs a great deal more dangerous than either their reason had at first calculated, or than their aversion to the established church had originally designed.

In the next place, if we come to examine what the opinions have been of the more recent adversaries of the episcopal order, we shall find, that, even amongst these, the few who have figured principally, and been the most distinguished for their talents and erudition, have, several of them, on various occasions, expressed their veneration for their sacred institution; and wished,—nay, even endeavoured, to retain it,—had the thing been possible,—in their newly-organised societies. It was so with Wesley, the too eminent founder of that too rapidly increasing sect, which threatens to overturn,—and this at no very distant period,—the fabric of the established church. Wesley, we find in the history of his life, defended for a considerable length of time the episcopal order of things; and attempted still farther to preserve it; alleging as his motive for such wish, those very reasons which are com-

monly assigned as the chief causes of its original institution,—namely “the means of preventing disorders, and confusion, amongst the people.” It was necessity alone, he declared,—lamenting, or pretending to lament, the unhappy circumstance that induced him to give it up. But, even then,—so strongly did he continue impressed with the importance of the episcopal character,—he boldly took upon himself, although a mere priest at best, to confer it upon two of his co-operators : and in that supposed capacity sent them over to America.*

It was the same case, too, for a certain space of time, with some of Wesley’s associates, and the chief leaders of the Methodistic societies.

In imitation of their leader these men were at first the advocates of the episcopal order. “At the more early part of their history,” says Dr. Daubeny, “they professed not to object either to the doctrine or discipline of the church of England. And even at the death of the founder of this sect, a proposal was made by Dr. Coke, J. Wesley’s successor in that connection, to the then archbishop of Canterbury, that, in order to prevent a total separation of the Wesleyans from the establishment, all the teachers in that connection should receive orders from his Grace : it being, at that time, considered by the Wesleyan ministers themselves, that a regular commission was wanting to render perfect the administration of their ministerial office ; which commission they were *then* desirous of obtaining from the apostolic source established in the church of England.”†

*“Wesley,” says Southey, in his *Life of the great innovator*, “had taken no step in his whole progress, so reluctantly, as that of employing lay-preachers. The measure was forced upon him by necessity. It had become inevitable in the position in which he had placed himself. He says, himself, that to touch this point, was to touch the apple of his eye.”

†“What constitutes,” adds the Doctor, “a most curious circumstance in the history of this eccentric sect, is, that this same Dr. Coke, who, on the death of its founder, applied to the archbishop of Canterbury for the admission of Wesleyan teachers into the regular ministry of the church of England, had, himself, been previously consecrated a bishop by that arch-schismatic, J. Wesley, who assumed the episcopal office, on that occasion, at Dr. Coke’s express desire ; as appears on record in Dr. Coke’s letter to J. Wesley, on that occasion. Dr. Coke opened his commission at Baltimore, in America ; where he consecrated Mr. Asbury a bishop : and by virtue of his assumed office, gave a new title to the Wesleyan societies in that country,—calling them, ‘The

Wherefore, from the consideration of the few arguments, and facts, thus rapidly stated in the present chapter, I think the conclusion obvious,—not only that the Christian world has always revered the episcopal form of government, but that it is really that, which, *alone*, the wisdom of our divine Legislator has established for the regulation of his spiritual kingdom. “Indeed,” say the learned writers of the British Critic, “the episcopal government has always appeared to us to rest upon *the same foundation*; and to possess *the same claim* to confidence with the received canon of Scripture, and the keeping of the Lord’s day instead of the Jewish sabbath: and the question as to divine authority, in all the three cases, must be finally determined by the same principles.” Such, too, is the general opinion of the most learned portions of this country. If there be sects and individuals that think otherwise, and deny the glaring fact, the chief reason is, that it is only thus, that they can justify, as they conceive, the act of separation from the parent church; or vindicate their own apostacy. The most specious apology, no doubt, which men can, at any time make, either for schism or rebellion, is the contestation or denial of the legitimacy of the authority which would restrict them. However, be this as it may,—the fact is certain, that if, in the order or annals of religion, there be one question which admits neither doubt nor cavil, it is the divine authority of the episcopal order. Awful consideration this to the feelings of the thoughtful and conscientious members of the dissenting sects. For it should thus appear to follow, that their churches are not real churches; their pastors not true pastors; their ordinances and institutions null and inefficacious.*

Methodistic Episcopal Church in America.’ On this occasion, Dr. Coke preached a sermon, which was afterwards printed, in which, he abused the English hierarchy; and attempted to defend the new order of things which he had adopted.”

*The baptism, indeed, conferred by the dissenting sects, is, by the catholic church considered *valid*, provided only that it be administered properly. Such, however, cruel circumstance!—is not the doctrine of the church of England. The church of England considers even baptism itself, as *invalid*, unless it be conferred, either by a priest, or deacon, who has been episcopally ordained. The consequence, therefore, is, that, teaching as it, likewise, does, that baptism is necessary for salvation,—so it must, of course, look upon the whole mass of the dissenters,—if born such,—as so many unregenerated beings, remaining still immersed in their original state of reprobation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PASTORAL COMMISSION, DELIVERED BY CHRIST TO HIS APOSTLES, PRESERVED IN THE COMMUNION OF THE CHURCH OF ROME UNTIL THE EPOCH OF THE REFORMATION.

“When the Reformation took place in England, the Bishops, and clergy, were not consecrated, and ordained, again. They had received consecration, and ordination, from men, to whom the power of consecrating, and ordaining, had been transmitted from the apostles: and that power was not vitiated.”

DR. TOMLINE'S ELEMENTS.

IN the foregoing chapters I have established the following truths,—first, that our holy Legislator when he organised his church delivered to his apostles a divine commission, which is the ground of all pastoral authority, and the ground, therefore, of the church itself;—secondly, that this said charter was designed to be perpetual;—and thirdly, that it was vested exclusively in the hands of the episcopal order. Such are the three propositions which I have thus far established, confirming them at the same time by the attestations of the best protestant theologians, modern as well as ancient.

What, therefore, next, in the natural process of the present investigation, becomes the subject of our inquiry, is the ascertainment of the fact,—where,—in what fortunate communion,—this sacred charter,—this great basis of man's salvation, had continued to subsist down to the epoch of the reformation; and did actually subsist at the time of that eventful tragedy. This is obviously the proper order of things. It is this important question which prepares the mind to judge with prudence, and to

decide with accuracy respecting the comparative and the real claims of the catholic and the protestant churches;—conducting it gradually to that awful conclusion in which it sees distinctly, where it is, that reposes the guilt of *schism*,—whether in the parent church, or in the reformed societies. Yes—this is indeed that bright and golden clue presented by the hand of wisdom to the hand of piety, by means of which men might easily,—provided they were in earnest, and sincere,—not only extricate themselves from the labyrinths of error, but from all the mazes of controversy. For when once the point is manifestly ascertained where the divine credential had continued to reside during the long course of fifteen hundred years, and where it did actually reside at the time of the protestant revolution,—there can be little or no difficulty in ascertaining the ulterior circumstance, where,—in what communion,—it resides, at the present day.

And where, then,—in what communion,—had the sacred investiture been preserved, during the aforesaid length of interval; and where did it actually exist, on the occasion of the above revolution? The reply to these questions, like the answers to all the preceding ones, is easy. For, we have here again, exactly as we had in them, not only the plainest evidences to attest the fact, but what is perhaps better upon such occasion,—we have the acknowledgment of it, made by the very men,—the protestants themselves,—who, if it could be called in question, are particularly interested to contest it. Wherefore, I at once reply, that it was in the communion of the church of Rome, that the divine prerogative had been constantly, and exclusively preserved, down to the epoch of the Reformation; and where, also, it subsisted, on the occasion of that event. In reality, if it had not subsisted there, it could not have subsisted any where;—because the church of Rome was then the sole church of enlightened Europe.

Referring, therefore, to the testimonies of the protestant writers,—since these are, alone, sufficient to render the question undeniable,—we find, that the most learned amongst these unequivocally admit the continued preservation of the apostolical commission, in the hands of the catholic ministry, down to the very time of

the forementioned occasion. * Such are the acknowledgments, very frequently repeated, by those distinguished men,—the Pearsons, the Lauds, the Hammonds, the Thorndykes, &c.—whose names, and erudition, are still, and very justly so, the chief ornament, and boast, of the established church. “I must accept,” says the last named writer, “the church of Rome for a true church; as in the church of England, I have always known it accepted: seeing, that there can be no question made, but that it continueth the same visible body, by the succession of bishops, and laws, that were first founded by the apostles. There remaineth, therefore, in the church of Rome the profession of all the faith, necessary for the salvation of Christians to believe, either in point of faith, or moral.” (Epil. p. 146.) Here, in this testimony, presented by a man, than whom no one was better acquainted with the general sentiments of his fellow clergy, and with the doctrine of the established church,—

* It is true, indeed, (but, this is one of those contradictions, which we so often meet with in the rolls of error)—it is true, that the instrument, which, after the 39 articles, is, of all others, the most sacred in the eyes of the established clergy,—the book of Homilies,—denies most positively, this preservation of the apostolical delegation. This book, which these men, by their oaths, and subscriptions, are solemnly bound to revere, as containing, according to the 35th of the articles, “a godly doctrine, necessary for these times,”—this book distinctly states, that the whole church had perished. For, “the whole church,” it declares, “had, for upwards of a thousand years, been sunk in idolatry, &c.” Now, whence this contradiction in a point so vital? Whence, the circumstance, that, whereas the most enlightened members of the establishment do positively attest, that the church, its government, and its ministry, have subsisted regularly through every age,—this most important testimonial of the public faith, just as positively, declares the contrary? To reconcile the two things together is, indeed, impossible. But, what, then, is the cause of the inconsistency? Why it is this:—The protestants have regulated their maxims, and their language, exactly as the nature of their wants required them. At the beginning of the Reformation, it was necessary for them to pull down the ancient church, ere they could erect a new one. Therefore, they then maintained, that the church had perished.—and this, as the article states, was the doctrine, “necessary for these times.” Ere long, they succeeded in rearing the new edifice upon the ruins of the ancient one. Therefore, they now contended, that the church had not perished. On the contrary, they now declared it to be imperishable; and immortal:—maintaining even, that their own pastoral ministry, by being linked to the chain of the catholic priesthood, is hence, apostolical, and divine. Such is the conduct, and such the character, of error,—for ever changing its maxims with the change of circumstances; and its language with “the necessities of the times.”

we have at once the common opinion of protestant theology, during the earlier, and most learned, epochs of the Reformation. Indeed, the above concessions go farther than does the proposition, which I have laid down in this chapter : for, it admits, that the apostolic succession of pastors is *still* continued, unbroken, in the communion of the catholic church ; and that it is, therefore, “ a true church.”

Consulting the opinions of our modern protestant theologians, we, in like manner, find in many of them the same kind of honest, but awkward, attestations. Thus, in the passage, with which I have ushered in this chapter, extracted from the Elements of Dr. Tomline, we have seen this divine allow, that that same sacred power, which had been originally confided to the apostles, and which rendered them the pastors of the faithful, had, through the medium of the catholic ministry, been preserved in the church, until the era of the Reformation ; and preserved, moreover, without having been so much as “ vitiated.” “ From the facts,” says Dr. Spry, “ which are recorded in Scripture ; and which other historical testimony confirms, we infer, that the apostles, in the exercise of the power, vested in them, instituted that ecclesiastical polity, which was maintained in the church, until the period of the Reformation.”—“ It is acknowledged, on all hands,” says Mr. Davis, “ that the church of Rome, in its original state, was apostolical, and pure. And even at the present day, it has persevered in all the fundamental articles of the true, and Christian, faith. And the sacraments, ordained by the gospel, are here administered by a priesthood, which derives its appointment by an uninterrupted succession from the apostles ; and its *authority* from our Great Master.”—“ The commission,” says Dr. Daubeny, “ originally delivered by Christ to his apostles, has been handed down in regular succession. Under the authority of this commission, the religion of Christ was introduced into this country, at a very early period : and the appointment of ministers, under the sanction of the divine authority, has been uniformly received, and preserved in the church, wherever it has existed, for fifteen hundred years.”—In short, even those fierce enemies of every thing catholic,—the authors of the British Critic,

admit, that “the church government, maintained by the church of Rome, has been traced, without a single break in the chain, up to the immediate successors of the apostles: and the chain of the episcopacy was unbroken, for fifteen hundred years.”

So that, thus, the proposition, which I have laid down, as the subject of the present chapter, is admitted even by the hostility itself of the bitterest enemies of our religion,—namely, that the divine commission, and the lawful government of Christ’s church, have been always preserved in the communion of the see of Rome, down to the era of the Reformation. In reality, the fact is too manifest to be so much as called in question, with any shadow of plausibility. For, if there be any thing in the annals of religion, or in the rolls of history, that is plain; any thing, that, in the monuments of time, or in the customs, and laws, of nations, is palpable,—it is the regular subsistence of the pastoral delegation in the hands of the catholic ministry. Insomuch that to deny, or contest, the important fact, would be setting aside at once all the sanctions, and authority, of human testimony.

The great reason, however, why the members of the established church in particular, so far from contesting, are even eager to defend the circumstance,—endeavouring, frequently, to impress it upon the feelings of the public,—is this:—They pretend, and it is their constant boast, and the theme of their exultation, whenever they compare themselves with the dissenting sects,—they pretend, that their own pastoral powers are apostolical; having descended to them, in a direct line of succession, from the first apostles of Jesus Christ. Of course, it is only thus,—that is, by the admission of the above stated fact, that they can affect to substantiate their claims. They found these wholly upon their alleged connexion with the ancient catholic ministry. For, taking away this medium, their church is at once rendered, as themselves admit,—a building without any foundation,—“the baseless fabric of a vision.” It becomes, without this, an entirely *new church*; and therefore, as Bishop Pearson remarks, “no church at all:” “for, a new church,” he very justly adds, “is *none*.” Hence, therefore, the general testimony of the established clergy, that the di-

vine commission, once granted to the apostles, and the lawful government of the Christian church, had always, until the period of the Reformation, been regularly preserved, and perpetuated, by the pastoral ministry of the church of Rome.

It is not for me to say, what sensations, the few preparatory principles, which I have thus far stated, may possibly have produced in the mind of the reader. If, however, he be candid, and have weighed them seriously, they must, I think, have already produced *some*. They must, I conceive, have already induced him to *suspect* at least, that, since the real grounds of the true church had, during the long lapse of fifteen hundred years, been, confessedly, the exclusive appurtenance of the catholic church,—so *in all probability*, they must remain hers, still. Such suspicion is, at all events, but natural. For, it is difficult to imagine, how a church, which had retained the sacred privilege so long, should, since that time, have forfeited it. Because, not only, during this whole length of interval, has she always continued to be, what she had constantly been before, —unaltered, both in her faith, and constitution,—but, there has been issued no fresh mandate from heaven, annulling her former titles.—As, then, in the preceding pages, I have established the possession of the important charter in the hands of the catholic clergy, (and this, too, upon the authority of the protestants themselves) during the course of fifteen centuries,—so, in the subsequent chapters, I shall point out the continuance of this possession in the same hands, down to the present time; and the emptiness of those arguments, by which the reformed churches have pretended, or pretend still, to arrogate it to themselves.

CHAPTER V.

ON SCHISM.

“Wherever there is a wilful separation from the communion of the church of Christ, there, according to the original idea upon this subject, a division of Christ’s mystical body takes place; and there the sin of schism is to be found.” Dr. DAUBENY.—GUIDE TO THE CHURCH.

IN the foregoing pages, I have stated little else than those preliminary principles, and preparatory facts, which are designed to conduct the mind of the reader to that palpable conclusion, which is the end of the present treatise (although, indeed, I have said, that such conclusion might,—if men were not prejudiced—be deduced from them already). In them, I have shewn, what are the real grounds of the Christian church; what is the order of its government; and in what communion, those grounds, and that order of government, had been preserved, during the long course of fifteen centuries.—Wherefore, I have now introduced the reader to the time, and spectacle, of the Reformation. Here, a new order of things took place. Here, a storm,—a moral, and tremendous, earthquake,—occurred, which convulsing the Christian world, divided it into two great portions,—leaving, indeed, the larger part still catholic, but rendering, at the same time, immense districts, and even some nations, protestant. It produced a *schism*, the most awful, that has befallen, since the dawn of Christianity.

The question, which, therefore, now remains to be examined, in order positively, and manifestly, to ascertain the respective claims of the two divisions, is simply

this,—To establish the momentous fact, what became of that sacred charter,—*the apostolical commission*,—which, being the source of all spiritual power, forms the grounds of the Christian church;—whether, by virtue of the aforesaid revolution, it was transferred into the hands of the reformers; or whether it still continued to remain invested in those of the ancient clergy. It could not possibly exist in both. Else, there would exist a divine commission to promote two opposite religions. If, therefore, it did pass into the possession of the former, then is their ministry alone divine; and that of catholicity rendered void. As, in like manner, if it still continued in the hands of the latter, then is their government alone legitimate; and that of protestantism, an usurpation. In short, as a separation of the faithful now took place, so, of course, the guilt of *schism*,—or the sin of dividing Christ's mystical body, must be imputed, either to the catholic, or to the protestant, church. Important subject! and important, beyond any other, to the protestant! Let me, therefore, exhort him again to weigh it, with pious care; every passion, and prejudice, and prepossession laid aside.—Before, however, I enter upon the examination of the awful circumstance, to which party the imputation should most justly be affixed, I will, first, present some reflections upon the nature, and guilt, of *schism*.

I have observed, in a preceding chapter, that the character of the Christian church, although so very obvious, is yet very little, and very ill, understood by the protestant public. “Men,” says Bishop Grove, speaking even of his times, when the subject was less imperfectly conceived than it is at present, “men have no notion at all of a church; or notion of one church; or know not in what, the union, and communion, of the church consists. And these think it indifferent, whether they communicate with any church at all: or that they secure themselves from schism, by communicating, sometimes with one church; sometimes with another; and that they may choose their church, according to their own fancies; and change again, whenever their humour alters.”

As, then, men are ignorant of the nature of the Christian church, so, of course,—since the two things are correlatives,—they must be ignorant, also, of the na-

ture, and guilt of schism. "Men now," says Dr. Daubeny, "no longer view with apprehension,—because the evil is so common,—the crime of schism, and division. Indeed, lulled by ignorance, they hardly any of them understand any thing about it." What, in these days, engages men, either to adhere to any church, or to separate from any church; to believe in any religion, or to disbelieve in any religion, are the pretended privileges of Christian liberty; the accidents of birth, and education; the feelings of fancy, and inclination; and above all, the admiration of some favourite preacher. In short, just as if,—because living here, in the land of liberty, as we call it,—the public were free to think, and to act, as they please,—so do they change their opinions, and cast off their former professions, with as much indifference almost, as they change, and put off, their clothes.

It is difficult to say, what, in all this conduct, is the most to be reprehended,—its imprudence, or its impropriety; its folly, or its guilt. Certain it is, that every thing in it is repugnant, both to Christian wisdom, and to enlightened reason. For, nothing can be more manifest, than that if Christ Jesus has established a church, it is the duty of men to revere it. If he has appended to it an order of government, it is their obligation to obey it. So that, if, in the walks of life, men possessed the slenderest notions of the divine economy, or any real respect for the divine institutions, the first questions that they would put to themselves, respecting the pastors, whom they may chance to follow,—be their eloquence, their learning, or even their virtues, what they may,—would be such as these: "Who, then, are these men? Whence do they come? Whence is the authority, by virtue of which, they undertake to conduct, and teach, us?" If prudent, they would ask those preachers, on whose eloquence, or noise, they hang with so much rapture,—the same questions, which Tertullian bade the faithful, in his time, put to the promoters of schism: "Who was it, that sent you to preach? Who commissioned you to administer to us the sacraments? Who made you our pastors; or committed to you the charge of the people? You invite us to follow you: and you promise to teach us the truth, according to the

genuine maxims of the gospel. But, pray, is not this the language of every schismatic; and of every false apostle? Is it not that of every thief; and of every intruder into the fold? For these reasons, it is proper; and even necessary, that, ere we believe you, we should carefully ascertain the real nature of your claims: we should find out, with accuracy, whether you, too, just like so many others before you, be nothing else than false apostles; and wolves in the clothing of sheep." Such as these, no doubt,—provided only that men were but prudent; or even if they paid but the slightest attention to their own principles,—would be the questions, that they would put to those pretended pastors, whom, from the want of such precautions, they now obey so blindly. The infatuation is indeed surprising, almost, as it is deplorable: for, even common sense itself,—if common sense were consulted,—instructs them, that, if the pastors, whom they follow, be not real pastors, then their preaching is in vain; and the associations, which they have formed under the insulted name of *churches*, are not churches, but conventicles, set up in opposition to the divine authority. "These ministers," says Dr. Daubeny, "are not the ambassadors of Christ; nor are the sacraments, which they administer, the sacraments of Christ. For, the essence of an ambassador's office is, that he should be commissioned by the party, in whose name he acts."

What, therefore, the nature of schism is,—this is a point, which may be sufficiently understood from what I have said already, respecting the nature of the Christian church. The Christian church, as I have shown repeatedly, and as the best wisdom of protestantism acknowledges, is a society, established by our divine Legislator, Christ Jesus; and, by him, invested with a sacred form of government, instituted for the purposes of uniting men together in the bands of the same faith, in the cultivation of the same worship, and in the practice of the same virtues. "The church," says Bishop Grove, "is an union, made by divine covenant. For, the Christian church is nothing else, but such a society of men as is in covenant with God, through Jesus Christ." Of course, a church, thus organised, and constituted, is *one and indivisible*. Wherefore, from these considerations alone, without needing to appeal to any others,—

we behold, at once, what the character is of schism. It is the breach, and violation, of this unity. Or, to give the definition of it, which is given by the protestant writers,—“It is the division of the members of the church, occasioned by the want of obedience to the government, which Christ, by his apostles, settled in it; and a consequent separation from its communion, in contradiction to the divine plan of its establishment.” Such is the definition of schism, (and it is a very correct one) as it is expressed by Dr. Daubeny.

From this definition, it is easy to infer, what, in the eyes of God, must be the guilt of this disorder. Its guilt,—since it thus implies a division of the mystical body of Jesus Christ; and a refusal to obey his government,—its guilt must be extreme. It is thus a derangement of the divine economy; and a destruction of the sacred order of things; an act of opposition to the will of God, and even a rebellion against his power. It is “the profane insolence,” as the Fathers often call it, “of setting up altar against altar, and tribunal against tribunal,”—a human altar, and a human tribunal, against an altar, and a tribunal, which are divine. It is, in short, a complete breach of the Christian covenant; which, therefore, besides its criminality, involves in itself the surrender of all the benefits of this blessed compact: for, all the benefits of religion, being covenanted things, are, hence, applicable, and available, only to those members, who comply with the terms of the divine alliance. These are awful considerations, which ought to awaken the solicitude even of the most careless, and unthinking. For these reasons; and seeing, that the calamity is now become so general, I will pause upon this part of my subject,—hoping, that if, by chance, these reflections should fall into the hands of some pious, but misled, individual, they may possibly excite his attention, and induce him to labour to extricate himself from a situation, which is replete with such alarming consequences.

In order, then, to evince the criminality of the disorder of schism, I will appeal, in the first instance, not to the order, or annals, of Christianity, under which the obligations of unity, and obedience, are, of course, the most binding, and indispensable,—but to the order,

and history, of an institution, which, when compared to the church of Christ, was exceedingly imperfect, and defective. I will refer to the history of the Jewish people; adducing, from this, two well-known examples, which demonstrate very forcibly the magnitude of the evil, which I am now describing.

The reader already knows, that long before the establishment of the Christian dispensation, God had selected for himself, and set aside a particular portion of mankind,—the Jewish nation,—whom he took under his own immediate superintendence; giving to them a peculiar code of laws; and prescribing a variety of pious institutions and ceremonies; intended to be, some of them, the testimonials and acknowledgments of *his* greatness; others, the instruments and sources of *their* salvation. In other words, he formed this favoured nation into a *church*; appending to it a government, at the head of which he placed Moses and his brother Aaron.—And what, therefore, was, now, the consequence? Did God, now, after having united the people together in this sacred association, permit them to abandon it? Or did he allow them even upon any pretext whatsoever to infringe the order of his economy? So far from this, he punished such violations with all the severity of his indignation. Behold one of the examples, just alluded to.

Excited by the spirit of pride, and pushed on by the restlessness of ambition, three individuals,—Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, assisted, indeed, by a great portion of other leading Israelites,—undertook to create a division amongst the people. For this purpose, they rose up against their rulers—and insulted them. They misled the public; and flattered them;—employing, upon the occasion, that very same kind of language, and those same persuasions, which our Christian schismatics have but too successfully made use of to divide the Christian church. Addressing themselves to Moses and Aaron, they said to them:—“You take too much upon yourselves. Is it not enough that all the congregation is holy; and that the Lord is with them? Wherefore then, do you lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?” &c. (How similar is this to the language of the first reformers!) But see now the manner in which God was in his wisdom pleased to express his displeasure at

the bold and profane design. The scene, every reader knows,—and hence, I shall not describe it,—was tremendous. “The earth,” suffice it to say, “opened its mouth, and swallowed them,”—the three leaders of the schism,—“with their tents; and all that belonged to them. And they went down into the pit.”—Such, and so dreadful, was the punishment with which, under a dispensation very inferior in all its properties to ours, the justice of the Almighty was pleased to visit the crime of fomenting schism, or of detaching the faithful from their obedience to their lawful pastors.

The other example to which I have alluded is equally instructive, and almost equally striking as the preceding. It is the case with the schismatic, Jeroboam.—But, before I describe it, I will premise the following observation.

It should be remarked, that before the awful event took place, to which I am now referring,—the political order of things amongst the Jewish people had already, by the divine appointment, or at least by the divine permission, undergone a very sensible alteration. Ten of the tribes had completely thrown off their allegiance to their former prince, Rehoboam. However, notwithstanding this great revolution in the civil economy of the nation, no change whatsoever had as yet taken place in the order of its religion. Its religion still remained unaltered—and the faithful yet continued, as they had always been wont to do, to repair at certain seasons of the year to Jerusalem, in order there to present their offerings in its temple. So that, though really separated from each other in every thing else besides, the body of the faithful, in relation to their religion, remained just equally linked together, as they had constantly been before. In this regard, the wisdom of the Almighty had not thought it proper to grant to them, either a dispensation, or any privilege. Behold, therefore, now, the example to which I am referring.

Jeroboam having, at length, by the force of artifices, and intrigues, obtained possession of the far larger portion of the ancient kingdom, became, hence, exceedingly anxious to render his claims, if possible, secure. This was his great aim, and solicitude. And what were the measures which he adopted for this purpose? It was to

produce a schism in religion. "For, he said to himself; if the people continue to go up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice in the house of the Lord, then also shall their hearts return again to their Lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah: and they will kill me; and go again to Rehoboam, king of Judah." Accordingly, stimulated by these and such like motives, he had recourse to the artifices of worldly cunning, and to the deceptions of affected piety. "He took counsel," the Scripture adds, "and made two calves. And he said to the people: it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt." Not that he meant, in all probability, by this piece of artifice to introduce idolatry, or to suppress the worship of the true God. His design, it is most likely, was simply this,—that, as the people were then very easily struck, and particularly led by sensible symbols, so they should worship the divinity under the forms which he thus suggested. However, be this as it may,—his real aim was to form a schism, and to detach the faithful from the government of their lawful pastors. We know the sequel. He, unhappily, succeeded; and formed a schism.*

* I have cited, in a previous note, the opinion of M. Le Mesurier (and he is but the echo of the opinion of many other writers of the establishment,) that the schism of Calvin, as well as that of the Presbyterians, originated in motives, and was founded upon principles, "not very dissimilar to those of Jeroboam." Such notion may be correct. And it implies a very severe condemnation of one of the largest, and most learned, portions of the Reformation. But, might it not be asked of M. Le Mesurier, or of his fellow-churchmen,—whether the separation from the parent institute, either by the present establishment, or by any other sect of the Reformation, originated in better motives; or were founded upon better principles, than were those of Calvin; or those of the Presbyterians? For, what,—as even they are described by the protestant historians themselves,—were the motives, and what the principles, which gave birth to protestantism, both in this, and in every other protestant, country? They were, as those writers themselves allow, the passions of the first reformers, their ambition; their lust; their avarice; their love of liberty, &c. Thus, did not the schism here originate entirely in the disorders of the eighth Henry? And did not, as Grey says, "the gospel light first beam from Bullen's eyes?" "If you reduce," says the great Frederick of Prussia, in one of his letters,—"the causes of the Reformation to their simple principles, you will find, that, in Germany, it was the work of interest; in England, the fruit of lust; in France, the effect of novelty."—"These are facts," Baron Starke observes, "which are completely conformable to history.—The Reformation," adds this candid protestant, "owed its success to a variety of passions,—to the avarice of princes; to the love of liberty; to the hatred of Rome; to rivalties; to

And see now the consequences. For, it is in these,—in the heavy punishments which God inflicted upon the people for their desertion, that we trace the heinousness of their guilt. In his vengeance he scourged them with a long succession of various calamities. He sent them a race of wicked and corrupted princes. He permitted every kind of vice and disorder to prevail amongst them. He suffered them, ere long, to be led into captivity,—and into a captivity, from which they never returned again. Indeed, not even were they ever again, after that period, so much as heard of, as existing in the list of nations. Such, in the eyes of God is the crime of schism; and such were the visitations which awaited it,—although here again, just as in the preceding instance, there was only question of rejecting an order of worship, which was, in itself, exceedingly defective; being merely accommodated to the character of a class of men, who were obdurate, perverse, and unenlightened.

But it is not by the dictate of *mediate* arguments; nor by the force of inferences, deduced from the punishments which have been on different occasions inflicted upon the act of schism, that the magnitude of this disorder is to be principally estimated. Its guilt is immediately condemned,—and this, too, very often, and very positively,—in the whole series of the sacred Scripture. The wonder is, how men, who are so often engaged in reading these instructive pages, can possibly, upon so important a subject, misconceive their alarming import.

For example,—referring in the first place to the conduct and testimony of our divine Redeemer,—we find that this sacred Being in his various instructions and commands suggests incessantly as one of the great principles of salvation, the necessity of unity, and the obligation of submission to the government of his church. Thus he prayed,—and it was one of the last of his solemn petitions,—that his disciples “might be ONE, even

pretensions; to the ambitious views of different orders; to the dislike of celibacy, amongst certain corrupted members of the priesthood.” For these reasons; and seeing, that the Reformation owed its origin, every where, to improper motives,—it is imprudent in such men as M. Le Mesurier, &c. to attribute to Calvinism and Presbyterianism, a defect, which, if examined candidly, may, with just equal reason, be attributed to their own sect. They throw a stone, to be cast back upon themselves.

as the Father, and himself, are one." Because it is by this means, he subsequently adds,—“that they also may be ONE with us; and the world believe that thou hast sent me;”—assigning, thus, the principle of union, both as the great source of eternal happiness, and as the best testimonial, moreover, of the reality of his own divine delegation.—In like manner, it may be observed, that, whenever there is question in the holy volume of the character of the Christian church, it is always represented, along with all its divine appendages, as centering in *unity*. It is *one fold*, under the guidance of *one Shepherd*. It is *one*, as there is *but one God*; *one faith*; *one baptism*. Accordingly, mark, next, the punishments, which the great Legislator appends to the violation of this unity. “You shall abide in my love,” he says, “PROVIDED you keep my commands. You are my friends, PROVIDED you observe my ordinances:”—giving us by these words to understand, that we in vain look for any share in his love; in vain expect the future consolations of his friendship, if, through a love of independence, we excite divisions in his church; or, by a spirit of disobedience, refuse to observe his laws. I will not cite the various passages, in which, under similar comminations, he commands the faithful to obey their pastors. Suffice it to say, that, having instituted these as the organs of his own voice, he instructs us, hence, that any neglect of them is, in fact, the neglect of himself; and as such, ruinous to salvation. “He, that hears you,” he says, addressing these men, “hears me; and he that despises you, despises me.”—“He, that will not hear the church, let him be as the heathen, and the publican.” In reality, all this,—the church being a divine institution,—is but natural, and consistent. It is more or less the case, even in the order of civil governments. For, whilst subordination in these is essential, as being the principle of their harmony, and the source of their strength and prosperity; and the principle, therefore, and the source of rewards and honours to their subjects;—so, also, in like manner, is insubordination regarded as criminal; and its criminality visited by the rigour of severe inflictions. But, in the economy of religion, all this is still more obvious: because the aim of religion is not only to render mankind obedient, and sub-

missive ; but, moreover, lowly, humble, and abject,—“ casting down,” as St. Paul says, “ imaginations, and every height, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God ; and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

In the different writings of the apostles just cited, there is hardly any disorder that is more frequently reprobated, or more severely condemned than the sin of schism ; and the crime of disobedience to the lawful pastors of the church. So, for instance, in his epistle to the Romans, he thus admonishes the faithful : “ Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark those who cause division, and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned ; and avoid them. For,” he adds, “ they, that are such, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly : and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the simple.”—In his first epistle to the Corinthians, making use of one of those comparisons, which were employed so often by our great Redeemer, he assimilates the order of the church to the unity, and harmony, of the human body : “ For as the body,” he says, “ is one ; and all the members of that one body, being many, are yet one body, so likewise is Christ,”—that is, the body of Christ,—his church. “ For, we are all baptised in one body.” Hence, he concludes,—“ that there should be no schism in the body : because now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”—In conformity with the above principles, let us remark, in what manner, the apostle proceeds to reprobate the sin of schism, which, unfortunately, had found its way into the societies of the Corinthians. “ I have been informed,” he says, “ that there are contentions among you.” There were then, it would seem, exactly as they are now, in our days, a set of people, who were constantly running after different preachers, accordingly as they might chance to suit, or their fancy, or their inclinations ;—some after Paul ; some after Apollos ; some after Cephas. This, the apostle calls, in the first instance, “ a division.” And he exclaims : “ Is Christ, then, divided ?”—In a subsequent chapter, he tells them, that their division “ is a carnal sin. You are carnal ;” he says, “ for, whereas, there are divisions amongst you, are you not carnal ? For, while one says, I am of Paul ; and another, I am of

Apollos,—are you not carnal?” In this way, does St. Paul, than whom there is no better interpreter of the will, and law, of his divine Master, condemn the sin of schism;—reprobating it, in the conduct of the Corinthians, as mortally criminal: although it is probable, that these people, guided even by pious motives, did nothing more, in reality, than just attach themselves to this, or that, teacher, according as the person, the manner, the talents, or the eloquence, of each of them appeared, either the more pleasing to their inclinations, or the more edifying to their sentiments.—In short, in his epistle to the Philippians, this apostle denominates false teachers, and the promoters of division,—“dogs, and the workers of evil; enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction.”

The sentiments of the other apostles, upon this awful subject, are not less positive, than those of St. Paul. Thus, St. Peter, admonishing the faithful against the artifices of seduction, tells them, that there come amongst them, “false prophets, and false teachers, introducing damnable heresies; despising lawful authority; beguiling unstable souls, &c., who, while they promise liberty, are, themselves, the slaves of corruption.” Speaking of the same class of men, St. John, in the warmth of his indignation, calls them, “antichrists.” “Now,” he says, “there are many antichrists. They went out from us. But, they are not of us: for, if they had been, they would have continued with us.”—In his second epistle, still speaking of the same order of men, this apostle goes so far,—kind, and amiable, as he was,—as to bid the lady, to whom he addressed it,—“not to receive them into her house; nor even so much as salute them.”—Saint James attributes the sins of schism, and dissension, to that general, and baneful, principle, from which nearly all other crimes, and disorders, proceed,—“to those lusts,” as he calls them,—“which war in the members.”—Whilst, last of all, St. Jude, animating the faithful “to contend earnestly for that faith, which was once delivered to the saints,”—reprobates, at the same time, “those ungodly men,” as he terms them, “and filthy dreamers,” who corrupt its purity, “who despise dominion, and speak ill of power.”—Such, according to the testimonies of the sacred Scripture,—and

I have only cited a few of them,—is the guilt of schism. It is, no doubt, peculiarly heinous; being, thus, a violation, as they exhibit it, of that principle of religion,—*unity*,—which is the great feature of its beauty, and the foundation of its excellence. It is directly opposed to that *unity of heart*, which Christ laboured so earnestly to establish amongst his followers; to that *unity of belief*, which he ordained so strictly; and to that *unity of government*, which constitutes the corner-stone of his divine establishment. So that hence, and in order to express its criminality, the sacred writers have termed it, the action of “tearing asunder the body itself of Jesus Christ.”

Where there is question of any obligation, which admits of difficulties; or of any sin, that is beset with doubts, it is always prudent, and often customary, upon such occasions, to ask advice. Hence, it is here a piece of prudence, (since here an error might prove so fatal) to inquire, what has been always the opinion, which the good, and the wise, have entertained, respecting the present subject. The authority, no doubt, of such men, under such circumstances, is a very important thing; and it forms a rule, which it is always deemed safe to follow. It is thus, too, that men act, in relation to their temporal difficulties; and in the management of their worldly interests. If here they have any perplexity, they have the good sense to consult the opinions of the experienced, and well instructed: and the prudence, generally speaking, to follow their advice.—Wherefore, it may be proper here, since I am addressing myself to individuals, many of whom are completely ignorant, respecting the vital question,—to state, still farther, to such, what the sentiments have always been of the most distinguished members of the Christian church,—its saints, its sages, and its brightest luminaries,—concerning the sin of schism.

And what, then, were the sentiments, which these great personages entertained, respecting it? Happily, the reply is easy, as the question is prudent. Their sentiments, respecting it,—let the period be what it may, when we consult them,—are always, and in every place, the same. There is not amongst the fathers of the Christian church, nor amongst its wisest writers, one single

individual, who, speaking upon the subject of schism, does not condemn it; and condemn it even, (for, this is the general case with nearly all of them) with a degree of severity, which exceeds their ardor, on perhaps every other occasion. They execrate it, as the most criminal of offences,—calling it, for example, sometimes, “a sacrilege;” sometimes, “a rebellion against Christ;” sometimes, “a crime, more heinous far than heresy itself.” These, and such as these, are expressions, which occur, frequently in the works of these holy men,—in those of Austin, Chrysostom, Jerome, &c. Saint Austin, indeed, in the warmth of his invectives against it, goes so far as to declare, that it is “worse than idolatry itself;”—*worse even, than any other crime: “Sacrilegium schismatis, quod omnia scelera supergraditur.”*—In like manner,—when speaking of the authors, and promoters, of this evil,—there is hardly a term of reproach so harsh, which these writers, in their indignation, do not pour out against them. St. Austin denominates them—“monsters;—men born without any spiritual generation;—new Corahs, Dathans, and Abirams.”—St. Cyprian calls them, “false prophets, and false apostles,” &c. In short, this, amongst the whole body of the fathers, and writers, of the church, during its early periods, is the fixed, unvarying, maxim, that “schism is always a heinous crime; so much so that there cannot *possibly exist* (this is the expression of St. Austin) *any apology to justify it.*”*

* Dr. Spry, in his Bampton Lectures, after having citing several passages from the works of the fathers, which reprobate the sin of schism, proceeds to make the following sensible observations upon the sentiments of all these enlightened men. “To these strong passages, many others, equally decisive, might be added easily. The writings of the Fathers abound with them. And the advocates of those principles, upon which the endless diversities of modern Christians are supported, must not appeal to the testimony of antiquity. Examples, indeed, of religious differences may be drawn from the earliest records of the church. But, these examples are also marked in her annals, by reproof so pointed, by censures so severe, as must baffle every attempt to cite them in defence of later divisions. And the disputant, who would still be heard in their favour, will be compelled to maintain, that, either the more immediate successors of the apostles were ignorant of the true nature of the church, and the duties of its members; or that the practice, which they so deeply lamented, *as a sin, scarcely to be expiated*, is now, by some change in the circumstances of men, and the counsels of God, become, not only venial, but defensible;—not only innocent, but laudable.”

In the next place, let us consult, (for this, also, is a matter, both of prudence, and curiosity)—what the opinion is, and has been, nearly always, of the established clergy in this country, respecting this same disorder. Well; and not even here,—singular as the thing should seem,—is there, either any obscurity, or any doubt. The writers of the established religion, with hardly any exception, all, concur in condemning schism; and in condemning it even, in language, almost equally severe as that, which I have, just now, cited. Indeed, they, many of them, adopt that very language: and they re-echo it incessantly, with loud, and frightful, vociferation, in the ears of the dissenters; and of their own unsteady, and fluctuating, congregations. They tell the public, every day, in their writings; and they thunder it from their pulpits,—that schism is a very grievous sin,—so grievous, that no motive can excuse it; no apology palliate it; no disorder,—not even the grossest immorality of their clergy; nor yet the grossest error in their church,—suffice to justify it. “It is,” they say, after St. Paul, “*a carnal sin*; which, therefore, like every carnal sin, must be cautiously avoided; or if not avoided,—punished.” “It is,” they proclaim, “the crime of Corah; which, consequently, the fate of Corah awaits.” In short, there is hardly any term of reprobation; hardly any expression of censure, which zeal, and eloquence, can invent, that are not daily employed by the established clergy, in their descriptions, and condemnation, of this disorder.

“Schism,” says Dr. Daubeny, (just to adduce one or two specimens of their mode of treating it) “schism is among the crying sins of the present day. It is a sin, at all times, productive of important consequences to the peace, and order, of society. It is, indeed, that great mother-sin, as it may be truly called, on account of the abundant progeny which it never fails to produce, which has done, and perhaps will do, more to counteract the divine scheme of human redemption, than any other means, which the great deceiver of mankind has employed against it. And it is on this account, it may be, that this deceiver, in these latter days, when his time is drawing to an end, is permitted, more generally to employ it, as preparatory to that awful period, when it seems to have been made a question, whether the Son of

Man shall find faith on the earth.”—“We must not suffer ourselves,” says M. Le Mesurier, “to be deluded into the idea, that schism is a matter indifferent in itself; or not an evil of the greatest magnitude. We must regard it, as what in truth it is; what it has always in the church, until of late years, been taken to be,—*a very grievous sin.*”—“Schism,” says Mr. Sykes, “is a work of the flesh; and must be avoided, just as the determined Christian would any other carnal sin.”—“It is in vain,” Mr. Davis asserts, “to look for either authority, or countenance, to justify an act of separation from the church. There is no such thing to be found. Separation is expressly forbidden in the word of God.” Such is the general language, which the clergy of the established church now make use of, in their condemnations of the guilt of schism.

Neither is this, as I have said, peculiar to its present members. Their predecessors,—a set of men, still more learned, and enlightened, than any thing, which protestantism now boasts,—had long since employed the same. Thus, Hammond says: “According to St. Augustine, it is *not possible*, that there can be any lawful excuse for separating from the catholic church. And consequently, no excuse can be admitted for those, who, *through any reason*, whether true, or false, have really made such a separation. Neither are we to inquire into the cause, or motive, of a schism; or give it any attention: but only inform ourselves of this fact,—whether he, who is accused of schism, has really made it.”—“The sin of schism,” says Thorndyke, “is of a horrible nature. For, a heretic, or an apostate, in the sight of God, destroys only his own soul: but he, that causeth divisions in the church, either peremptorily destroys, or probably hinders, the salvation of all, that are parties in it. Until the dregs of our times, I do not know, that it was ever disputed, that Christians are not bound to be members of one, and the same, visible church.” “If schism,” says Bishop Grove, “be an innocent thing, I have no more say, but that the whole Christian church, ever since the apostles’ times, has been in a very great mistake. But, if schism be a very great sin; and that, which will, according to the judgment of the primitive church, damn us, as soon as adultery, and murder, then it must be a dangerous thing

to communicate with schismatics." Such is the doctrine of the established church, respecting the nature, and the guilt, of schism. The severity of the early Fathers, as I have asserted, was not more severe in its condemnation, than they are."*

* Establishing, as I am now doing, the magnitude of the sin of schism, by the testimonies of the protestants themselves, it may not perhaps appear very prudent in me to remark, upon such occasion, that these testimonies, after all, are very inconsistent things:—and not only this, but if carefully analyzed, ruinous even to the cause, which they are intended to support. It is true, they point out very forcibly,—founded, as they are, upon the plainest texts of the Scriptures, and upon the authority of the Fathers,—they point out very forcibly the magnitude of the guilt of schism. But, as coming from protestants, they are certainly gross inconsistencies; and very palpable contradictions of the first rule, and law, of protestantism. For, what is the first rule,—the fundamental maxim,—of this religion? I have cited it frequently, already; neither will any enlightened protestant contest it:—it is *liberty of faith*; or the privilege of believing, just what the reason of each private individual judges to be true. For, as Archdeacon Blackburn, whom I have before quoted, says, "When the protestants first withdrew from the church of Rome, the principles, they went upon, were such as these: Christ Jesus hath, by his gospel, called all men unto liberty; and restored them the privilege of working out their salvation by their own endeavours." "Whence," says also Bishop Watson, "it is the unalienable privilege of every protestant to judge, and believe, as he pleases." This is, indeed, the real charter of protestantism: inasmuch, that take it away; and there is at once an end of this sect. Now, I ask any candid individual;—How, with such a principle as this, it is possible, that there can really exist,—I do not say, such a *sin*, but even such a *thing*, as schism? For, if "Christ hath, by his gospel, called all men unto liberty; and restored to them the privilege of working out their salvation by their own endeavours;"—if it be "the unalienable privilege of every protestant to judge, and believe, as he pleases,"—then, of course, (else, the privilege would be a mere illusion) he may adopt, or abandon any communion, that he chooses; he may believe, or disbelieve, any religion, that his reason bids him. With such a privilege, indeed, he need not even,—if such be the suggestion of his reason—belong to any communion whatsoever. At all events, this is plain, that, if each individual be the arbiter of his own belief, there cannot then be possibly any crime in dissenting from the church of England.

Upon these accounts, therefore, it is, that the dissenters complain so loudly of the conduct of the established church; which not only condemns, but even punishes, them for the alleged offence. This, they say,—and they say so, with reason,—is both inconsistent, and unjust;—*inconsistent*, because it is a direct contradiction of the first principle of the Reformation; *unjust*, because by separating themselves from the church of England, they do nothing more, than what did this church itself, but a few years past, by detaching itself from the church of Rome. "So that, if we are guilty of schism,"—they again say to the members of the establishment,—"so are you:—and it is wrong in you to condemn us." "Or, if, indeed,"—they still farther add,—"if we are guilty of schism,—then the only remedy is, both for us, and for you, to hast-

The history of error is curious ; and it is interesting to trace in it the astonishing inconsistencies, into which the human mind is inevitably hurried, when once it has emancipated itself from the restraints of Christian wisdom. The history of protestantism is full of these disorders. It presents one constant series of contradictions, and absurdities ; of instability, and fluctuation. In it, you see men for ever at variance, not only with each other, but even with themselves,—approving, to-day, what, but yesterday, they had condemned ; and above all, defending strenuously, whilst in power, what, when out of power, they had, as strenuously, reprobated. This reflection, whilst applicable to a variety of objects in the protestant religions, is also strikingly applicable to that, which I am now discussing. I will briefly illustrate this, in the conduct, for example, of one of the sects of the dissenters themselves. It shall be in that of the Puritans,—considering the two opposite situations, in which these men were successively placed, of depression, and control ; of persecution, and power.

The Puritans, whilst they were placed in a state of depression ; or before they had attained the possession of temporal power, were, as every reader knows, the loudest advocates of the widest toleration ; and the most ardent defenders of what they were then pleased to call “the essential rights of protestant, and Christian liberty.” Never, indeed, since the dawn of religion, did there exist a set of men, who have maintained these points, with so much eagerness ; nor, perhaps, with so much eloquence. They were, certainly, the very heroes of the privileges of non-conformity ; reprobating all intolerance, and all the restraints of belief, in language the most severe ; and with every hateful epithet, that the indignation of their zeal, or anger, could suggest. Such was the conduct of these men, ere they had exalted themselves to power.

en back, at once, to that pale, which we have, each of us, abandoned.” This reasoning is correct. For, either, according to the principles of protestantism, there is no such sin as schism ; or if there be, it is just equally imputable to the members of the church of England as it is to the dissenters. However, the real fact is, that both parties err ;—the members of the church of England, *by the wrong application* of right principles ; the dissenters, *by the adoption of wrong principles*.

But, see them now, when power, and authority, were theirs. Above all, see them, at that frightful period, when, by the artifices of fanaticism, and the intrigues of faction, they had linked themselves together in that awful confederation,—that monster of bigotry, and mischief,—“the solemn league, and covenant.” What were now their conduct, and the character of their language? Precisely the reverse of what they had been before. They, now, restrict, and condemn, toleration and liberty of conscience, with as much, if not with greater, violence than that, with which they had, so lately, defended them. They now define, with the most solemn gravity, that toleration is “a cursed thing, and a hideous monster;” and that all dissent from their newly erected order of things, is “a damnable offence;”—terms, these, which they made use of in the book, composed for the instruction of the public, in the year 1647.* Hence, on the occasions when some attempts were made by the now ejected, and persecuted, clergy of the late establishment, as well as by a certain portion of the public, to obtain for themselves something like liberty of faith, and freedom of worship,—straight, these new advocates of unity set their faces unanimously against it; declaring, that to give any sanction to such privileges, would be no less a crime, “than the establishment of in-

* Take the following specimens of the manner in which the leaders of puritanism were wont to condemn the sin of schism. Baxter, the great oracle, and organ of the sect, writes thus: “He, who is out of the church, is without the teaching, the holy worship, the prayers, and discipline, of the church: and is out of the way, where the spirit doth come; and out of the society, which Christ is related to. For, he is the Saviour of his body: and if once we leave his hospital, we cannot expect the presence, and help, of the physician. Nor will he be pilot to them, that leave his ship; nor captain to them, that separate from his army. Out of the ark there is nothing but a deluge; and no place of rest, or safety, for a soul.”

In 1645, the collected body of ministers protested solemnly against the toleration of sects; and in their remonstrance, they say: “We detest, and abhor, the so much endeavoured toleration”—In one of their provincial assemblies, they denominated this privilege, “a soul-poison.” In another, they called it, “a sword in a madman’s hand; a cup of poison in the hands of a child; a city of refuge in men’s consciences for the devil to fly to,” &c.—In short, this,—compressed into one word.—was the general sentiment; and therefore, the general language of these men, that, “schism is a damnable sin; and whatsoever is contrary to the gospel, can have no right, and therefore, should have no liberty.”

iquity by law ;"—“a crime,”—they added, “to be abhorred by all good Christians.”—“When they were in power,” says Dr. South, “no toleration was allowed for the liturgy, and established worship, of the church of England; though the users of it pleaded liberty of conscience never so much for its use, and the known laws of God, and man, for the rule of their conscience. But, these zealots were above the legal ordinance of doing as they would be done by. Nor were their consciences any longer spiritually weak, when their interest was grown spiritually strong. And then, notwithstanding all their pleas of tenderness, and outcries against persecution, whoever came under them, and closed not with them, found them to be men, whose bowels were brass; and whose hearts were as hard as their foreheads.” Such, also, were the notions, which the chief writers of the Calvinistic sect,—the Baxters, the Cartwrights, the Calamies, &c. entertained of the sin of schism, during the period of their unhappy triumphs.

Again I might proceed; and, if the thing were necessary,—still farther, show,—that this disorder is condemned, not only by the church of England, and the puritans, but by many other sects of protestantism. In fact, I believe, that the assertion will be found completely correct, that there never has existed one single sect of protestantism, which, having once organized itself into a kind of body,—into a something, which it called, *a church*; and above all, if it had attained the possession of a considerable share of temporal power,—that did not, in these cases, (however much its members had before extolled the rights of Christian liberty) very loudly condemn the act of separation from it; and even treat it as a crime, deserving the severest punishments. This, certainly, has been the case with the Lutherans, in Germany, in Sweden, in Norway, &c.; with the Calvinists, in Switzerland, in France, in Scotland, &c.; nay, even with some of the societies of the Independents themselves. No sooner, we find, did the leaders of these sects,—although, before, the very heroes of liberty, and disorganisation,—unite their followers into establishments, than they had the good sense to censure schism; and even with St. Paul, to represent it, as “a carnal sin;” insomuch, that there is hardly one combination of

these men,—no matter however small,—that does not pronounce the severest sentence,—sometimes even of excommunication,—upon the unfortunate individual, who is deemed guilty of it.

The above conduct is, no doubt, all of it, inconsistent; and very repugnant to the real maxims of the Reformation. However, it is, after all, but natural; and what, when similar circumstances offer, will always take place. For, give to any set of men a preponderating power;—suppose them to possess the means of controlling the minds of a large portion of the community—certain it is, that they will always use them to cement unity, and to prevent division. They will always then have the wisdom to discover; and the good sense to teach, in conformity with the Scriptures,—that schism is a great disorder.—For these reasons, therefore, if, amongst the protestants, and particularly amongst the dissenters, there be men, as there are indeed multitudes,—who are, for ever, inculcating the widest principles of toleration; and the broadest liberty of belief,—the chief cause is this,—that they want the authority to control the public, and the influences to command obedience. But, only give them these;—only give them once the means of staying division; and the consequence, there is no doubt, would be, that they would reprobate schism; condemning that liberty, which they now extol; and blaming those privileges, which they now preach up, as the best conquests of the Reformation. I say this, because such has always, hitherto, been the fact. The loudest preachers of toleration have always, when once they had attained their ends, become the enemies of division. I say so, too, because such also is the nature of things. Unity is an essential quality of religion; confusion, its violation.*

* I could cite the testimonies of several distinguished writers, even in the school of modern philosophy, who, after having considered the end, and character, of the Christian scheme, have,—conducted only by the suggestions of common sense,—severely censured the disorder of schism. For example, Bayle thus expresses himself; “I do not know, where one could possibly find out a more grievous sin, than is that of rending the mystical body of Jesus Christ,—of that Spouse, which he has purchased at the expense of his own blood;—of that Mother, whom he has begotten in God; who feeds us with that milk of understanding, which is devoid of fraud; and conducts us in those paths, which lead to eternal happiness. What crime can, indeed, be possi-

Wherefore, it is thus, on all sides, acknowledged, that schism is a very heinous offence. It is, indeed, so heinous, that the amiable Dean Hickee, having seriously weighed it, very feelingly exclaims: "I would not be a schismatic in the church, to have the wisdom of Solomon; the tongue of St. Paul; or the eloquence of Apollos; no, not to be caught up into paradise, and to hear unutterable things." Hence, then, with what diligence, should men here labour to be secure! Here, they ought indeed to be well instructed. It is not enough to say, as many well-meaning, but imprudent, protestants often do say,—that, "belonging, as they do, to an establishment, which has flourished, almost three centuries;—to an establishment, respectable for the number of its members; and respectable still more, for the talents, the virtues, and the learning, of its clergy,—belonging to such an establishment, they need not, surely", they say, "feel uneasy, or insecure." Alas! flattering, but yet feeble, apology! For, what, after all, is an establishment, that has flourished three centuries? It may be just equally schismatical, as is any one of those sects, or new aggregations, which, like so many funguses, we see springing up, almost every day, around us. Three centuries of duration form, in the eyes of Christian wisdom, no better a claim to veneration, than does the duration of a single year. And then, as for the consideration of the number, talents, and learning, of its members,—these, too, are circumstances, illusive almost as the preceding. For, a numerous, and learned, association may

bly greater than to rise up against such a parent; to defame her, throughout the world; and to make her children, when they can do it, rebel against her; tear them, by thousands, from her womb, in order to drag them to eternal flames;—and not only them, but their posterity for ever? Where does there exist a crime of high treason against God, if it be not here? A husband, who loves his wife, and who, at the same time, is assured of her virtue, considers himself more mortally wounded by the calumnies, and libels, that would make her pass for a prostitute, than he would be, by any injuries, proclaimed, and published, against himself. Amidst all the crimes, into which a subject can fall, there is not any one more grievous than that of rebelling against his lawful sovereign, and endeavouring, at the same time, to excite as many provinces as he can, to dethrone him. Now, precisely in the same proportion as supernatural interests exceed all temporal interests, just so does the church of Christ surpass all civil societies. And the consequence, therefore, is, that schism in the church exceeds, in the greatness of its criminality, the guilt of all other acts of sedition."

be equally involved in the guilt of schism, as a small, and ignorant, one:—as, indeed, such, at various periods of the church, has, not unfrequently, been the case. Schism is still schism, whatsoever may chance to be the multitude of its adherents, or the character of its followers. These are things, which change nothing in its real nature; nor in the security of its abettors. So that although it be true, that many of our separated brethren lean upon the above considerations, with pleased complacency, yet is such confidence unwise. They ought, therefore, to discuss the great subject better; and not leave off its investigation, until, having understood it thoroughly, they had attained *that prudent*, and enlightened, conviction, which is the gift of industry, and the reward of piety.

As an additional reason, why the protestant ought to make himself well acquainted with the nature, and guilt, of schism, I might cite here the present increasing prevalence of this disorder; and the alarming mischiefs, which are daily resulting from it. It is this, that forms the chief source of those errors, and of that confusion; of that instability, and incertitude; of that incredulity, and licentiousness, which are now so general in this country; and which are rapidly breaking down the few remaining mounds of faith, piety, and religion. “The season,” says Dr. Mant, and it is the language of most of the thinking members of the establishment, “the season of anarchy, and instability, seems to be gaining ground upon us with rapid strides; whilst men, despising all ecclesiastical subordination, all unity of mind, and judgment, tenaciously adhere to such practices, and opinions, as are right in their own eyes; or rather, such as are agreeable to their inclinations, and conceit. Thus, sectarianism, with all its manifold variety of forms, is perpetually enlisting fresh proselytes, of whom it may be more easily affirmed, what they are not, than what they are.” These evils are, indeed, now so general, and notorious, that, terrified at the awful prospect, not a few of our most distinguished writers have, from it, been induced to tremble for the dissolution,—even for the speedy dissolution,—of the established church itself.—“The separation,” says Dr. Daubeny, “from the church in this country, is daily increasing. And it furnishes a

subject of serious alarm to thinking minds. No great portion of time can be expected to elapse, before the great body of the people will be lost to the establishment." Indeed, M. Le Mesurier had told us, that, "it is the opinion of some, that, even in twenty years, the methodists will prescribe, what sort of government there shall be in the church."*

I have already protracted the present chapter a great deal beyond the limits which I had originally designed to give it:—else, I would here etch the general characters of the *men*, and the nature of the *means*, to which, in this country, the propagation of schism is now principally indebted for its successes. Such description might, perhaps, be useful; because it might possibly serve as a caution to some simple, and deluded, reader or other. It would, indeed, strikingly evince this truth,—that nothing is more easy than to mislead the credulity of the public; and nothing so easy, as to mislead the credulity of an English public. It would illustrate very clearly that sentence of the holy Scripture, which tells us, that "the number of fools is infinite." However, having already exceeded my intended limits, I will not attempt such delineation. I will merely remark, after the writers of the establishment, that both the characters of the *men*, who are now so successful in the propagation of error; and the nature of the *means*, which they employ in

* It is not, however, only amongst the dissenters, that there exists this spirit of schism, along with all the confusion of errors, attendant on it. These are evils, which prevail, almost equally, if not equally, in the established church itself;—and even amongst the very men, who have solemnly subjected themselves to its authority; sworn to the belief of its doctrines; and hence, feed upon its wealth. "Schism," says Mr. Wix, "does not prevail merely out of the church. It abounds within it. And among those, who profess themselves its members, very little attachment to it is to be found.—It is, moreover, most seriously to be lamented, that very many of those, who boast the warmest attachment to her doctrines, have arrogated to themselves the knowledge of the gospel, in a sense, which excludes all others from a due conception of it, whose opinions, or feelings, accord not with their own. In consequence of this, we observe much spiritual disorder; a variety of opinions of faith, and discipline, both in the church, and out of the church. And thus the greatest injury is inflicted on the unity of the gospel of Jesus Christ."—Such, too, as this is the language of many other writers of the establishment. "The establishment," said one of its most eloquent prelates, "is a tree, that is shivering to pieces with wedges, made out of itself."

its diffusion, are such as absolutely confound wisdom; and afflict, and astonish, piety. The *men*,—observe the above writers,—are, for the most part, of the same quality, as were those fomenters of confusion, whom St. Jerome describes in his times—“shopkeepers, carpenters, cobblers, tinkers, bricklayers, farmers, soldiers,” &c.—the meanest, frequently, of the vulgar; the most illiterate, sometimes, of the ignorant.* *The means* (the same writers again remark) which these men make use of, analogous to the features of their characters, are abuse, insult, violence, misrepresentation,—all the artifices of deception, as well as all the contrivances of fanaticism. Such are the individuals, who are now “running the race,” as it is expressed, “with the established

* “They are,” says Dr. Daubeny, “a set of low, ignorant, self-sufficient, enthusiasts, industriously pushing themselves into every parish; creeping into houses; and leading captives those silly persons, who are weak enough to be led by them.—They are, many of them, of so low a description, as to be obliged to substitute their marks for their names.”

“In this country,” observes Mr. Sykes, “vast sums of money are gained by schism; and prodigious collections are annually made for the support of its ministers. Inferior persons, assuming the situation of teachers, are leaders of the multitude. Thus in the worship of calves, (1 Kings, xii. 33.) the priests were made of the lowest of the people.—It would now seem, having preachers of all sorts, as if we had Moses’s wish; and all the people were prophets. (Numb. xi. 29.)”

But, not only is it true, that schism, with all its train of errors, is now propagated by instruments, like those, alluded to by the above writers; it is propagated even,—and this not unfrequently,—in some places, by women: in some, by children. Thus, Dr. Daubeny informs us, that there is a seminary in Bath, “in which boys are trained to preaching; and at about twelve, or thirteen, years of age, when considered qualified for public exhibition, are sent to undertake the services of religion.”—Speaking of these tiny heroes of the pulpit, Dr. Valpy tells us, that one of them, “a lad, twelve years old, went about the country preaching *extempore*. He became popular, and was much admired, and patronised.”—The case is; and this is the solution of the whole secret; and accounts, at once, both for the multitude of our preachers, and for the confusion, which they generate:—*preaching is now a very profitable, and a very easy trade.*

“Each pious ’prentice freely may dispense
Salvation; licens’d now for eighteen pence;
And should devotion tempt him from his awl,
He’ll get his orders, if he gets his call.”—*Relig. Clerici.*

clergy:" and such the methods, by which also, I am sorry to think it, they will, very soon, *out-run* them.*

Thus, therefore, besides representing the grievousness of the sin of schism, I have shown, moreover, how very prevalent this evil is in this country;—the great mass of its population exhibiting a spectacle, which must distress every lover of Christian unity. Out of the establishment, I have shown, all is anarchy; within it, all division. Out of it, there subsist a hundred different sects, all at variance with each other; within it, a conflict of opinions, the most opposite, and contradictory. Out of it, you may trace every form of illusion, that fanaticism can invent; within it, a spirit of latitudinarianism, bold as liberty can suggest. Out of it, you see hosts of enthusiasts, who sport with Christian wisdom; within it, a crowd of Arminians, Calvinists, Socinians, &c. all busily, although unintentionally, employed in undermining the tottering fabric.* Such are the fruits of

* The late Dr. Outram has described, very minutely, the various contrivances, by which these men prove so successful in imposing upon the public credulity. His two discourses upon the subject are eloquent: whilst the illustrations, appended to them, pointing out the dangers, &c. which are to be apprehended from the spirit, and growth, of sectarism, are curious, and interesting. I will cite only a few passages from them.

"They infuse," he says, referring principally to the Methodists, "they infuse into the public mind persuasions, hostile to the ministers of the establishment, as well as to her doctrines. They urge them to the extremes of discontent, or of error; encourage them in their disaffection, and secession.—They adopt every expedient, that can be devised, for the purpose of increasing their own influence, and degrading other teachers of religion in the opinion of the multitude. They labour to attract, and allure, by every novel mode of expression, and gesticulation; by harangues, and invectives, addressed, not to the reasoning faculties, but to the senses, and passions.—They have projected, and formed, a mighty hierarchy, that is meant to swallow up almost every religious denomination in itself.—They publish their pretensions to divine mission, and even to miraculous gifts. They proclaim indulgences, and rewards, which await the sons of guilt, who, at the very last extremity, receive their doctrines. They apply to themselves scriptural expressions, which belong exclusively to Christ himself. They reprobate all adversaries, and canonise all their advocates. They revile the established clergy, as mere nominal Christians, as ignorant profligates, and unconverted hypocrites," &c.

* "In the body of our clergy, we have Arminian, Calvinian, Unitarian, Pelagian, Arian, Socinian, Sabellian, Trinitarian, and I do not know how many other sorts of clergymen; some starving in a curacy; and others fattening in a bishoprick. We have Methodistical clergymen;

the Reformation:—such the retribution, which has awaited that “bright, and blessed, revolution;”—such the consequences of having rejected that sacred principle, which is the sole source of Christian unity. Thus is verified,—or at least, fast verifying,—that prediction of Christ; “Every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation; and every city, or house, divided against itself, shall not stand.” Thus, is realised that threat of the holy Scripture: “Woe to thee, that despisest; shalt not thou, too, be despised in thy turn?” Thus, is fast hastening to its fulfilment that saying of St. Austin, “All those, who have preferred the presumption of their own hostility to the sacred tie of catholic unity, must necessarily perish; frittered away by degrees; and ere long, falling to pieces by their divisions.”—These are, no doubt, evils, which should strike every thoughtful mind; which should engage piety to pause, and deliberate; and impel prudence to seek out for some wise, and effectual, remedy. They are those evils, which, in his gloomy, but sagacious, forebodings, Melancton had foretold, when he exclaimed: “Good God, what a tragedy are we not preparing for posterity!”

and clergymen with no method at all. All these classes of clergymen are retained in the church. live upon her revenues, and are protected by the laws.”—NIGHTINGALE.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE IMPUTATION OF SCHISM.

“Schism lies on the side of the party, which separates; whenever, therefore, there is a society, calling themselves a church, gathered out of a church, already constituted, and regularly established, and formed into a distinct society,—this, by dividing the Christian communion, makes a notorious schism.”—DR. DAUBENY.—GUIDE TO THE CHURCH.

THE reader will perhaps remember, that I have already, in the fourth chapter of this work, established the important fact, that, at the epoch, when the Reformation took place, the divine pastoral commission, originally granted to the apostles,—and, therefore, also, the lawful government of the Christian church,—were still vested in the hands of the Roman catholic ministry. I showed this, not only from the most authentic testimonies, but from the concessions of our own prejudiced, and illiberal, protestant writers themselves. I might, indeed, have shown it, still farther, from the acknowledgments even of the first reformers: for, these men, although actively engaged in rebellion against the church of Rome, still admitted its divine authority.*

* This was the case, even with Luther himself, at the very time, when he was shaking the pillars of the sacred fabric. Thus, in his conclusions respecting indulgencies, he professes to submit himself, without any reserve, to its dominion. In his declaration of the ten articles, he again does the same,—renewing the protestations of his sincere veneration for the holy see, and his subjection to its control. In his Protestation to Cardinal Cajetan, he declares, that he honours, in every thing; and in every thing, is ready to obey, its mandates. In his appeal from the pope to a council, he again protests, “that he does not, by such act

When, too, I stated the aforesaid truths, I made moreover, it may be equally recollected, the following remark upon them:—I observed,—that, since it is thus manifest, and admitted, that the apostolical commission, and the lawful government of the Christian church, had been so long, and were then still, vested in the hands of the pastors of the church of Rome,—so it ought, at all events, to appear but natural to imagine, that these sacred truths have continued (seeing, that there is no means of accounting for their loss) to remain there still. This, however, is an inference, which I then deduced, as only *probable*. I shall now proceed to examine, whether it be not *certain*.

At the epoch, then, just alluded to,—when the religion of this country, and of the Christian world in general, was yet *one*; and its members formed, all, one great, and united, family,—that revolution came on, which destroyed the happy harmony,—a revolution, as I have said already, the most awful in the annals of Christianity; changing, in half the nations of Europe, not only their ancient creeds, and forms of worship, but introducing, along with these innovations, new codes of morals, new manners, and new maxims. The author, and spirit, of the storm,—every reader knows,—was Martin Luther,

design, by any means, to derogate from that respect, and obedience, which are due to the holy see, and to the catholic, and apostolic, church. He repeats the same sentiments to the pope, soon after his conference with Miltitz.—In short, in his book against Silvester de Prierio, after having laid it down, as a maxim, that men ought to profess the faith of the church of Rome, he adds: “I give thanks to Jesus Christ, that he has, by a great miracle, preserved on earth this only church; which, alone, can show, that our belief is true: so that she never departed from the true faith by any decree.”—“The consent,” he again adds, “of all the faithful retains me in reverence to the authority of the pope. And I condemn the Bohemians, who have detached themselves from the communion of the church; protesting, that it shall never befall me to commit the like act of schism.”

Melancton, in like manner, acknowledges, very frequently, the divinity of the church of Rome. And even at the period of the Augsburg Confession, the protestants still used to boast, as Bossuet remarks, that “this important instrument contains no doctrines, that are repugnant to the genuine tenets of the Roman catholic church,”—which they still affected to revere, as the church of Jesus Christ.—But, in short, the mere circumstance of the *term*,—“Reformation,”—which the protestants have, all of them, adopted to express their revolution,—alone suffices to prove, that they do not, any of them, consider the church as having perished, but only as standing in need of certain corrections, and improvements.

an obscure friar from an obscure convent in Germany. The motives, which, first, awoke his zeal, were, according to the testimony of his own historians, the feelings of jealousy and disappointment. These, ere long,—such was the influence of events,—became heightened, and inflamed, by the still stronger impulses of ambition, and revenge. It was in the year 1517, when he first entered upon his bold career. He then stood, himself informs us, completely alone: “*primo solus eram.*” However, urged on by the spirit of animosity; and possessing, not only strong passions, but great talents, and the most daring courage,—he ventured to proceed. His first steps, indeed, were marked with a certain degree of caution. Like the generality of revolutionists, he began merely by inveighing against abuses; reprobating the alleged usurpations of tyranny; and ridiculing the follies of superstition; language, which, if attended to, is always sure to awaken interest; to excite discussion; and to conciliate favour to the man, who uses it. Accordingly, such, soon, were its effects.—Next,—for, this is usually the next artifice of cunning, upon such occasions,—next, he extolled the privileges of human reason, and the prerogatives of Christian liberty,—exhorting, at the same time, the men, whom he addressed; and the public, amongst whom he circulated his writings, courageously to re-assert their rights, and to burst their chains asunder. Appeals like these, particularly as they were seconded by a variety of other motives, were too flattering not to meet with the approbation, and applause, of multitudes. They did this: and the number of his adherents became, ere long, considerable. Inspired, therefore, with increased confidence, and animated with fresh ardor, his language became now more insolent; his conduct more violent; and his darings bolder. He now ventured to propose, what, at first, either in the wildest visions of his fancy, or in the worst workings of his resentment, he had, in all probability, never once, so much as dreamt of. He now proposed to his followers to break off entirely from the communion of their parent church; and to form themselves into a distinct society. But, here,—at this awful crisis,—on the brink of this frightful precipice, his courage, himself tells us, began to fail him; and his mind became agitated, and distressed. “I paused,” he says, “often. I looked

down the precipice, which yawned beneath me. My heart trembled. I asked myself frequently these questions: 'What! art thou, then, alone, possessed of wisdom? Are all, save Luther, the dupes of error? Are all, except thee, the victims of ignorance? But, ah! what if it be thou, thyself, that art mistaken? What! if, damning thyself, thou art dragging others likewise to damnation after thee?'" Such were the feelings of the great revolutionist, at this trying period,—the dupe of conflicting passions, and the victim of perplexity; sensible of his errors, yet unwilling to retract them; aware of his own danger, yet too obstinate to recede; apologising often for his violences, yet without the fortitude to subdue them.—However, behold, at length,—such was but the natural effect of passions like those of Luther,—he took that step, which, hitherto, he had contemplated with so much horror; and which, now, he measured back no more. He detached himself completely from the communion of that church, of which, until now, he had been the member; and set up a new establishment in opposition to it; making himself the chief corner-stone, and giving to it new laws, new governors, new institutions, &c. He did this, drawing after him,—as all rebels, and heresiarchs will do, if not restricted,—immense hosts of eager followers, attracted, for the most part, by the love of novelty; and misled by various motives,—some by interest; some by passion; some by licentiousness; and some, it may be, by the honest feelings of a good intention.—Such was the origin of protestantism. Such were the date, the author, the cause, the motives, of that eventful revolution, which, in order the better to conceal its defects,—its friends have artfully denominated, "*the Reformation.*" It was indeed an eventful revolution. It dissolved entirely that sacred compact, which, during the course of fifteen hundred years, had preserved the Christian church in the state of unity; and soon rendered society the afflicting scene of anarchy, error, and licentiousness.

The consequences, indeed, which resulted from the defection of Luther, were almost immediate. For error, and rebellion are contagious things. Accordingly, the spirit of schism, and apostacy, became, at once, in various parts of Europe, general. Encouraged by the suc-

cessful example of the heroic leader; and conducted, above all, by the seductive maxims, which he had propagated, there rose up instantaneously, and almost every where, whole troops of other reformers. There now came forward crowds of licentious monks, and unbelieving priests; of wild enthusiasts, and artful fanatics,—in short, teachers without end, or number,—all, reviling their parent church; insulting its doctrines; and contemning its authority. These, too, like Luther, succeeded in withdrawing large portions of the faithful from the ancient pale. And not only this, but they became, moreover, many of them, the founders, like him, of new religions. They formed, early, in various places, and in different countries, new associations, and new churches, professing, each, distinct creeds; and distinguished by peculiar appellations. These they borrowed, sometimes from the names of their respective authors,—such as Lutherans; Calvinists; Zuinglians;—sometimes, from the character of some leading tenet, which they had adopted,—such as Independents, Presbyterians, &c.—sometimes, from the name of the place, or nation, where the new creed had been first invented,—such as the church of Geneva; of England; the kirk of Scotland. But, as an expression of the complete estrangement of all these men from that church, which they had just deserted, they all, without any exception, assumed to themselves the general name of “*Protestants*,”—designing by this strange, but yet significant, appellation, to declare, not only their denial of the doctrines of the parent institute, but their rejection also of its government; and their entire alienation from its authority.

Wherefore, it is thus certain;—and this very material act is established clearly,—that protestantism, under whatsoever name, or title, it may chance any where to exist, implies; and is indeed, a real separation from the church of Rome,—that is, a real separation from that church, which, at the opening of the sixteenth century, was,—and is still,—confessedly admitted to have been the true church. The point is, indeed, too palpable to be reasonably called in question. For, if protestantism be not a real separation,—in what, I then ask, can separation possibly consist? Or, if on the occasion of the Reformation, a real schism did not take place,—when, I

again ask, or in what age, or place, did there ever such event occur? An immense multitude of men,—the members, until now, of the catholic church,—emancipating themselves, as they called it, from slavery, withdrew themselves entirely from the guidance of their former pastors, as well as from the profession of their former faith; and setting up authority, against authority, and altar against altar, established for themselves new governments, and new codes of doctrine. Surely, if any thing be separation, it is this. According, not only has the catholic church declared it such, but, the protestants themselves admit it; exulting even, usually, in the act, as the best triumph of human reason, and of Christian piety. “We have departed,” says Calvin, speaking of the protestants in general,—“we have departed from the religion of the whole world.”—“As for the external communion of the visible church,” says Stillingfleet, “we have, without scruple, granted, that protestants did forsake it.”—“The Reformation,” remarks Mr. Faucett, in his Bampton Lecture, “in point of fact, is a separation from an established church.”—In short, Dr. Burgess, in his strangest of all strange catechisms, defines protestantism to consist precisely in the act of separation from what he is pleased to nickname popery:—for, “What,” he asks, “is protestantism? It is,” he replies, “the abjuration of popery.” So that,—without needing to adduce any farther authorities to show it,—it is thus plain, that protestantism is, to all intents and purposes, a complete separation from the communion of the ancient church.

Behold then, I am now come to that part of my subject, which I have perhaps, been preparing, too long. It is here precisely, that wisdom should take its stand. It is here,—at the formation of this awful breach; at the completion of this great convulsion—that good sense, contemplating seriously the spectacle, should undertake to judge. It is here, that piety should decide.—The Reformation, producing a moral earthquake, has divided Christian Europe into protestant and catholic;—into churches and religions, entirely separate from each other; having, each, separate pastors, separate governments, separate doctrines, &c.;—and not only this, but even mutually anathematising one another. Wherefore,

the question is simply this,—to ascertain correctly, to which of the two parties,—whether to the catholic, or to the protestant,—the guilt of such division ought most justly to be imputed. It *must* be imputed to one of them; and either the one, or the other, must be most fatally in the wrong. For, the divine commission, being essentially *one*, cannot, of course, possibly subsist in two opposite communions. “As the church” says Dr. Daubeny, “is *but one*, so there cannot be separate communions, without schism. Opposite altars are like opposite thrones; and different governments cannot make one society.”—“Whenever,” adds M. Le Mesurier, “a separation takes place there must be guilt somewhere.”—Here, then, let candor, and good sense decide the momentous point. Its decision, as I have already said, is not difficult; being merely the ascertainment of an obvious *fact*. “For,” observes Hammond, “it is not the examination of the occasion, or cause or motive, of any man’s schism, that is worth producing, or heeding in this matter. The only thing that is of force, or moment; and by consequence, to be inquired into, is the truth OF THE MATTER OF FACT; that is, whether he, that is thus accused, stands really guilty of separation from the church of Christ.”

And can, then, the fact, or guilt, of separation be, with any just reason, attributed to the church of Rome? I never hear this assertion made, but I smile, and pity the credulity, that can possibly believe it true. For if the church of Rome were not schismatical, before the Reformation, (and this the protestant allows she was not) how, then, could she possibly have become such by that event—or if you will, since that event? Whereas, both then, and since that occasion she continued, and continues still, to be, what she was and had always been, before. Schism is an act of separation. But, from what society, did the church of Rome, at the era of the Reformation, separate herself? Most certainly, from none; since none, except herself, at that time, subsisted:—herself being the sole religious society, which, at that time, flourished in these Christian regions.—Schism implies the rejection of an established and lawful, authority; and the violation of the laws of order. Here, then, the same question recurs again. For, what authority did the

church of Rome reject; or what laws of order did she infringe, on the occasion of the Reformation? The answer is again:—*None*:—because except her own, neither any other authority, nor any other laws of order, as yet existed. So that if she were not involved in the guilt of schism, before the Reformation, it is impossible, with any thing like wisdom, to imagine, how she could really have incurred such misfortune, either in consequence of that revolution, or since that revolution.

“But, did she not separate herself”—the protestant here remarks,—“from the first reformers;—from those hosts of pastors, who, on the occasion of the Reformation, undertook to conduct the faithful? And what was this, but an act of schism?” Really, this is an argument, which, although sometimes seriously urged,—for, prejudice will urge any thing—is even too pitiful to deserve an answer. It is exactly the same thing as maintaining, that an army deserts, because a few mutinous soldiers leave it; or that a nation rebels, because it refuses to obey a few seditious fellows, that rise up to disturb its harmony;—or, to use those common comparisons, which are sometimes employed by catholic writers,—it is the same kind of thing as contending, that a tree ceases to be a tree, because a few branches are lopped off from it,—that a river is no longer a river, because a few trifling streamlets have been diverted from its current. For, who, let it only be recollected were the men, who, in the protestant revolution, came forward; and took upon themselves the right of changing the then established order of things and of thenceforth conducting the public?—Why; a mere handful of restless, obscure, and discontented, individuals—the subjects, all of them, until then, of the church of Rome; and linked to it by every tie, which the sanctity of vows, and the force of authority, could create;—men, with no diploma, but their own word; no charter, but their own boldness; no fresh commission, but the fresh impulses of their own passions, and imaginations;—men, too, inculcating doctrines, completely at variance with each other. Such were the men—to say nothing of the immorality of a large proportion of them—who now rose up to reform, and renew, the church. And can common sense honestly believe, that the universal church did really become

schismatical, because she did not obey these?—because she did not unite herself to their society?—or because her pastors did not quietly transfer to such men those sacred powers, which they still held, inherited from the first apostles? Surely, such ideas are preposterous.

But, at all events, (for, here occurs another difficulty) to which of these supposed apostles ought the parent church, or the faithful, to have submitted? Or to which of them ought the ancient pastors to have resigned the depositum of their apostolic powers? It was not, certainly, to all of them collectively. This is both an absurdity, and an impossibility: because they were men of different religions, and different principles. To which of them, therefore, was it, that the act of submission should have been paid? Was it to Luther?—to Calvin?—to Zuinglius?—to Muncer?—to Cranmer?—to—? It is true, these distinguished reformers had, all, and each of them, the same prerogatives, and the self-same claims to the public veneration. For, they were, all, and each of them, according to their own positive declarations, the real envoys of the Almighty;—deputed by his authority,—the one just equally with the other,—to reform the church, and to rule its members. Therefore, to which of them ought now the faithful to have submitted?—or, for the neglect of submitting to which of them, did the church of Rome now become schismatical? Here, the protestant must feel perplexed. Or rather, if he will reason at all upon the circumstance, he will feel no perplexity whatsoever. He will feel, that to imagine, that the above church became schismatical, because she did not obey any one of those daring innovators, is, in reality, even worse than downright nonsense.

But, the protestant replies:—“Ere long, those reformers, several of them, succeeded in forming great societies; and in organising rich, and magnificent, establishments. They did so, in Germany; in Holland; in Sweden; in Swisserland; in this country. And was it not, therefore, the duty of the faithful, then at least, to have submitted to these; and an act of schism, consequently, to have refused them submission?” This again, although sometimes urged with complacency, is a pitiful evasion, suggested chiefly by human policy, in order to deceive

the weak. For, it would thus follow, that there must, then, exist as many churches, or religions, all, and each, equally entitled to the same share of veneration, and obedience,—as there exist establishments of the above description. So that in Germany, the Christian ought to be a Lutheran; in Swisserland, a Calvinist; in England, a thirty-nine article man; and so on. As, then, the argument thus proves evidently too much, it therefore proves nothing. It is repugnant to every principle, both of unity of Christian faith, and of the unity of the Christian delegation. The case is—and this is the point, which, in the investigation of the true religion, the protestant ought most carefully to attend to,—that what constitutes the grounds of the Christian church, and renders the duty of submission necessary, is not the number of the members in any alleged society; not the riches, and splendor, of its establishments; but the genuine delegation of its pastors. If these be not really sent;—if their diploma be not divine,—then be what may the greatness, or the magnificence, of any church, such society is not the church of Christ, but a mere human institution: for, such precisely is the character of any church, as is the foundation, upon which it is reared. If this be defective, so also is the whole superstructure that is raised upon it; no matter how fair, or beautiful, this may chance to appear to the eye, or how imposing to human reason. For these reasons, consequently, it follows, that, if the first reformers,—the fathers, and founders, of protestantism,—were schismatics, so likewise must the churches, of course, be still schismatical, which they established. Because, what was once schism, must for ever remain schism, until it goes back once more to that centre of unity, from which it had departed. So that the ulterior consequence again is, that, if the catholic church did not become schismatical, at the era of the Reformation, because she did not submit to the revolutionists of that period, so neither can she be *now* such, because her members do not yield obedience to the establishments, which the industry of those men created. But, in short, (to repeat, what I have repeated, more than once already; and what alone is sufficient, in the eye of candor, to decide the present controversy) if the church of Rome were not schismatical, at the opening of

the sixteenth century,—a fact, admitted by the protestants themselves,—then I defy any ingenuity to prove, that she can possibly have become such, either at that period, or on any subsequent occasion since ; because, both at, and since, that period, she has constantly remained the same that she then was, and had always been before,—no doctrine changed ; no maxim altered. “ If,” says Cressy, “ that church, which, in 1516, was confessed not to have been schismatical,—because no schism was yet begun ;—if the same church, continuing without any alteration in doctrine, or practice, till the year following, when Luther taught, and divided it ; and so ever since,—is to be called schismatical, because others would stay no longer in it, then, to change is to be constant ; and to be constant is to change ; to run away is to stand still ; and to stand still, to run away.”

If the few arguments, which I have thus adduced, be sufficient to convince the reader, that the catholic church is not involved in the guilt of schism,—then should they likewise appear sufficient to satisfy him, that the protestant churches *must be* involved in this misfortune. The evidence of the former proposition forms equally the evidence of the latter. There is no medium between them. Because, since the members of the church,—*which is essentially* ONE,—became, at the era of the Reformation, divided into parts,—so, as M. Le Mesurier observes, “ there must be schism somewhere.”—But, should not the very definitions, and concessions, which I have quoted from the works of the protestant writers, suffice to convince any candid mind, that the imputation of schism lies, much more manifestly, at the door of the protestant, than of the catholic, community ? For, what, as defined by those writers, is the act, or guilt, of schism ? “ It is,” they all say, “ the act of separation from the established government of the church of Christ.” Well, and was not the Reformation, as again defined by those same men, precisely an act of separation from such government ? This, certainly, was the case. Insomuch that we find the reformers themselves, notwithstanding all the darings of their boldness, lamenting the unhappy circumstance ; and making frequent apologies for their own conduct. It was so, I have shown, with Luther himself ; who even trembled, he declared, at his own rashness. It was so,

too, with Melancton, Beza, Calvin, &c. ; as well as with many of our first English apostates. — “The original reformers,” says Dr. Daubeny, “lamented the necessity, they were under, of separating from the established government of the church of Christ.”—Let the reader only mark these words. They contain the whole proposition, which I am now establishing. For, it is thus conceded, that the reformers did actually separate themselves from the established government of the Christian church,—the very thing, which constitutes the fact, and the crime, of schism.

And let him, too, in like manner, take notice of those other words of the same writer, with which I have introduced the present chapter. They, again, if applied consistently, evince, equally with the preceding ones, where lies the real act of schism. “Schism,” he says, “lies on the side of the party, which separates. Whenever, therefore, there is a society, calling themselves a church, gathered out of a church, already constituted, and regularly established, and formed into a distinct society,—this, by dividing the Christian communion, makes a notorious schism.” It is true ;—the design of the writer, in suggesting the above principle, and conclusion, is to point out the crime, which, according to him, the dissenters incur, by separating themselves from the established church. However, the principle, in itself, is correct ; as is also the general deduction, appended to it. Let, then, these only be applied,—as they are exactly applicable,—to the protestant reformation ; and they demonstrate at once its criminality. “*Schism lies on the side of the party, which separates.*” Now, nothing is more obvious,—the point is not so much as contested,—nothing more obvious, than that the protestants were the party, which separated themselves from the parent institute. They formed societies, “calling themselves churches, gathered out of a church already constituted,” &c. Therefore, according to the principle of Dr. Daubeny,—which, properly understood, is the real principle of wise theology,—they were guilty “of a notorious schism.” It is difficult to imagine, how the men, who admit such maxim, can pretend to deny such inference. But, partiality, and prejudice, are blind : and therefore, they reason ill.

If the foregoing considerations evince the truth of the propositions, which I am now attempting to establish, then I need not repeat the consequences, which result immediately from them.—If it be true, that the catholic church has not involved itself in the guilt of schism,—then the direct consequence is, that its pastors are still the heirs, and proprietors, of the apostolical commission; and that its government is still divine;—and that, therefore, thus possessing the grounds of the true church,—it is still the true church.—If it be true, that the protestant Reformation was a schism; then, too, the direct consequence is,—that its pastors are not the heirs, and proprietors, of the apostolical commission; and that its governments are not divine;—and that, therefore,—thus *not* possessing the genuine grounds of the true church, its churches are not true churches. Such are the important consequences, which result, both to the catholic, and to the protestant, religions, from the circumstance of the non-imputation, or the imputation, of the *fact* of schism.

However, notwithstanding that these inferences are correct, and such as no enlightened theologian will deny, —yet, seeing, that protestantism is acknowledgedly a separation from the established government of Christ's church,—it is not to be supposed, that the authors of such desertion have not alleged, or that its abettors do not still allege, a great variety of motives in their own justification. They, of course, do this: because all the securities of salvation are here, confessedly, at stake. They even contend, that the motives, which gave rise to the separation, were such,—so very urgent, and imperious,—as not only to render that action justifiable, but to make it *the most indispensable obligation*. Wherefore, I shall now proceed to the examination of these apologies. It is upon them, that the whole defence of the Reformation is made to depend. Inasmuch that if they be ill-founded, then it is conceded by the most ardent advocates of this innovation, that its vindication is impracticable; and that its churches are but mere “human fabrics, cumbering the ground, upon which they stand.” How awful are these considerations! and how well do they deserve all the attention of Christian prudence!

CHAPTER VII.

THE ALLEGED JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROTESTANT SCHISM, ON THE SCORE OF CATHOLIC DOCTRINES.

“The chain of the Episcopacy was unbroken for fifteen hundred years. Stern, and unavoidable necessity was the only plea, on which those, who then partially dissolved it, ventured to justify their conduct. And nothing, we have reason to believe, was farther from their minds, than a wish to perpetuate the schism, which *overruling*, but, as they hoped, temporary, circumstances had produced.”

THE WRITERS OF THE BRITISH CRITIC.

It is an observation, made by St. Austin, that there never was question of schism, or of heresy, but the abettors of these disorders had always motives, as they pretended, for their conduct; and motives, too, the most urgent, and unquestionable,—which, he again remarks, they were always sure to defend with violence, and misrepresentation; and often, with arguments the most artful, and insidious. Thus, speaking of the pretended reformers in his time, he tells us, that, in order to justify themselves, and to cheat the public, they were accustomed,—precisely as our modern reformers have done,—to vilify, and insult, the church, which they had abandoned; and even to proclaim its apostacy. “The church, say these men,” (these are the words of the saint,) “the church has perished. Impudent falsehood! Yes, it has perished, forsooth, because they are no longer in it. Ah! let them take care,” he continues, “that they be not lost. The church shall flourish, when they are not. this presumptuous, false, vain, rash, absurd, and pernicious, assertion, was foreseen by the Holy Ghost;

when he said; "Behold I am with you, all days, to the end of the world."—The conduct of these men, thus alluded to by St. Austin, was, after all, but natural. For, if men will err, they must, of course, defend their errors; and the grosser the errors are, the more artful likewise, and the more violent, must be their pretended justification.

Accordingly,—referring to the protestant schism,—it is not to be supposed, that the authors, and abettors, of this revolution have not alleged a variety of motives in its vindication. They have, indeed, done this; alleging motives, and reasons, in its defence, the most serious, and imposing,—or, as the learned writers express it, with whose words I have ushered in this chapter,—even "stern, and unavoidable necessity." In short, every thing, that talents, and ingenuity, can suggest; every thing, that learning, and eloquence, can produce,—have been, and are still incessantly, brought forward in its justification. And not only this, but, in order to vilify the parent institute, every thing has been, and is daily, urged against it, that either virulence and passion can invent, or that the spirit of misrepresentation can devise.

For these reasons, entering, as I now am, upon that part of my subject, which is peculiarly delicate, I will, once more, remind the protestant reader to attend to it with calmness, and with the feelings of Christian candor. Let him follow the wise advice, suggested in the following words of Dr. Daubeny, which, although designed to be addressed to the separatists from the establishment, are, still, equally, and even more justly, applicable to all separatists from the parent church. "It behoves those, whom it may concern, to take this subject into serious consideration. It must be remembered, that their persuasion, in this case, will be their justification in the sight of God, in proportion only as it has been built upon rational, and conscientious, motives. Should it have been taken up, with passion, or prejudice; or adopted without examination; or should any means of information have been neglected, which might have been made use of for the direction of their judgment; their error, in this case, will be their sin; because it has been derived from their neglect; and their

consequent separation from the church will be also a sin: for, one sin will not be permitted to plead in excuse for another. Let me, then, entreat such Christians to examine fairly the grounds, upon which their separation stands. Let the objections, which they have, be brought to a fair trial; laying aside every prejudice, and not being wise in their own conceits." All this is wise. Let only the advice, here suggested, be followed in the discussion of the subject, now before us; and the result will not be doubtful.

The causes, then, which the authors, and defenders, of protestantism have alleged, as the grounds, and justification, of their separation from the catholic church, besides being, as I have said, of a very serious nature, are, moreover, of various descriptions. They include a series of pretexts, and imputations, as awful, and sometimes, as disgusting, as it is well possible for the mind to imagine. There is not, indeed, a protestant, who reads, nor hardly a protestant, who hears, (for, they are re-echoed, for ever, in almost every pulpit) but is acquainted with them. They are, above all, the theme of every controversial work. I shall not, however, attempt to enumerate them all. I shall only select those, which are considered the most important; and which are urged by the most ardent advocates of the protestant cause, as its best defence. Thus, for example, the very venerable, and gentle, Bishop of Durham, Dr. Barrington, stating the grounds of the separation from the parent church, alleges the following, as the leading ones,—“the idolatry of this church; its blasphemy; and its sacrilege;—its idolatry, in its worship of the Eucharist, and of images;—its blasphemy, in praying to the saints;—its sacrilege, in refusing the use of the cup to the laity. Hence, it was,” says the good man, “that we separated from popery.” Let us, therefore, proceed to the investigation of these, and of a few other, almost equally frightful, and just equally well-founded, imputations.*

* I will here recommend to the attention of the reader, the following canons of controversy, extracted from the Bampton Lectures of Dr. Heber. They are the dictates of good sense; and, if observed, would be eminently useful to the protestant, in his discussion of catholic doctrines.

The first, and great, charge, that is urged by the protestant, as the grounds of his separation from the church of Rome, is the alleged *idolatry* of this church. This, indeed, is the grand bulwark of protestantism; the main principle of its defence, and the source of all its triumphs. The belief even, and the solemn acknowledgment, of this horrible imputation are deemed, in this enlightened country, the essential parts of its religion: insomuch that no one can be admitted to any exalted office; no one be considered as deserving of any public trust, or confidence,—neither its clergy; nor its legislators; nor its ministers; nor its magistrates,—nay, hardly its very ex-cisemen, in order to fit them to gauge a cask,—who do not absolutely *swear* to its truth! The accusation, as I have said, is founded upon the two following circumstances,—*the adoration*, which the catholic pays to the mystery of the Eucharist; and *the veneration*, which he gives to the images of Christ, and his saints. “Now, all this,” says the protestant, “is idolatry. And since idolatry,” he adds, “is a crime, of all others, the most hateful in the sight of God; so, of course, it was not only proper, but even necessary, to abandon the communion of a church, which was guilty of it.”—Such is the reason-

“First, that a perspicuous distinction be made, both in the statement of the subject, and the degrees of eagerness, with which we pursue its investigation;—between truths, which are really divine, and eternal; and those institutions, which are only of human authority, or at most of temporary expediency.

“Secondly, that no opinion be imputed to our adversary, which he himself denies; not even if such opinion should appear to be fairly deducible from premises, which he acknowledges. For, though the argument, *AB ABSURDO*, be a very powerful, and legitimate, instrument in the war of words; and though it is not only useful, but charitable, to point out to our brethern, and to the world, the natural consequences of an erroneous doctrine; yet, if such consequence be disclaimed by our antagonists, we have a right, indeed, to argue from his inconsistency against his ability to guide the faith of other men; but we have no right to accuse him of insincerity; or to maintain, that because our inference is logical, he must necessarily see it in the same light with ourselves.

“Thirdly, it is fitting, that we never advance an argument to convince, or confute, our adversary, of the force of which we are not, ourselves, satisfied. This rule will extend to all those vulgar arts of controversy; those arguments, expressly, and solely, intended to captivate the multitude; those inapplicable citations of Scripture, and those appeals to human prejudice, and passion, which unhappily occupy so large a space in almost every controversy,” &c.—With the observance of these rules, how different would be the language of our writers; and how altered, the notions of the public, on the subject of catholicity!

ing of the protestant ; and such the chief grounds, by which he affects to justify his schism.

Before I make any direct reply to the pretext, I will just suggest, by way of preliminary, the few following considerations. In the first place, let me caution the protestant, as St. Austin cautioned the schismatics in his time, to be slow in his admission of so horrible a charge. Let him not take it upon credit ; nor believe it, —if he must believe it,—until he has discussed it seriously. Let him remember, that all separatists from the church, just like all rebels in the state, are always violent ; and always most violent, when most in the wrong. With this reflection present to his mind, he will, at all events, pause, ere he imputes to us the crime of being idolators.—In the next place, let me observe to him, that the charge ought certainly to appear to him very improbable ; not only on account of the well-attested wisdom, piety, and learning, of immense portions of the catholic body ; but, above all, if he have studied well, in the sacred pages, on account of the characters of the Christian church. In those pages, the Christian church is every where exhibited as divine, and incorruptible,—as a society, “with which the spirit of God shall remain, for ever ;”—as a fabric, “founded upon a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail ;”—as “the pillar, and the foundation of truth ;”—as a community, in which its sacred Founder tells us, “himself will remain, all days, even to the end of the world ;” and to whose rulers he bids us listen, “as we should listen to him, himself.” Such as these, along with many other expressions of the same import, are the ideas, which the wisdom of God presents to us, in the holy Scriptures, of the nature, and perpetual sanctity, of the Christian church. Surely, then, it is not probable, that such an institution should have sunk into the abyss of idolatry. It is unreasonable to believe it.—Thirdly, the charge, besides being inconsistent, is, at the same time, peculiarly imprudent,—at least, peculiarly imprudent, as coming from the members of the establishment, who pretend to have derived from the parent church, both their orders, their mission, and their authority. For, the fact is, that, if this church had really fallen into the crime of idolatry,—making this even the most solemn, and important, object of its worship,—then, it is certain,

such a church was no longer the true church of Christ. For, to suppose, that an idolatrous church is the church of Christ, is a supposition, far more absurd than nonsense. Or if, indeed, this were the case; and it be true, that the church had fallen into idolatry, then also it is certain, that neither the established church of this country, nor any other protestant church, can possibly have derived from it any share of spiritual animation,—neither orders; nor mission; nor authority; nor any thing else divine. So that, this fact once admitted,—it follows, that all protestant churches are completely new generations; new families; and new ministers;—or, in one word, new churches; and therefore, no churches at all, according to that saying, already cited of Bishop Pearson; “a new church is none.” This fact admitted,—I ask the protestants the same question, as in his time, St. Austin asked the donatists: “If the church,” said the saint to these men, “has perished, whence, then, comes Donatus? What soil begot him? What sea cast him forth? From what cloud did he fall?” This is precisely what, here, I ask the protestants. “If the parent church had fallen into idolatry,—and had consequently perished,—then what soil, what sea, what cloud, produced your Luthers, Calvins, &c.? If she were idolatrous—how, then, could she possibly have given a spiritual birth to these men, either in grace, in vocation, or in power? She, certainly, could not have done this. But, if so,—therefore, again, they are not her children. And not being such, your churches are, consequently, NEW; and of course, according to your own principles,—NONE.” Such is the imprudence, as well as the inconsistency, which the protestant is guilty of when, pretending to extricate himself from the sin of schism, he accuses the catholic church of idolatry.

But, having premised these general observations, I come now to the charge itself. My reply to it, however, shall be brief; containing little else, besides the statement of our belief, in relation to the two articles, by which we are involved, it is said, in the awful, and odious, crime.

In relation, then, to the former of these articles,—the adoration of the Eucharist,—it is very true, and we exult in the acknowledgment,—that the catholic does

adore this mystery;—that he cherishes it, with the fondest veneration;—that he considers it, as the dearest object of his worship, and as the best gift of Jesus to his church. All this is true. But, is there, then, in all this, as the protestant pretends there is,—any act, or species, of idolatry? No; not even,—when the nature of our belief, and worship, is properly understood,—is there so much as a shadow of reason for such reproach. The following simple exposition will suffice to show it.

If the adoration, which the catholic pays to the Eucharist, were an act of idolatry, the reason, of course, must be, that, mistaking, and worshipping, the creature for the Creator, he absurdly believes, that the elements of bread and wine are the body and blood of Jesus Christ; and that profanely bowing down before these, he adores, and worships, them, as his God. This is the only supposition, that can seem to render the accusation plausible. Now, what is the real fact? Why, that the catholic, so far from believing, that the elements of bread and wine are the body and blood of Jesus Christ, believes precisely the reverse:—he believes, that they are not his body and blood. He believes even, that the elements of bread and wine do not so much as exist in the stupendous mystery. For, he believes, that by virtue of the divine omnipotence; and in consequence of the solemn act of consecration, these humble substances are completely changed; being, thus, transubstantiated into the body and blood of our great Redeemer, in conformity to that plain, and strong assurance of this divine Being — ‘THIS is *my* body: THIS is *my* blood.’—Such is the belief of the catholic. The consequence is, —that, since he does not believe, that the elements of bread and wine are the body and blood of Jesus Christ, —so, of course, *he does not* adore those elements. Believing even, that they do not so much as exist, so, of course, he *cannot* adore them. In short, *he does not adore them: therefore*, he is not guilty of idolatry. His whole adoration is referred solely to the sacred person of his Redeemer. He adores only this immortal Being, —his glories miraculously veiled; his greatness hidden, under the humble appearances of bread and wine;—precisely in the same way, as, whilst he conversed on earth, his disciples adored him, under the equally humble form

of one of the lowest of human creatures. So that if there be no idolatry in adoring Christ,—the catholic, who refers all his adoration to him alone, is, therefore, quite guiltless of that impiety.

Accordingly, not only is the above explanation, alone, sufficient to refute the odious calumny, but it has even been employed for this purpose, (rare instance of liberality in our adversaries!) by several protestant writers; and these, too, some of the most enlightened members of the established church. So, for example, Thorndyke expresses himself thus: “The worship of the Host is not idolatry. For, the flesh and blood of Christ is no idol to Christians, wheresoever he is worshipped. He, that worships the Host, believes our Lord, Christ, to be the only true God, hypostatically united to our flesh and blood; which, being present in the Eucharist, in such manner, as he is not present every where, there is due occasion to give it that worship in the Eucharist, which the Godhead, in our manhood, is to be worshipped with, upon all occasions.”—“Will any papist,” he adds, “acknowledge, that he honours the elements of the Eucharist, for God? Will common sense charge him with honouring that in the sacrament, which he does not believe to be there?” Indeed, not only does Thorndyke treat the imputation as a groundless calumny, invented for the purpose of deceiving, and inflaming, the public,—a calumny, he says, by which the protestant preachers “lead the public by the nose,”—but, he contends, moreover, that it is a calumny, which, if properly considered, is completely subversive of the claims of the protestant establishments to the real title of being Christian churches. “For, they,” he adds, “that separate from the church of Rome, as idolaters, are, thereby, schismatics before God.”—Similar to the sentiments of Thorndyke were those, too, of the prelates, Parker, Taylor, Sheldon, Bilson, Forbes; with a long et cætera of other distinguished names, in the church of England—all reprobating, like him, the impeachment, as an empty falsehood, suggested by hostility, in order to inflame the public mind against popery.* To these,

* “So black a crime as this,” says Bishop Parker, “that is no less than renouncing God, is not lightly to be charged upon any party of Christians; not only because of the foulness of the calumny; but the barbarous consequences, that may follow upon it, to invite, and warrant,

likewise, I might add the testimonies of the most enlightened foreign protestants,—of Leibnitz, Grotius, Vossius, Haller, &c.*

And not only is it true, that the above statement of our principles is, alone, sufficient to demonstrate the injustice of the imputation of any idolatry, on the score of our adoration of the Eucharist,—but, I even contend, that the very tenets of the leading reformed communions,—the Lutheran, and the English, churches,—do, themselves,—if properly, and consistently considered,—establish the propriety, and even the necessity, of such adoration. For, what are the tenets of these churches, in relation to the holy Eucharist? They believe,—or at least, profess to

the rabble, whenever opportunity favours, to destroy the Roman catholics; as the Israelites were commanded to destroy the Canaanites. But, before so bloody an indictment be preferred against the greatest part of Christendom, the nature of the thing ought to be well understood. The charge is too big for a scolding word. And how inconsistent soever idolatry may be with salvation, I fear, so uncharitable a calumny can be of no less damnable consequence. It is a piece of inhumanity, that outdoes the savageness of the cannibals themselves; and damns, at once, both soul and body. And yet, after all, we have no other ground for the bold conceit, than the crude, and rash, assertions of some popular divines, who have no other measure of truth, or zeal, but hatred to popery: and, therefore, never spare for hard words against that church; and run up all objections against it into nothing less than atheism, and blasphemy; of which idolatry is the greatest instance.”—(Reasons for Abrog. the Test.)

“The object,” says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, “of the catholic’s adoration in the sacrament is the only true, and eternal, God, hypostatically united with his holy humanity; which humanity they believe actually present, under the veil of the sacrament. And if they thought him not present, they are so far from worshipping the bread, that they profess it idolatry to do so. This is demonstration, that the soul has nothing in it, that is idolatrical: the will has nothing in it, but what is a great enemy to idolatry.” (Lib. of Proph.)

Burnet, in the History of his Own Times, relates, that, when the Duke of York asked Archbishop Sheldon, whether, according to the doctrine of the church of England, the catholics are idolaters?—the prelate replied; “No:—but, that young men of parts would be popular; and such a charge was the way to it.”

*“Pious antiquity,” says Leibnitz. “has declared, plainly enough, that the bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the wine into his blood. And the early writers acknowledge, generally, a μεταστοιχείωσιν, which the Latins, very properly, translate, transubstantiation; and define, that the whole of the bread and wine passes into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. Here, therefore, as in other cases, we ought to explain the Scripture by the tradition, which the church, as the guardian of this deposit, has transmitted to us. And certain it is, that antiquity has instructed us, that, by virtue of the act of consecration, a change of substance is effected.” (Systema Theolog.)

believe,—that Jesus Christ is truly, and really, and personally, present in this mystery. Their belief respecting it is similar to that of the catholics, save only in the explanation of the *manner*, by which the introduction of the divine presence is effected. Thus, Luther, stating the doctrines of the Lutheran churches, says:—“We believe in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Neither is this an article, unestablished by the Scriptures, or invented by men. It is clearly established, and founded, upon the gospel,—upon the express, and indubitable, words of Jesus Christ. It has been uniformly, believed, and preserved, since the beginning of the Christian church, till the present day; as the writings, both of the Greek, and Latin Fathers demonstrate. To this consideration add the daily use, and practice, of experience, down to the present day. These testimonials of all the holy churches of Christianity ought, without the need of any other attestation, to suffice to keep us steady upon this article at least; so as neither to regard, nor yet suffer, in relation to it, any spirit of cabal. For, it is a dangerous, and a dreadful thing to listen to, or to believe, what is contrary to the testimony, the belief, and the unanimous doctrine, of the whole Christian church; and in opposition to what has been maintained throughout the whole world; and this, too, uniformly, during the course of above fifteen hundred years.” Such is the real, and genuine, doctrine of the Lutheran churches, on the subject of the Eucharist. If *now*, indeed, their belief have altered, the reason is, that, Proteous-like, protestantism is for ever putting on new forms and attitudes.*

Similar, too, to the above, are the proper, and best authenticated, tenets of the church of England. “As for the church of England,” says Archbishop Laud, “nothing is more plain, than that she believes, and teaches, the true, and real, presence of Christ in the sacrament.” Archbishop Secker, so lately even as in our own times, acknowledges the same thing. “The church,” he says, “has always

*“Men of distinguished learning, and abilities,” says that great oracle of erudition,—Leibnitz,—“have clearly demonstrated, that, with the exception of the Calvinistic societies, all the churches of the whole Christian universe admit the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. They have even done this, so satisfactorily, that, it must be owned, if this be not proved, it is then in vain to look for the proof of any opinion whatsoever, in relation to distant nations.” (Systema Theolog.)

acknowledged the real presence.”—“Indeed,” remarks Archdeacon Glover, in a work, which does equal honour to his heart, as to his head ; to his talents, as to his learning ;—“there is no point in the doctrines of the church of England, more strenuously insisted on, than the doctrine of the real presence in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. It is insisted on, in the very strongest, and unqualified terms, in our catechism. It is insisted on, throughout the whole of our public offices, respecting it. Our table still retains the name of *altar*. The bread and wine are still denominated, *before* consecration, ‘*elements* ;’ and *after* consecration, an ‘*oblation*.’ Our partaking of them is still called, ‘eating of flesh, and drinking of blood ;’ and the whole service of our sacrament is a proper sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.” Such, likewise, is the genuine doctrine of the church of England, in relation to this mystery ; and such the general profession of its members, during the course of above two centuries. If *now*, its present members believe differently,—as I suspect, they do, almost universally,—the reason is again that, which I have just been citing,—that, steady in nothing but variation, the churches of protestantism are, for ever, adopting new opinions.

However, be this as it may—what alone I have here to contend for, is this,—that, if the doctrine of the real presence be once admitted, the necessity of the act of worship,—*of adoration*,—is rendered manifest ; and ought even to appear,—as in such case, it is,—one of the most urgent of all Christian duties. For to believe that Christ Jesus is really, and personally, present in the sacred mystery, and yet refuse to adore him, what is this, but both a piece of inconsistency, and an act of disrespect ? Bishop Forbes calls it even, “a monstrous error.” “And the sounder protestants,” he adds, “make no difficulty of adoring Christ in the Eucharist.”—Thus, Calvin, too, as well as the generality of the Calvinistic writers, reproach the defenders of the real presence with gross inconsistency, for believing, that Christ is present in the sacrament, and yet refusing to adore him there. “What can possibly,” says Calvin, “be more singular, than to place the true body of Jesus Christ in the bread, and yet not adore him there ?”

Hence, therefore, if the worship, which the catholic pays to the Eucharist, be wisely understood, there is no

thing in it,—although even it be explained by the doctrine of the protestants themselves,—that leaves the slenderest room for the imputation of idolatry. In reality, the catholic adores the divine mystery, merely upon the score of the doctrine, admitted by the protestants. For, our adoration is founded, not upon the belief in transubstantiation, (this is only the method, by which we explain the mystery) but, upon the belief in the real presence.* We adore Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, because we believe him to be present in it. Consequently, if the adoration of this divine Being be no idolatry, then not only is the catholic guiltless of this disorder; but, the imputation of it is a groundless calumny:—and, of course, the pretext of separation, as founded upon it, is groundless equally. For these reasons, if our modern defenders of protestantism still urge (as they nearly all of them do) the hateful charge,—the chief motive is that, which I have already cited as given by Thorndyke,—namely, that “they wish to lead the people by the nose:” or else, that, ignorant, and bigoted, they are led “by the nose,” themselves.†

* On this point, too, the Calvinistic sects agree with the catholic; that is, they contend with the catholic, that, if the real presence ought to be admitted, then the only rational method of explaining the divine presence is to admit at once the ministry of transubstantiation. Zuin-
gius strenuously maintained this, in several of his writings. Beza maintained it equally, in the conference at Monbeliard; as well as the whole synod of Czinger, in Poland. Calvin even goes so far as to call the belief in the real presence, without the belief in transubstantiation, “a stupid error.”

† “Not even,” says Dr. Glover, “did transubstantiation, at the era of the Reformation, form, either the chief ground, or even a principal feature, of the separation of the two churches.” And he states the following facts as the proof of this assertion. “In the articles of 1552, a long detail of argument had been entered into, on the impossibility of Christ’s body being, in its human nature, at one and the same time, in many places. This was accompanied by a long, and express, declaration against the doctrine of transubstantiation. But yet, ten years afterwards, they were again withdrawn. Nay; though they appear in the original MS. as it was subscribed by the members of the convocation, in 1562, yet they were forbidden ‘by the lawful authorities,’ to be printed. And the reason, assigned by Burnett, is, that ‘such an express definition of the real presence might drive from the church many, who were still of that persuasion; and that though this silence was not a proof of the opinions of the convocation, *it was testimony of the wisdom of that time*, in leaving a liberty for different speculations, as to the manner of the presence. Hence, he again

In relation to the second part of the charge, alleged, as another justification of the protestant schism,—that is, *the worship*, as it is called, *of images*,—my reply to this shall be still more concise, than that, which I have given to the preceding,—so groundless, and pitiful, do I deem it. In the first place, I will simply remark, that, if, in the veneration, which the catholic pays to the images of Christ, and his saints; or in the “worship,” as it is called, of these objects, there be, either any real idolatry, or any thing that approaches to idolatry,—the reason must be this,—that, conceiving, that there is in these things some virtue, or some principle of grace, or at least something that is divine, we are, hence, induced to place our confidence in them; to ask them favours; and to bend down before them. Such as these are, certainly, the notions, and such the actions, which constitute the character, and the crime, of idolatry. And are, therefore, such as these the notions, or such the conduct, of the catholic, in relation to sacred images? So far from this, both our notions, and conduct, are precisely the reverse. We believe, that there is no virtue whatsoever, no grace, no divinity, in them;—nor yet, any thing at all divine. We believe,—as every catholic child, who has learnt its catechism, would tell the protestant, that “they have neither life, nor sense, to see, nor hear, nor help us.” For this reason, we, of course, still farther believe, that to adore them; to ask of them any favour; to place any trust, or confidence, in them;—would be, both an act of folly, and an act of wickedness,—an absurdity, and a sin,—but, an absurdity, and a sin, which, I am sure, no catholic, however ignorant, or superstitious, he may chance to be, is capable of committing. Hence, where can be the idolatry?

adds, ‘the catholics continued, for ten years afterwards, to communicate with us. And several of our bishops held the Romish doctrine; as may be seen by a reference to the additional notes, appended to Nichol’s Comment on the book of Common Prayer.’ So that thus, according to the opinion ‘of the lawful authorities’ of this country,—at a period, too, when it was particularly distinguished for its theological wisdom,—there was nothing in the catholic doctrine, or worship, of the Eucharist, that was then deemed idolatrous;—nothing, that was deemed sufficient even to form a principal feature in the separation of the two churches.”

'It is true, indeed, that we do keep the images of the saints; and above all, the image of our divine Redeemer, in our churches, chapels, oratories, &c. But then, it is not for the purpose of paying any adoration to these objects, that we keep them, but solely to remind us of the holy originals, whom they represent;—exactly, as for a similiar kind of reason, the protestant keeps in his rooms, and parlours, the pictures of his parents, friends, and benefactors—But, do we not entertain a certain respect, and veneration, for these representations? Yes; we do. But again, the whole respect, and veneration, are referred, not at all to the image, but merely to the original, whom it is intended to represent; precisely as in the case just cited of the pictures of our relatives. Men, all, respect, and revere, these, not on account of the canvas, and the paint, but because they are the memorials of individuals, who are, or have been once, dear to their recollection.

But, let me here state, as I have done in regard of the holy Eucharist, the sentiments of enlightened protestants upon the subject.—Thorndyke writes thus: “To the images of the saints there can be no idolatry, so long as men take them for saints,—that is, God’s creatures: much less to the images of our Lord. For, it is the honour of our Lord, and not of his image. The second council of Nicæa teacheth no idolatry, by teaching to honour images. For, indeed, and in truth, it is not the image, but the principal, that is honoured by the honour that is done to the image; because it is done before the image.” “Hence,” he adds, “the charge of idolatry is an idle word: and the adoration itself, that is given to the saints, is a direct protestation against idolatry; because it supposes a superior Deity: and that supposition cuts off the very being of idolatry.”*

* “The pictures of Christ, of the blessed Virgin, and of the saints,” says Bishop Montague, “may be had in houses, and placed in churches. Respect, and honour may be given them. Protestants give it. You papists say, they must not have Latria. So say we. You give them Dulia. I quarrel not with the term; though I could. There is a respect due to the pictures of Christ, and his saints. If you call this Dulia, we protestants give it too. *Let doctrine, and practice, go together, we agree.*”

“If,” says the learned Starke, speaking of the advantage of sacred images,—“if indecent statues, and immoral images, are calculated to

Take also the following passage from the works of Leibnitz :—“ Although,” says this great writer, “ men often say, that the catholics pay honour to images, yet it is not to the inanimate thing, that this honour is paid, but to the original in the presence of the image; or by means of the image. Thus, what the scholastic divines call the adoration of the image of Christ, is, in reality, but the adoration of Christ himself, at the sight of the image; before which men bend themselves down, as it were, before this divine Being. Never did a man, possessed of common sense, say, or think of saying,—“ Give me, O Image, what I petition. O Marble, or Piece of Wood, to thee, I render thanks.” It being, therefore established, that the worship, which the catholic pays to images, is referred purely to the original in presence of the image, the consequence is, that there is no more idolatry in such kind of worship, than there is in that, which we pay to God, or to Christ, when we pronounce his holy name. Idolatry transfers to some other object that honour, which is due to God. But, in the catholic church, all the honour, that is paid to images, is referred to their originals. So that this church has acted wisely in retaining them: and their retention can furnish no one with a legitimate cause for separation.”—Such were the opinions of some of the most celebrated protestant writers, respecting the nature, and the use of images.* They even treat, like the catholic, the alleged

excite evil thoughts, and bad passions, then it must be admitted, for the just opposite reasons, that the images of the saints are calculated to inspire good sentiments.”—Leibnitz makes the same observation; and concludes, that for these reasons, “ the use of images is not only harmless, but reasonable, and praiseworthy.”

* “ It is for the purpose of screening the idolatry of their church,”—say certain protestants,—“ that the catholics have invented the artful, but wicked, expedient of mutilating the ten commandments, by the omission of that, which reprobates the worship of images.” This trite, but awful, charge has been made repeatedly. But, it has recently been renewed, with increased hostility, particularly by the venerable Bishop of Durham; and frightfully re-echoed by a set of heroes, who have manfully,—and not fruitlessly,—come forward to support his Lordship. In reply to it, let me merely state the reflection made upon it by one of the most eloquent members of the establishment,—Dr. Heber, in his Bampton Lectures. “ We ourselves,” he says, “ are not altogether guiltless of falsely imputing to the catholics, in their public formularies, the systematic omission of that commandment, which we make the se-

imputation of our idolatry,—as founded upon *the veneration* of these objects,—with pity, and contempt. There is not, indeed, one shade of idolatry in it: “nor, consequently,” as Leibnitz himself concludes, “any legitimate cause, upon this pretext, for separating from the church.”*

If, therefore, the imputation of its idolatry, so triumphantly urged against it, be thus proved to be groundless,—then, also, does the main defence of the Reformation,—which is chiefly grounded on it,—fall to nothing. However, I will now make the supposition, which is, of all others, the most favourable to this cause. I will even suppose it to be true, that the catholic church had,—as the protestant contends,—it had, fallen into idolatry; and that its adoration of the Eucharist, and its worship of images, were crimes, great as his indigna-

cond in the decalogue. During the recent disputes, occasioned by the catholic question, this accusation has been brought forward by some, who *ought to have known better*. However the Romanists may transgress the commandment in question, *they certainly have not expunged it from the table.*—The real truth is, that so far from having expunged it from the table, we insert it there exactly as much as do the protestants themselves. Whoever will give himself the trouble to consult our versions of the sacred Scriptures, our catechisms, prayer-books, &c. will at once be convinced of this:—he will find, that not a word of the law is omitted. The only difference between the catholic, and the protestant, in relation to this point, is this, (which, in fact, is no real difference) that we have divided the commandments, differently. Our division is that, which is given by St. Austin; and even by Luther himself.

* It is, too, a remark, which ought not, perhaps, to be omitted here, and which is calculated, if well considered, to lessen the prejudices of the protestant upon the present subject,—that, although the catholic church retains, and piously cultivates, the use of sacred images, yet she does not consider, either their retention, or their cultivation, as the essential appendages of her religion. “Images,” says Petavius, “belong to that class of things, which we call indifferent; that is, to those which, not being the essence of religion, may either be preserved, or suppressed, by the church.” What alone the church has decided, in relation to them, is,—that the use of them, if properly understood, and wisely cultivated, is beneficial. But, should this ever degenerate into abuse, so as to be destructive of the end, for which she now recommends them, then in her wisdom, she would suppress, or suspend, it. Hence, the use of images is merely a point of discipline. The church compels no one to keep them; neither does she ordain, that any external marks of veneration shall be paid to them. For these reasons, therefore again, to pretend to justify the separation from the church, upon their account, is an empty, and vain, illusion.

tion represents them. I will suppose all this.—Well; and I contend, that even upon this supposition, and admitting all this to be true,—it would, nevertheless, still follow, that the protestant churches are involved, by their separation, in the guilt of schism; and this, too, according to the very principles, and concessions, both of the first reformers, and of the best subsequent defenders of the protestant cause. For, what, notwithstanding the alleged disorder,—have those men, nearly all of them, acknowledged, in relation to the parent church? They have acknowledged,—and so also do the generality of its modern adversaries acknowledge still,—that, nevertheless; and in spite of all its supposed abominations, it was still, at the epoch of the Reformation, the true church,—its pastors still invested with the real apostolical delegation; and its government, still divine. In this case, it was, consequently, still, at that time, “the one fold of the one Shepherd;”—“the kingdom of Jesus Christ;—the house of the living God,” &c.—But if so,—can, then, any kind of excuse appear prudently sufficient to justify men for having abandoned it? And, above all, can any thing appear sufficient to justify them, not only for having abandoned it, but for even setting up new churches, and new altars, in opposition to it? “There cannot,” says St. Austin, “exist any kind of excuse, that can possibly justify schism : *præscindendæ unitatis nulla justa necessitas.*”

Again, making once more the supposition, that the catholic church had fallen into idolatry,—was there, then, no medium; no possibility of avoiding the contagion of this disorder, save the desperate measure of abandoning that establishment, which they still allowed to be divine?—Yes; there was: and the public, or the reformers, might easily have adopted it. They might, (this is the medium, which I allude to) without abandoning the church, have simply abstained from the performance of those acts, in which they contended, or imagined, that the guilt of idolatry was included. They might, without rebelling against their lawful pastors, have declined holding any communion with them, in relation to those points, in which, they considered the communion with them to be criminal. All this was easy; and the medium, obvious. And this is, certainly, all, that,—reasoning, and

acting, consistently,—the protestant, *with his principles*, can reasonably defend. For, to abandon a church, which is acknowledged to be still the true one;—to create new ministries, whilst the lawful ministry is yet, confessedly, in power,—this, surely, is the breach of unity, if a breach of unity can be effected:—this is schism, if there exist such a sin as schism.

If, then, curiosity were, with candor, to attempt to trace the real source of the accusations, which I have been discussing, it would easily, I think, discover it in the artifices, and hostility, of the first reformers,—who, anxious to make out a strong case for their own darings; and to seem to justify their rebellion, thus deemed it necessary to vilify the church, which they had deserted. These men, like the generality of revolutionists, had studied the features of the human character. They had ascertained, how easy a task it is, by violence, and insult, to impose upon the credulity of the public; and how much more easy still, when this is once effected, to lead them on to any thing, either to any excess of conduct, or to any absurdity of belief. For these reasons, therefore, in imitation of other revolutionists, they had recourse to the darkest accusations, and to the foulest calumnies.* They did this, too,—and it was, perhaps, their principal motive,—as a measure of personal security. Aware of the danger, to which they had exposed themselves by their rebellion against their lawful pastors, they, hence, conceived it a very urgent piece of prudence to procure some powerful shelter for their own security. They were sensible, that, if not thus protected, they must, ere long, be punished, as rebels, and innovators. Wherefore, as they had not like the early saints, any great relish for persecu-

* Grotius, in one of his letters to his friend Vossius,—in which he reprobates the accusations, which the protestants so incessantly employed against the parent church,—informs us, that the excuse, which their ministers made use of to him, when he reproached them for the illiberal act, was this,—“that they found it necessary to do so for the public good of the reformed religion.”

In reply to the above epistle, Vossius, in like manner, tells us, that he, too, just like his friend, had been often struck with the same disingenuous conduct; and that even, like him, he had sometimes remonstrated upon the subject with the ministers at Amsterdam. And their apology, too, was precisely similar to the foregoing. They owned, he says, the illiberality of the thing. “But,” they added, “if we leave off such language, our people will soon leave us.”

tion, or taste for martyrdom, their great solicitude, and aim, was to erect this useful, and important, bulwark. They felt, that to do this, the most obvious, and effectual, means would be, to render the church, and its pastors, odious ; and themselves popular ;—to awake the public discontent ; and to call a strong host of defenders round their persons. Accordingly, it was hence, (neither could cunning have devised a safer artifice) that they solemnly, and loudly, proclaimed, that the religion of the church, even in the most important objects of its worship, is a base idolatry ; its pastors, the ministers of the frightful abomination ; and the public, the dupes of the illusion. Such was the ingenious contrivance of the first reformers ; by which, under the appearance of zeal for the purity of religion, securing the public confidence, they effectually secured their own protection.—They, of course, added to the hateful imputations all the bitterness of invective, and all the violence of reproach : “so that their pulpits,” says Starke, “were the arenas of battle.” “And you might see men,” adds Erasmus, “coming from their sermons, just like so many furies,—fire in the eye, and vengeance in each feature.”

The force of terms is an awful thing. A mere odious name will frequently have more influence upon the public, and go farther towards creating ill-will, and injustice, than all the efforts of the most splendid eloquence. It is a lever, which, dextrously managed, will move any thing ;—a magic incantation, which, cunningly employed, will conjure up ghosts, and spectres ;—deceiving, sometimes, the wise ; and misleading, most easily, the ignorant, and the unsuspecting. So, for example, if consulting the rolls of history, we refer to nearly all the occasions of peculiar mischief,—either to the revolutions, effected in states ; or to the heresies, propagated in the church,—we find, that injurious terms, and artful appellations, have been constantly used as their best auxiliaries,—as the watchwords of the factious ; and the leading principles of seduction. Hence, therefore, the real secret of all those hateful names, with which the reformers have vilified the members of the ancient church,—“idolaters ; sons of antichrist ; children of the whore of Babylon,” &c. All this was policy ; and in fact, the real policy, which, be-

yond every other artifice, contributed to secure their triumphs.*

That the first reformers, indeed, labouring to effect a great revolution in the public mind, to destroy the ancient church, and to erect a new edifice upon its ruins,—that they should have employed every artful, and unjust, ex-

* As instances of the influence of *terms*, not only upon the vulgar, but even upon the learned, let the reader just reflect upon the following ones. Take, for example, the terms, *philosophy* and *philosophers*. The former has been constantly employed, in our times, and with astonishing, and fatal, success, in undermining religion; annihilating truth; and destroying piety:—the latter has been used to cast a veil over a set of men, the professed advocates of impiety; and the promoters of every species of licentiousness,—men, black with every crime. Take, in like manner, the cant, and fashionable words, *reason*, *liberty*, *toleration*. The mere sound of these, for ever, and eloquently, re-echoed by the masters of seduction, has crowded the schools of irreligion with disciples. That of *reason* has been artfully used to degrade reason;—that of “*liberty*” to destroy liberty;—that of “*toleration*” to establish every possible form of error.—The term *reformation*, invented for similiar reasons, has produced almost similar effects.—Again, take a set of opposite terms;—for instance, *superstition*, *bigotry*, *fanaticism*, and such like. Is it not unhappily too true, that, by the constant use of these words, emphatically vociferated in the public ear; or pressed upon the public mind in the poisonous, but eloquent, works of innumerable writers,—immense multitudes have been seduced?—have been even sacred out of their belief; and shamed into incredulity? Such, certainly, is the fact.—And what a dreadful proof, again, might I not cite of the power of terms, in the use of that odious, and single appellation,—*aristocrate*,—invented by the leaders of the French revolution? This single epithet was the watchword, and the signal, of death; and immense was the hecatomb; innumerable the noble, and innocent, victims, that were immolated to it.—And, citing this example, why may I not likewise add to it, as a farther illustration of the subject, the terms, so illiberally made use of, in this country in particular, *popery*, and the nick name *papist*? The use of these has been long a prolific source, both of insult, and injustice, to the catholic;—the former being employed to convey to the protestant mind the notion of every thing, that is most disgusting in belief; the latter, of every thing, that is most dangerous in policy. The mere yell,—“*No Popery*,” has done, during many frightful years, and does still, essential injury to the catholic body. Howled often from the pulpit; bawled, and re-echoed, in the streets; scrawled upon every wall; and repeated loudly by the press,—it has, many a time, had the effect of absolutely maddening the credulity, and fanaticism, of the nation; exciting, not only the vulgar, but even multitudes of the best-instructed portions of the community, to acts of cruelty, persecution, and injustice, that would disgrace the most barbarous country. Indeed, owing greatly to this hateful cry, not even yet, is it discovered, that charity, or justice, are due to the Roman catholic. It is yet, to multitudes, a bar to the common feelings of humanity.—Such is the effect of *terms*. They operate upon weak minds, when artfully applied, just like the cry of *mad-dog*, upon cow-

pedient to promote their views,—this is not surprising. *Their* conduct was but in the common order of things. The circumstance, which, alone, ought, perhaps, to appear astonishing, is the following,—that *now*,—*now* that the revolution has been effected, its advocates should *still* continue to cultivate those same disingenuous, and illiberal, measures, which were only necessary for its first successes. *When a building is completed the scaffolding should be removed.* However, here, it is not so. For, although the stupendous edifice of protestantism has, long since, been finished ;—although its members enjoy, both the undisturbed profession of their own creeds, and the unmolested possession of the riches of the ancient church,—still do they retain those hateful expedients,—all that violence, and insult ; all those miserable *scaffoldings*,—which were invented, and employed, by the first reformers. The press, as I have often said, still groans, every day ; and, every Sunday, the walls of innumerable churches still re-echo, with the abuse of popery.—I have just called this, “singular.” But, perhaps, it is not so. Separatists are always unrelenting. They never love, nor forgive, the church, which they have abandoned : whilst, also, it is generally the case, that men do not easily dismiss those artifices, which have once proved useful to their cause. Hence, therefore, it is, that, even in this age of boasted liberality, the enemies of the catholic religion retain still all that hostility towards it, which marked the conduct, and language, of Luther, and his fierce associates.—However, let us hope, that, ere long, all this will cease :—as it is indeed time, that it should cease. Let us hope, that, practising moderation, the protestant, if he will still combat our religion, will, at least, combat it with candor. The cause, which can be supported, only by the arms of insult, and misrepresentation, ought, in the eyes of prudence, to appear a bad one.—But, to proceed.

The next argument, which I have cited, as another apology for the protestant schism, is “the subduction of the cup in the Lord’s Supper from the use of the laity.” This, too, is often denominated by the protestant writ-

ards. An odious name will always, in the eyes of the public, render a man odious ;—a contemptible name, contemptible ;—a ridiculous name, ridiculous.

ers, “ a crime; an act of injustice ; a profanation,” of the most flagrant character; insomuch, that if there were no other cause, save this, to vindicate the Reformation, this alone, they assert, would suffice to do it. “ The denial of the cup to the laity,” says the Bishop of Durham, “ is derogatory from the honour of our Saviour; and a violation of his express command; ‘ Drink ye all of this.’ ” “ It is not only,” he adds, “ an unjust infringement of the rights of the laity; and a daring mutilation of the holy sacrament; but also dishonours him, who instituted, and ordained it.” He, elsewhere, calls it, “ a sacrilege, and a profanation:”—and hence,—upon the alleged score of all these dreadful things,—he infers, that the separation from the church of Rome, was an act of necessary piety, and of public justice. Similar, too, to this are both the language, and the reasoning, of the generality of the defenders of the Reformation ;—all contending, that the supposed mutilation of the sacrament is one of the most criminal parts of popery; and therefore, one of the best vindications of protestantism. This is, indeed, certain,—that the accusation, by interesting the great body of the laity, had a very powerful influence in contributing to the establishment of the Reformation.

It would be well, if it were half so easy to *convince* men of the emptiness of any charge, as it is to *prove* its emptiness. In this case, the labour of the catholic controversialist would not, in general, be very formidable; whilst, also, it would be, sometimes, pleasing. His difficulties would be rare: his triumphs frequent. For, certain it is, that there are very few charges, adduced against his religion, which are not, most easily, proved to be groundless; and few even, which it is not easy to prove groundless, by the authority itself of its very adversaries:—for, it is a fact, that there is hardly one disputed article of the catholic religion,—if indeed, there be one,—in which the protestant writers are not in contradiction with each other,—some confidently asserting, what others, as confidently, deny. However, unfortunately, so it is:—*to convince* men who are not willing to be convinced;—to make those understand, who have not the desire to understand;—but, above all, to engage men to admit, what it is not their wordly interest to admit, or what is opposed to their prejudices, their habits, and partialities,—all

this is next to impossible. So that let the catholic refute, ever so clearly, the alleged imputations against his religion, yet will the protestant, almost universally, refuse to believe him. The reader may have remarked this, in relation to the article, which I have just dismissed. He may trace a farther illustration of it, in the accusation, which is now before us.

“The denial of the cup in the Lord’s Supper,” it is said, “is an unjust infringement of the rights of the laity; a daring mutilation of the holy Sacrament,” &c. To convince any impartial reader of the injustice of these accusations, it should suffice merely to state to him (as I have done, in regard to the two foregoing charges) the nature of our belief, and principles, concerning the mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

In relation, then, to the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the belief of the catholic church is this:—She believes, that Jesus Christ is truly, and substantially, present in the adorable institution. He is present in it, she believes, whole, and entire, under each of the external species;—as completely whole, and entire, under each, as he is whole, and entire, under both. Indeed, the nature itself of the real presence essentially implies this. For, wheresoever the divine Being is present,—there, of course, he must be perfectly present. To suppose otherwise; or to imagine, that, being really present, he could be partially present, this would be a notion, more preposterous still than nonsense. The consequence, therefore, is, that Jesus Christ is completely present, under each form of the sacred mystery. But, if so, where, then, can possibly be the injury done to the faithful, by withholding from them the use of the cup; and administering the divine food to them under the appearances only of the bread? Because they, by this means, receive precisely as much as if they had communicated under both species;—receiving thus, perfect, and entire, that sacred Being, to whom they had come to be united. They receive, too, of course, by communicating in this manner, the same effusion of graces; the same store of blessings, as if they had shared in the banquet of both species. Because it is not to the external species, that these benefits are appended, but to the divinity of him, who is present under them. So that,—these principles once admitted,—

there cannot possibly appear to be any real injury done to the laity, by withholding from them the use of the cup.

Neither, again,—and this, for the same reasons,—is there any room, when the nature of the mystery is thus explained,—for that other part of the insulting imputation, that, “by taking away the cup, we mutilate the sacrament.” For, there cannot be any mutilation of the sacrament, where the sacrament is perfect, and complete, under each of the species ;—where the body, and the blood; the soul, and the divinity, of Jesus Christ, are as fully, and entirely, present under one of the mysterious symbols, as they are under both,—a circumstance, which must necessarily be now admitted; because the divine Personage, being now, after his resurrection, impassible, glorified, and immortal, must, of course, be now likewise incapable of division, and unsusceptible of any kind of separation.

If indeed, it should be contended, that our Redeemer, instituting the mystery, instituted it under different species,—the reply again to this observation is easy,—namely, that the separation here is not a real separation, but only a mystical one;—not a proper division, but merely a figurative one. The separation, which is here made in the Eucharist, relates to the divine institution, not as it is a sacrament, but as it is *a sacrifice*;—not as it is designed for the use of the great body of the faithful, but as it is intended to be offered up by the Christian priesthood as the victim of our altars; and as the commemoration of Christ’s death upon the cross. For these reasons, the catholic church, whilst, from motives of prudence, she administers the sacrament to the laity under one species only,—is careful, at the same time, whenever she offers up the sacred oblation as a sacrifice, to retain both. She would even, upon these occasions, consider the omission of either of them,—although the distinction is merely figurative,—as an infringement of the Christian law.

But, having said, that it is often easy to refute our protestant adversaries by the authority itself of protestants; and that I could, moreover, illustrate this in the case of the present subject,—I will now proceed to make this assertion good.

The best authority, which the protestant can adduce with consistency, in favour of any of his religious

opinions, is,—or at least; should be,—that of the chief oracle of the Reformation,—the man, whom he reveres, as, “the immediate envoy, and minister of the Holy Ghost,”—Luther. Behold, therefore, the sentiments of this apostle, respecting the present question. In his letter addressed to the Bohemians, amidst a variety of other instructions, he tells them: “It might, no doubt, be well to use both kinds in the administration of the Eucharist. However, Christ has not commanded any thing, as necessary, upon this article.”—For this reason, in another part of his works, he says: “They do not commit any sin, who communicate under one kind: because Christ has left this to the choice of each one.” (De Cap. Bab.) But, he even goes farther still than this: for, he councils, under certain circumstances, the reception of communion, under one kind only. Thus, in an instruction, composed by him, in the year 1522, he tells his followers: “if you arrive in a place, where communion is given under one kind only, be satisfied with receiving it under one kind. If they give both, receive both: and do not distinguish yourselves from the greater number, by opposing a practice, which you find established.”* The favourite disciple of this apostle,—Melancton,—in the work, which he published, the year following, at Haguenau, entitled, “Loci Communes,” inculcates precisely the same thing. “They commit no sin,” he says, “who communicate under either kind. It is indifferent, under which you communicate.”—Such, too, as these, amongst the various sects of Lutheranism, were the sentiments of many of their most noted, and distinguished, writers. For admitting, like their leader, the real presence of Christ in the sacred mystery; and, consequently, his complete presence under each kind,—so they, with great good sense, admitted, likewise, that it is,

* In 1528, when the reformer was making his apostolical visitation of the Saxon churches, he positively decided, that his followers should have the liberty of communicating in one kind only. And in order to declare with energy, and eloquence, his fixed opinion upon the subject, he thus expresses himself: “If a council were to command, or permit, both kinds,—in spite of the council, we should take but one: or else, we would take neither one, nor the other: and we would, moreover, curse those, who, in virtue of the council, took either.”—(Tom. iii. Ed. Jen.)

hence, very immaterial under which of them the faithful might chance, or think proper, to communicate.

Amongst the Calvinistic sects,—although here, in consequence of their principles, the difficulty ought to appear much more considerable,—we find, again, the same opinions. Thus for example, Daillé, in his *Apology*, speaking of the reformed churches; and speaking, too, in the name of that immense body,—says: “we place the retrenchment of the cup amongst those things, which are either of no importance at all; or else, of very little.”—It was hence,—induced by these considerations,—that, in the year 1560, the whole Calvinistic synod, which was convened at Poitiers, where they drew up various articles of discipline,—solemnly decreed, that the ministers of their churches “ought to administer the bread *only* of the Lord’s Supper to those, who cannot drink the wine.” It is true, indeed, that they added; (and the artifice is a very strange one)—“The communicants, upon such occasions, shall protest, that they cannot drink wine; and shall do their best to drink it,—applying the cup, as much as they can do it, to their mouths; and touching it with their lips, in order to prevent scandal.” Preposterous regulation!—But, the consequence, at all events, is this, that the fathers of this venerable assembly did not, of course, consider the reception of the Eucharist under both species, as an essential duty; nor its administration under only one, as a mutilation of the sacrament. Else, their dispensation would have been profane.—So that if these men, from prudential motives; and in the plenitude of their power, could dispense their subjects from the reception of the cup,—why, then, could not the catholic church, for similiar, and much more urgent, reasons, be permitted, without any violation of religion, to do the same?

I might here cite, likewise, the opinions of a few members of the church of England,—and these, too, very justly eminent for their learning,—who have thought, and written, upon this article, like those, whom I have just been citing. Such, amongst its writers, were Forbes, White, Montague, &c. The latter of these says: “Where does the Scripture command, that the people should receive the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in both kinds? The Scripture teaches no such thing. The

Scripture does not command it.”* Indeed, it is even, by different acts of parliament,—the real canons of religion in this country,—ordained, “that, although both kinds should be commonly so delivered, and ministered; yet, if necessity did otherwise require, an exception should be made.” (Bishop Sparrow’s Collection.)

For these reasons, therefore,—after having considered the passages of the sacred Scriptures, and the examples of the primitive church; after having studied, and compared together, the respective tenets of the catholic, and the protestant churches,—Leibnitz writes, and concludes, thus:—“Communion under one kind was introduced, not without some foundation in the sacred Scripture; nor without examples in the primitive church.—And, surely, it cannot be denied, that Christ is received, whole, and entire, under each of the two kinds, by virtue of concomitance, as divines express it: since the flesh cannot be separated from the blood. Even the protestants themselves admit, that, if any one has a repugnance to wine, he may then receive the communion under the form of bread alone. And I, therefore, do maintain, (mark this conclusion; for, it is the same with that, which I am now deducing) I do maintain, that the withdrawing of the cup does not afford any one a just cause for having separated from the church.”

I have not shown,—neither is it necessary, after the foregoing evidences, to do so,—what has been always the opinion of the Christian church; and what constantly, under certain circumstances, its practice, in regard to the use of the holy communion. Its doctrine has, at

*In order, however, to make it seem to the reason of the public, that the Scripture does ordain the reception of the sacrament under both kinds, our protestant versions of the sacred text present thus the 27th verse of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians,—“Whosoever shall eat this bread, AND drink the chalice,” &c : designing, by the import of the copulative, “AND,” to show, that the faithful were, hence, accustomed; and, therefore, obliged, to communicate under both kinds. The inference is, indeed, palpable. But, what, then, is really the case? Why, that the insertion of the copulative is a daring corruption of the sacred text, adopted merely for the purpose of imposing upon the public credulity. The genuine text, as it stands, not only in the Latin Vulgate, but in the original Greek; and even in some of the foreign protestant versions, is this: “Whosoever shall eat this bread, OR drink the chalice,” &c.— $\kappa\alpha\iota$ —thus proving the very reverse from what,—sporting with the divine word,—the English translators have attempted to make it prove.

every period, been the same with that, which I have been describing,—namely, that, since Christ is equally present under one of the sacred species, as he is under both,—so, for all the benefits, and effects, of the holy institution, it is completely immaterial, whether the faithful communicate under one, or under both. “It considered this,” says Starke, “as a point of simple discipline.” Its practice, accordingly, was conformable to this doctrine. For, although the faithful, by its general discipline, did usually communicate in both kinds,—yet was it, likewise, its established regulation, every where, to impart the divine mystery, under certain circumstances, only in the form of bread. “Thus,” says the aforesaid writer,—one of the most learned in the school of protestantism,—“in the first ages of the church, it was the custom to send the Lord’s Supper, in the form of bread alone, to the sick, and even to prisoners. And it was in this way only, that St. Ambrose himself received the holy communion before his death. You may find a multitude of examples like these in Tertullian, Cyprian, and in almost every writer of the earliest periods.”—“It is, indeed, evident,”—just to cite one other attestation of a fact, which I wonder, that even the strongest prejudice should deny,—“it is evident,”—says the protestant author of the Essay for Catholic Communion, “in the records of antiquity, that, in the purest ages, it was the practice in many cases to give the communion in one kind only; as to the solitaries to whom it was carried into the desert; to the sick; and to persons on a journey; to infants; to the abstemious; and for some time also, in some places, in the ordinary communion at church.”

What the motives were, which, in these latter ages, have induced the pastors of the church to withhold the cup from the general use of the laity,—is a point, which,—seeing, that the same kind of thing had been constantly done before,—I, hence, need not here investigate. I will only say, that their motives were not those, which are usually imputed to them,—not any disrespect to the holy institution, nor any want of obedience to the divine command. On the contrary, amongst a variety of other motives, they did it out of a principle of respect for the adorable mystery. They did it, in order to prevent the

accident of spilling the sacred blood,—a misfortune, which must, not unfrequently, have taken place from the confusion, sometimes, that was attendant upon its distribution in large congregations; and from the negligence, sometimes, of the faithful, upon such occasions. They did it, because in many places, it is often extremely difficult,—if not, indeed, now and then, impossible, to procure a sufficient quantity of genuine wine for the communion of great bodies of the laity. It was for these, and such like, motives, that the piety, not the profaneness, of the church thought it prudent to ordain, that, in the present state of things, the laity should communicate under the form of bread alone. However, the circumstance (let the protestant remember this) is, after all, no more than a mere point of discipline. The regulation is only a temporary thing,—a point, which the wisdom of the church is always disposed to alter, whenever she can do it with advantage,—that is, whenever the ancient method of dispensing the communion under both kinds will contribute to the piety, the peace, and the welfare, of the public.—From these few considerations, attentively compared, and combined, together, it follows, I think, quite evidently, as Leibnitz remarks,—“that the withdrawing of the cup does not afford any just cause for having separated from the church.”

Thus, then, I have discussed some of the various arguments, which the defenders of the Reformation have alleged in their own justification, and as the apologies for the act of separation from the parent institute. Neither are the arguments, which I have selected, those of inferior moment. They are, on the contrary, those, which have always been, and are still, considered the very best vindications of that great event. From them, therefore, the reader may form a tolerable judgment of several others: and he may infer, that, if the best apologies are unsatisfactory, this must, of course, be the case with those, which are only of secondary moment. Accordingly, such is the fact. For, the other alleged justifications of the Reformation,—those, I mean, which are founded upon *the doctrines* of the catholic church,—are neither of a nature so important, nor in their bearings, nearly so alarming, as are those, which I have just been citing. Nay, it is even true, that several of

them,—such as the objections to our tenets respecting good works; merit; justification, &c.—and which were once the strongholds of the first reformers,—are now, very generally, if not entirely, neglected, and abandoned. So that now, there is little or no necessity of discussing these.

It is true, indeed,—as I have already said so often,—that, referring to the writers of this country,—where bigotry still lingers, or rather, flourishes, far more than in any other,—we find, that these men,—be the subject of their works what it may,—for ever represent the *whole* creed of the church of Rome as a code of errors, and a ritual of superstition,—as a system of religion, invented by artifice, and fanaticism, and promoted by avarice, and ambition; in order, by deceiving, to enslave the public mind. Such is, certainly, the general portrait of what, in the blindness of their ignorance, or the rancour of their hostility, the far greater number of our English writers are still pleased to denominate, “popery;” thus rendering, or appearing to render, the separation from it, an act of piety, and of Christian prudence.

In opposition to these sweeping accusations, let me here, by the way of caution to the well-intentioned protestant, just present to him the few following observations.—In the first place, such charges are fraught with peculiar mischief. They tend—and this was the motive which first, and principally, suggested their adoption,—they tend to keep out of the sight of the public the consideration of that awful question,—“*Where now resides the sin of schism?*” They put off the investigation of this,—which is the real clue to the sanctuary of truth,—to an unmeasurable, and unlimited, distance. Because if the truth of religion, or the claims of any church, are to be determined by the public, by the discussion of all the various tenets which men believe,—where, in such case, or when, would the discussion finish? It would thus be endless. And this, therefore, is the chief source of those vague imputations, that “the doctrines of popery are, all, or nearly all of them the corruptions of modern artifice.”

In the next place, I remark, that such charges,—just like those, which I have been refuting, are groundless, and unjust;—the dictate, either of malevolence, which

hates our religion; or of ignorance, which does not know it. The fact is, that, in the whole series of the tenets of the catholic church, there is *not one*.—as it is most easy to demonstrate,—which does not reach up to the brightest ages of Christian antiquity. I am not, indeed, going here to establish this. But, I will just cite, as a confirmation of it, the attestations of a few of the most learned, and enlightened, protestants themselves. Thus, for example, Grotius, the oracle of literature, and the boast of protestant wisdom, asserts, in a work (*De Cœnæ Administratione*) which he composed, but two years before his death: “The catholic church is not only catholic; but she presides, moreover, over the catholic church. Whatsoever is universally believed by the western church, united to the church of Rome, *that*, I find is taught *unanimously*, both by the Greek, and Latin, fathers.”—In like manner, Bishop Dudith, a writer, who was second to few in talents, learning, and acuteness, writes thus, in one of his epistles to Beza: “If that be the truth, which the ancient fathers have, *with one consent*, professed, then it is also the fact, that this truth is, *wholly*, on the side of the papists. *Si ea est veritas, quam veteres patres, mutuo consensu, sunt professi, ea a pontificiis tota stabit.*” In the works of Leibnitz, Melancton, Illyricus, the Centuriators, Grabe, &c., similar acknowledgments are not unfrequent. Even our historian, Gibbon, asserts, that “no learned man can resist the force of that historical evidence, which establishes the fact, that, during the whole period of the first four ages of the church, the principal points of doctrine, believed by the papists, were already admitted, *both in theory, and in practice.*” In short, the candid Starke, in his astonishing work, which was published but yesterday, speaks thus: “The writings of the most ancient fathers of the church are the authentic testimonials of the faith of the Christian world during the first ages. Now, this faith *is still that of the catholic church.* And if men had retained any shadow of respect for what Christ and his apostles, taught,—and which they cannot refuse, without inconsistency,—then it is certain that *all the advantage is on the side of this church.*” From testimonials such as these,—and I could easily produce many others like them,—the protestant should

be induced to feel, both the injustice, and the folly, of those imputations, which the bigotry of our writers is daily casting upon the catholic religion.

In the third place, I remark, (and this observation should appear very important to the protestant,) that, although the defenders of the Reformation allege always, in justification of that event, the supposed errors of the catholic church, yet do they never venture to assert,—or at least, the learned do never assert,—that these errors are *fundamental*,—that is, of such a nature as to be destructive of the divine character of the institution. Indeed, they could not do this ; else, they must also have contended, that the church had entirely perished. For this reason, even the fierce enemy of every thing almost, that is catholic, the learned Dr. Field, (in his treatise “Of the Church,”) blames those “popish” controversialists, who seem to impute to their protestant adversaries the opinion, that “the church of Rome had apostatised from the true faith.” “No man,” he says, “of our profession thinketh any such thing.” “If we consider,” says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, “the doctrines themselves of the Roman catholics, we shall find them superstructures ill built. But yet, they keep the foundation. They build upon God, in Jesus Christ. They profess the apostles’ creed. They retain faith, and repentance, as the supporters of all our hopes in heaven, &c. So that there is nothing in the foundation of faith, that can reasonably hinder them to be permitted. The foundation of faith stands secure amongst them.” “I must,” says Thorn-dyke, “and I do freely profess, that I find no position, necessary for salvation, prohibited; none, destructive of salvation, enjoined, to be believed by the church of Rome.”—Such, too, as I might easily, if necessary, show it,—is the language of many of our modern protestant theologians,—of all those, who have any pretensions to consistency, and erudition. If here and there, an individual is found, who speaks otherwise, it is only, either some intemperate bigot, or some ignorant fanatic. This is even the observation of Mr. Wix. “The church of Rome,” says this writer, “has the foundation of true faith, and the advantages of discipline, modelled after the apostolic practice. For which reasons, I cannot agree with those, who, in an intemperate zeal, have, as uncha-

ritably, as absurdly, stated the church of Rome to be the antichristian power. The author is hurt, whenever he notices so cruel a charge, from however high authority.”*

So that thus it is conceded by the general voice of protestant wisdom, that, although the doctrines of the catholic church be corrupted,—still, they are not, after all, corrupted fundamentally,—not corrupted, so essentially, as to have rendered this communion, at the period of the Reformation, no longer the true church of Christ. But if so, then, again, is the inference correct,—That it is not, therefore, at all events, upon the pretext of *its doctrines*, that the protestant can prudently consider himself justified for having separated, or for still living separated, from its society. The only errors, which can, at any time, appear reasonably to justify schism, must be *fundamental errors*.

But, let us now proceed to examine, whether, since the *doctrines* of the catholic church are not a satisfactory vindication of the Reformation, there may not possibly exist some other, and some better, apology for that revolution.

* Aware of the difficulty of pretending to justify the Reformation, upon the alleged score of the *corrupted doctrines* of the mother church,—many protestant writers, abandoning this plea, have had recourse to a much better, because bolder, expedient, for its vindication,—“the glorious privilege of Christian liberty.” Thus Bishop Warburton says: “The principle of the Reformation was not so much the right of separation from the errors of a corrupt church, as that Christian liberty, which gives every man a right to worship God, according to his conscience.”—Bishop Hoadley assigns the same reason. “When we left,” he says, “the popish doctrines, was it because they were actually corrupt? No; the reason was,—because we thought them so.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ALLEGED JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROTESTANT SCHISM, ON THE SCORE OF THE CORRUPTIONS, AND ABUSES, OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

“The important work (the Reformation) was begun, and prosecuted, upon the common principle, that the Bishop of Rome was Antichrist. And the great separation from the church of Rome was, every where, justified, on the idea, that Rome was the Babylon of the Revelations; and that Christians were bound, by an express command in those prophecies, to come out of her communion.”—BISHOP HURD.

THE apologies for schism, I have already observed, just like those for rebellion in civil governments, are various, and artful,—in proportion precisely to the badness, and the difficulty, of the task, which it is their object to promote. Insult, upon such occasions, misrepresentation, invective, &c. are the ordinary, and indeed, the necessary, expedients, to which the heroes of the intended mischief are sure always to have recourse.

Bent, therefore, as the reformers were, upon the destruction of the ancient church; and skilled, at the same time, in the artifices of deception,—they, hence, adopted all those methods, which, whilst they were calculated to forward their design, were intended, moreover, to justify their own excesses. It was for these purposes, I have shown in the preceding chapter, that they assailed, with so much violence, *the doctrines* of the church; declaring these, idolatrous, profane, &c. However, their stratagems did not rest here. The mere denial of certain doctrines would not have ensured their victories. Therefore, they adopted another, and a still more useful, because more striking, expedient. They inveighed loudly against *the corruption, and abuses*, of the church;—

against the vices of its pastors ; the disorders of its government, &c. They represented, and exhibited, these in every hateful, and disgusting attitude, that the inventiveness of their cunning, and the rancour of their hostility, could suggest. I have cited this defence of the Reformation in the *second place*, although it, in reality, deserves the first : for, there is something in it, that is more specious than the apology, which I have just dismissed. However, I have done this, because, by the modern defenders of that revolution, the former is the chief pretext, which is now, most generally, urged in its justification.

Referring, then, again to the annals of the church, and to the history of heresy at every period, we find, that the alleged corruption, and abuses, of the church have formed always the leading source, and the most prominent vindication, of schism. The argument is ancient as this evil ; and it is often cited by the early fathers. Saint Cyprian, taking notice of it, makes use of the same observations, which I have done. He remarks, that invective against the disorders of the pastors of the church is the surest of all methods, (since it produces discontent,) of producing disunion ; and the infallible means, at the same time, of rendering the declaimer popular ; because it gives to his intemperance the semblance of the love of piety, and conceals his guilt under the mask of zeal. In fact, the artifice is natural ; and it is that, as I have just said, which is always the first adopted, whenever there is question of doing mischief. So let men attempt a revolution in the state, the method, to which they always, in the first place, have recourse, is to inveigh against the disorders, and to expose the vices, of its rulers ; and to hold up to the public execration the abuses of its government. Such is the general history of civil revolutions ; and such the means, by which, rendering themselves popular, men have been enabled to pull down, and to erect, whatsoever their ambition wished for, or their fancy pleased. For this reason, therefore, it was, as Bishop Hurd remarks, that “the important work of the Reformation was begun, and prosecuted, upon the common principle, that the Bishop of Rome was Antichrist ; and the great separation was, every where justified, on the idea, that Rome was the Ba-

bylon of the Revelations.”—Frightful as are these imputations, and powerfully as they contributed to the progress of the reformation,—still, they are not such, after all, as ought to appear sufficient in the eyes of Christian prudence to justify that great apostacy.

“The great separation was every where justified on the idea, that Rome,”—owing to its corruptions,—to the ambition of its popes; to the vices of its clergy; to the abuses of its government, &c.—“was the Babylon of the Revelations.” The reply to this mischievous, but artful, apology is not difficult. It is contained, and its refutation included, even in those few observations, with which I have closed the preceding chapter. For, howsoever great were the alleged corruptions of the church of Rome;—howsoever general the disorders of its pontiffs, or the vices of its pastors,—still, it was admitted by the reformers themselves, that, neither the nature of those corruptions, nor the prevalence of those disorders, were such,—*so fundamentally wicked*,—as to have destroyed the divine character of that church; to have annulled the apostolical delegation of its ministers; and to have destroyed its government. These are propositions which those innovaters, with all their violence, had not the hardihood to defend:—else, they must have contended also, that the true church had perished; and that all the promises of its perpetual stability are no better than empty figures. The consequence, therefore, is,—that the church of Rome, notwithstanding all its corruptions, was still the true church,—still, “the one fold of the one shepherd.” But if so, then it was wrong to leave it; according to that maxim, already cited, of St. Austin;—that “no possible pretext can justify the abandonment of the true church.”

That, at the epoch of the Reformation, as well as for ages long before it, there did exist certain corruptions, and abuses, in the church of Rome,—these are facts, which every catholic, sighing over the circumstance, is compelled, however reluctant, to admit. There did exist such evils: and they were even great, various, and frequent. But, let good sense, and candor, here pause; and ask these questions: Was it, then, ever intended, —or at least, ever promised,—that corruption should never reign in the church? Did its divine Founder, when

he framed the sacred institution, so construct, and organise it, that its pastors should be, all, saints, and its members, all, holy?—that its practices should never be degraded by superstition, or vitiated by fanaticism?—in short, that passion, and vice, and human weaknesses, should never disturb its harmony?—Alas, so far was this from being the case, that, on the contrary, we know,—we have the positive assurances of our holy Legislator, forewarning us of the unhappy fact—that his church, although so powerfully protected;—although guarded, and defended, by the omnipotence, and influences, of his power,—should yet never be free from the contagion of vice and error. Indeed, not only do we know this, but the same sacred Being has instructed us, that the multitude of the wicked shall always, even in this empire of grace, exceed the number of the good; and that the influence of the passions shall, for ever, be more prevalent than the influence of piety. Whence, also, he bids us remember, that, though “many are called, yet few are chosen.” It is, too, upon these accounts, that he compares his church to those objects, which exhibit to us a scene of the mixture of good and bad,—to “a barn-floor, overspread with wheat, and chaff;”—to “a net, containing all kinds of fishes,” &c. So that the *exemption* from corruption is, by no means, the necessary appendage, or mark, of the church of Christ.

It is true, indeed,—and even the above texts evince it,—that, along with the mass of corruptions, there must always, at the same time, coexist a fund of virtue, opposed to them. There must always, mixed with the portion of the immoral, be found a multitude of individuals, eminent for their sanctity. Sanctity, notwithstanding all the prevalence of vice, is, and for ever must be, the characteristic of the Christian church,—a feature, by which, amidst all the scenes of iniquity, and the confusion of error, it may always be distinguished from every false and spurious institution. “Christ,” says St. Paul, “loved the church; and delivered himself up for it, *in order to sanctify it.*” This divine Being himself assures us, that “his spirit shall remain with it, all days, to the end of the world.” But then, the case is,—that sanctity, and this holy “spirit,” are not secured, or promised, to this, or to that, individual; not to this, or to

that, pastor; nor yet, to any determinate number of pastors;—not even to the supreme guardians of the sacred fold. They are secured, and promised, to the church in general; and, of course, although not to the largest, still to a large, and very considerable portion of its members. For which reason, we repeat; and men for ever will continue to repeat, with truth,—“I believe in the *holy* catholic church.”—So that thus, again, the alleged pretext of the corruptions of the parent church does not form any substantial argument against its divinity; nor, consequently, any substantial motive for having abandoned its society. Corruption is an evil inseparable from the present established order of things, and resulting necessarily from the abuse of human liberty;—an evil, which, theretore, has always, even in the brightest ages of Christian piety, prevailed in the sacred fold. For, vice, even during those eras of glory, abounded always still more than virtue.

But, having made these observations; and admitted also the fact, that corruption did prevail in the catholic church, both at the time of the Reformation, and for centuries long before it,—I must now remark again, that, still, the accounts, which the reformers, and the protestant writers in general, have given, and yet daily give, of those supposed disorders, are very grossly exaggerated; and for the most part false. They were the inventions, as I have stated, of the first reformers, in order the more easily to effect their premeditated revolution; to screen the peril of their own apostacy; and to have a pretext to seize upon the revenues of the church. They are the accusations of revolutionists and plunderers: for, says Melancton, in one of his epistles. “It is not for the sake of the gospel, that our reformers contend; but for their own temporal interests.” Surely, then, the testimonies of such men should be received with caution, for, as Burke observes, “Enemies, and thieves, are bad witnesses.”—The same imputations, it is true, though still kept up, are not now continued from the same motives. They are now continued, from a spirit of ill will, reposing upon prejudice; and from prejudice, reposing chiefly upon ignorance. “When we write upon this subject,” says the elegant Mr. Shuttleworth, “we dip our pens in gall; every illusion his burdened

with acrimony ; and satire never wearies in launching her arrows in the same direction."—From writers such as these, it is vain to look for truth.

The accusations, therefore, respecting the disorders, and abuses, of the church, even at the time of the Reformation, when the general depravity is supposed to have reached to its utmost acme, are very extravagantly exaggerated. In proof of this, I might appeal to the testimony of history; or to the accounts, which have been furnished to us by a multitude of writers, of unimpeachable veracity. So, for example, Erasmus,—a man, who, surely, was no flatterer of the catholics; and who, from his situation, and knowledge, was peculiarly competent to judge of the state of things,—assures us, repeatedly, that the condition of the church, at the above period, so far from being such as its enemies have represented it, was, on the contrary, *even then*, distinguished by the piety, the holiness, the learning, &c. of immense portions of its members;—insomuch that he adds: "If Paul himself had come down from Heaven to view it, it would not have displeased him."

However, it shall not be to the testimonies of catholic writers,—because the protestant will suspect these of partiality,—that I will here appeal. It shall be to the acknowledgments of the protestants themselves; and even to the acknowledgments of the very men, (for nothing is more incoherent than they are) who, most grossly insulting the church, have made its pretended corruption the pretended motive of their separation from its communion. It is, therefore, a fact, that the first reformers themselves,—Luther, Beza, Melancton, Zuinglius, &c. in various parts of their works,—forgetting, it may be, their previous accusations,—very honestly admit, that there prevailed in the church, at the very time when they were rebelling against it; and this, too, amongst large portions of its members,—a spirit of piety; an innocence of life; a system of mortification, &c. which did credit to the Christian cause. Nay; they allow, that, even in the convents themselves,—the most insulted of all the catholic institutions; and in which, if we believe the generality of our English writers, there prevailed the most unbounded licentiousness,—they allow, that, even in these, there existed the practice, and cultivation, of

very distinguished holiness. “In convents,” says Luther, (I quote the words from his Life, by Bower,)—“in convents, no intrusion of worldly cares was permitted; and life was devoted wholly to the service of God.” And hence, the great reformer tells us, speaking of his own conduct: “I practised, whilst I was a monk, all the virtues of the religious state.”

I might cite, too, the attestations of a few of our own modern protestant writers,—and these, moreover, the decided enemies of catholicity,—who, because too well instructed, or too candid, to be guilty of misrepresentation, have described the situation of the church, even at its worst periods of ignorance and superstition, in very different language from that, which, almost universally, pervades the literature of this country. Thus, for instance, the late Bishop Porteus, who, most assuredly, was no friend to popery, describes, in the following manner, the character, and conduct, of its pastors, during those ages, when corruption is supposed to have been the most predominant. “They proved,” he says, “a check to the despotism of our monarchs; and kept the community from falling to pieces by the factions of the nobles. It ought never to be forgotten, that, for what we call our Magna Charta, that main foundation of our free constitution, we are principally indebted to the eloquence, the spirit, and the activity, of an English primate, assisted by almost the whole body of his clergy. It is true indeed, that, in other respects, the conduct of our clergy was not always so irreproachable as might have been wished: for, they must needs partake, in some degree, of the corruption, and barbarity, which then generally prevailed. Yet, great numbers of them did, notwithstanding, preserve themselves pure, and undefiled, from the vices of the age; and were exemplary in their manners, temperate, charitable, meek, and heavenly-minded. Their cloisters were a retreat, not merely, *as it is commonly supposed*, for the idle, and the dissolute; but, for the studious, the afflicted, the penitent, and devout. They afforded support to all the neighbouring poor; and in those days of lawless violence, were extremely useful, as places of refuge, and security, for the defenceless, and the weak.” Such are the features of the ancient church, as delineated by a man, from whom nothing but the plainest

evidence could possibly have extorted any testimonial in its praise.

I will quote one other passage : and it shall be from the work of the same polished writer, whom I have cited already ; and whose aversion to popery is not unequal to that of the venerable bishop. Speaking of our clergy in general, Mr. Shuttleworth says of them : “ If the Romish clergy were eager in the acquisition of wealth, it was not to allow it to accumulate in useless ingots, but to promote the glory of God, by establishments of a benevolent nature, by extensive alms to the poor, and hospitality to the stranger, the pilgrim, and the unfortunate ; and also by architectural monuments of the most splendid description.”—Speaking of the state of our monasteries, he remarks : “ It is easier far to condemn, than to reflect, and investigate. And those, who are only acquainted with monasteries, as they meet with them in fiction, and romance ;—who look upon the mouldered cloister, and the vaulted cell, as the elysiums of vice, or the dark theatres of cruelty, are as unjust, as they are uninformed.—All history shows, that, within the walls of a convent, there was invariably to be found, a balm for every sorrow ; consolation for the broken heart, and hope for the wounded spirit.”—Adducing proofs of the spirit, which animated the episcopacy, he cites the examples (and from these we may judge of the conduct, of the whole order) of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and York. Of the former, he says : “ from the age of Augustine, few can be named, who, besides being conspicuous for talents, knowledge, and virtue, are not likewise deserving honour for munificence, benevolence, and charity.”—Of the latter : “ From the year 625, eighty-three archbishops have occupied the metropolitan throne : and for patriotism, loyalty, learning, benevolence, eloquence, true Christian piety, and virtuous principles, stand pre-eminent in all existing records.” Such as these are the testimonials in relation to the parent church, which, now and then, escape from the hostility of its enemies. If the public do not entertain the same equitable notions, it is because they are ignorant ; and instead of consulting the sources of correct information, consult only those which are calculated to deceive them. Even Hume himself, speaking of the accounts, which, at the time of the Refor-

mation, were constantly given by the protestants, respecting the state of the church,—its convents, &c.—observes, that little or no credit ought to be affixed to them. “In times of faction,” he says, “no equity can be expected from adversaries. And as it was known, that the king’s intention, in the visitation of monasteries, was to find a pretence of abolishing them, we naturally conclude, that the reports of the commissioners are very little to be relied on. Friars were encouraged to bring information against their brethren. The slightest evidence was credited. And even the calumnies, spread abroad by the friends of the Reformation, were regarded as grounds of proof.”—Burnet, too, with all his hatred of every thing catholic, makes the same observations. “Generally,” he says, “it was cried out, that underhand and ill, practices were used (by the visiters of the monasteries). Therefore, to quiet these reports; and to justify what they were about, all the foul stories, that could be found out, were published to defame these houses.” In fact, the protestant should always remember, what I have said so often,—that the Reformation was a *Revolution*,—and ‘a Revolution,’ as the honest Nightingale very justly observes, “in which destruction, much more than reformation, was the object.” For which reason, violence, and injustice, were, of course, essential to its success.

I have quoted, at the head of this chapter, the words of Bishop Hurd, informing us, that “the important work was begun, and prosecuted, and justified, upon the common principle, that the Bishop of Rome was antichrist.” The fact is true: and art, or cunning, or injustice, could not have devised a better expedient to attain their ends—that is, to frighten ignorance, to cheat credulity, and to inflame fanaticism. It did, accordingly, produce all these effects,—scaring even the courage, very frequently, of the boldest hearts; and exciting the enthusiasm of immense multitudes almost to frenzy. Its utility in assisting to establish the Reformation was infinite. Perhaps, did no other stratagem contribute to “the important work,” so effectually. It may, hence, therefore, appear proper, that I should make some reflections on it, by the way of refutation. However, this is not, now, necessary. The artifice has served its intended purpose;

and it is now given up;—condemned by moderation, as a piece of injustice; and ridiculed by wisdom, as a piece of folly. Or if, indeed, there be yet some, who,—pretending to explain the mysterious book of the Revelations,—still keep up the pitiful delusion,—they are merely a few dotting bigots, who,—greater prophets than the prophet himself, are the dupes of the most incurable fanaticism; and who, conducted, themselves, by prejudice and passion,—endeavour, as Thorndyke expresses it. “to lead others after them by the nose.” “Let not them,” he says, “who charge the pope to be antichrist, lead the people by the nose, to believe, that they can prove their supposition, when they cannot.” I am even convinced,—such is my opinion of common sense in general,—that hardly an individual among those, who have defended such “supposition,” did, themselves, believe it; and that, just like the pagan priests of old they smiled at each other, when they chanced to meet. But, be this as it may, “the doctrine,” says another protestant writer, “is not the doctrine of the church of England; not resolved by any synod; not assented to by any convocation; not commanded by any parliament, law, proclamation, or edict; not imposed upon repugnants, or non-consentients, under any penalty.” So that, now, to pretend to justify the Reformation upon this silly pretext,—now that the trick has served its purpose,—is, in reality, an act of folly. I have not refuted it seriously, because I am sure, that no enlightened man believes it. It is true, there have been bad popes; because, like the rest of men, popes are neither impeccable, nor infallible. But, their corruption, surely, did not suffice to exalt them to the high dignity of antichrist.*

* There have been, since the days of St. Peter, about 250 popes, who have, in regular succession, filled the see of that apostle. And it is a fact, that, speaking comparatively, there have been amongst them very few immoral men. There is not one single throne on earth, that can exhibit a chain of princes, who have been half so eminent for their virtues, and piety: so illustrious for their talents, and learning; so distinguished for the benefits which they have procured to society, as our popes. “The charity,” says Bergier, “the heroic courage, the humble, and poor, mode of life of the popes of the first three centuries are facts, which the monuments of antiquity unanimously attest.—The genius, the talents, the zeal, and the laborious vigilance, of those of the fourth, and fifth, centuries are incontestable.—The labours, and the constant efforts, of those of the sixth, and seventh, centuries, in order

From these few considerations, it should seem, I think, to the candid reader, to follow, that, whatsoever may, have been the corruptions of the church, at the era of the Reformation, yet they were not such as to form a

to lessen, and repair, the ravages of barbarity, and to save the wrecks of the sciences, of the laws, and of morality, cannot be called in question.—What the popes did, in the eighth, and ninth, centuries, in order to humanise, by the spirit of religion, the nations of the north; this is a circumstance, which is so well known, that the protestants have only been able to throw an odious varnish over it, by poisoning the motives, the intentions, and the means, which they employed upon those occasions. Neither ought it to be forgotten, what the popes did, in the ninth century, in order to stay the ravages of the Mahometans.” —It is, consequently, only in the dregs of the later ages, when Italy was torn to pieces by a set of little tyrants; and when Europe was the prey of feudal anarchy;—that the enemies of the church have been able to find out a set of pontiffs, who were a disgrace to the priestly character. It is true, indeed,—for I do not wish to excuse what was wrong,—that, during those ages, there did exist bad popes. However, I will again assert, that, even during those ages, the number of such men was, comparatively, very small: whilst, within that interval, there also existed many excellent ones,—men, distinguished for very exalted virtues; and as Roscoe observes, “almost all of them very superior to the ages in which they lived; the protectors of the sciences, of letters, and the arts.”—“In the middle ages,” says Ancillon,—who, certainly, is no friend to popery,—“in the middle ages, when there was no social order, it was the influence, and power, of the popes, that, perhaps alone, saved Europe from the state of barbarism. It was they, that kept up the relations between the most distant nations. They were the common centre, and the rallying point, of all the isolated states. They formed a supreme tribunal, erected in the midst of universal anarchy; and their decrees were, in general, as respectable, as they were respected. It was their power, that prevented, and stayed, the despotism of the emperors; that replaced the want of equilibrium; and diminished the inconveniences of the feudal system.”

Even the very tremendous enemy of popery,—the redoubtable Dr. Southey,—in his late virulent attack upon the ancient church, is so candid as to have let drop the same concessions. “If,” he says, “the papal power had not been adapted to the condition of Europe, it could not have existed. Though, in itself, an enormous abuse, it was the remedy for some great evils, and the palliative of others. We have but to look at the Abyssinians, and oriental Christians, to see what Europe would have become, without the papacy. With all its errors, its corruptions, and its crimes, it was, morally, and intellectually, the conservative power of Christendom. Politically, too, it was the Saviour of Europe. For, in all probability, the west, like the east, must have been overrun by Mahomedanism, and sunk in irremediable degradation, if, in that great crisis of the world, the Roman church had not roused the nations to an united, and prodigious effort, commensurate with the danger. In the frightful state of society, which prevailed during the dark ages, the church, every where, exerted a controlling, and remedial influence.”

Since the days of Leo X., which includes the space of three centuries, Rome has beheld thirty-four popes. And I defy the pro-

wise justification of that schism. They were great: but still not so great, as the protestants have represented them.—They were great: but, in this vale of misery, our Redeemer has forewarned us, that the power, and prevalence of passion will be always great.—They were great: but their greatness was the effect, not of the observance of the catholic religion, but of its violation;—the disorders, not of the belief, but of the passions of the believer.—In short. they were great: but still, they, were not so great as to have unmade the church, or to have annulled the divine commission of its pastors. They did not do this. *Therefore*, they did not afford any sufficient apology for having separated from its society.†

It is a great misfortune, that the protestant, because blinded by prejudice, is completely ignorant of the real history of the catholic religion. And it is, perhaps, an almost equally great misfortune, that, because misled by partiality, he is nearly equally ignorant of his own. He is, hence, unacquainted with the genuine characters of its founders; with the motives, and principles, which gave it birth; and with the methods, to which it finally owed its triumphs. Were he but moderately instructed, in relation to these points, he would, I am sure, be both too modest, and too consistent, to urge the corruptions of the catholic church, as the justification of the Reformation. Because he would then trace in the history of his own religion those same disorders, which he so severely condemns in ours. It ought, no doubt, to be the case, that, whenever men detach themselves from any church, upon the alleged score of its corruptions, they ought, of course, in order to be consistent, to attach themselves

testant to adduce the example of a single one amongst them, whose morals have deserved reproach. Whilst how many of them have merited every eulogy of praise, for their piety, their talents, their learning, their noble sentiments, their charity, and their benefits to society?

†“ Though the ministers of the church ought to be shining lights to the world, yet it must be remembered, they were men. As their personal defects do not vacate the object of their commission, any thing must rather be borne, than that we should rend the church of God.”

—Dr. DAUBENY.

“ Let the appointed minister be the most profligate of his day, still the act of leaving him is a desertion of the church. The vices, the want of skill, &c. in the commander of a regiment may justly be the subject of complaint; but if, upon this account, they will submit themselves to his rule no longer, this is mutiny. And if they leave his corps, this is desertion.”—BAXTER.

to some other, which is less corrupted. To attach themselves to one, which is equally corrupted, would be, upon the alleged pretext,—a contradiction: and to attach themselves to one, which is still more corrupted, should appear,—as it certainly is,—an act of folly.

Wherefore, having made this observation, I will here invite the protestant reader to consider, for a moment, one or two of the features, which mark the qualities of the Reformation. For example, let him just cast an eye upon the general character of its founders; and upon the state, and condition, of its members, at those very periods, when, if the new order of things were divine, they ought to have been the most distinguished for their virtues.

Looking, then, at the lives, and conduct, of the first reformers,—of Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Zuinglius, Beza, Múncer, &c., the real pillars of the stupendous edifice,—the men, whom the protesant daily lauds, as saints, and sages, and apostles; and upon whose account it was, that such immense portions of the faithful abandoned their parent institute,—looking at the lives, and conduct of those men, what do we there discover? What, do we find, were their genuine characters?—Were they, then, those pure, those perfect, personages, whom piety loves, and should expect, to trace in the real instruments of “a God-like Reformation?” Nay, were they even devoid,—let it be only asked,—of those very vices, and disorders, which themselves imputed so loudly to the pastors of the church of Rome? Alas! I reply,—and I do so, not upon the testimony of catholic writers, but upon the concessions of these men themselves; and upon the authority of their own historians,—that so far was this from being the case,—so far were the first reformers from being pure, and perfect men;—so far even from being free from vice, they were, on the contrary, the victims of the strongest passions and of the grossest immorality. Thus, for example, (I am not drawing a portrait, but only etching one or two features) Luther, speaking of himself, tells us: “I am mad almost with the rage of lust, and the desire of women.” (In Col. Mens.) Describing in like manner, his own arrogance, and pride, he says: “In point of pride, I yield, neither to emperor, nor prince; no, not even to the devil himself.” (Ad Maled. Reg. Aug.)

Hence, his dear disciple, Melancton, lamenting the circumstance, informs us: "His passions are violent, as were those of Hercules, Philoctetes, or Marius."—Another of his admirers, Sleydan,—a man, almost equally attached to the great reformer, as was Melancton himself,—acknowledges, that "he was so sensible of his own immorality, that he wished to be removed from the office of preaching." (Lib. ii. anno 1520.) Such (and the rest corresponded to them) were some of the features of the great founder of protestantism. They are not, surely, the features of a real apostle.

The character of Calvin, as it has been delineated by his own associates, and coadjutors, is not at all inferior to that of Luther, either in relation to the violence of his passions, or to the grossness of his disorders. His own writings, indeed, are the monuments of pride, and insolence, as striking, perhaps, as any thing, that exists in the annals of vanity, and low scurrility. So that Bucer, upon this account, as well as for the general intemperance of his conduct, calls him "a downright mad-dog." Whilst his friend Volmar,—not deploring the circumstance, but, on the contrary, exulting in it,—adds: "Calvin is, no doubt, violent, and perverse. But, so much the better, since violence promotes our cause."—In regard to this apostle's lust, we have the assurances of Schusselburge, Bolsec, &c., that this was even "horrible." "Horrible things," says the former historian, "are objected to Calvin, on the score of his lust."—I might cite his cruel, and unjust, condemnation of Servetus, which induced Voltaire to say of him, that "his soul was savage." I might cite, too, a variety of his tenets, which are absolutely monstrous,—such as that, which declares, that God is the Author of sin;—such as that, which asserts, that God created man, for, the purpose of damning him;—such as that, which denies the existence of free-will.—These, again, are not the qualities, which wisdom would expect, or piety look for, in the character of a true reformer.*

* Speaking of Calvin's tenets, Bransby Cooper, in his "Letter," addressed, the other day, "to a Clergyman," says: "Calvin seems to have felt a diabolical satisfaction in vilifying his Creator. He says, "All men are not created in an equal condition; but eternal life is preordained to some; eternal damnation to others.—He governs his elect by his

Our Cranmer is the apostle of the church of England, —the man, to whom, beyond every other, it owes its propagation, and establishment; and to whom, therefore, every tribute of praise, and gratitude, has been, and is still daily, offered by the whole body of its defenders. He is revered, and described in the writings of these men, as “a saint; a martyr; a Cyril; an Anthanasius;”—in short, as a pastor, who, if ever surpassed at all, was surpassed only by the first, and greatest, heroes of the Christian church. “His virtues,” says Burnet, “were primitive, and apostolical: and he was the restorer of the primitive, and apostolic doctrine.” Such, in the eyes of the English protestant, was Cranmer. But, does he, then really deserve all these flattering commendations? I will only say this,—that the credulity, which has uttered; and the weakness which believes them, are very striking attestations both of the force of prejudice, and of the influence of partiality. He, most certainly, does not deserve those commendations. The few following facts, which are founded upon the plainest evidences of history, should suffice to prove it. For example, he stands convicted by the testimony of his own historians,—of the grossest *hypocrisy*; admitting in public, and publicly defending, the doctrines of catholicity, whilst yet, in private, he was protestant, and the disciple of Luther:—of *flattery*; for, he was the pander of the passions of his master, Henry, dissolving all his marriages,—or at least, three of them,—for no other reason than because their dissolution was gratifying to the tyrant’s lusts:—of *impurity*; for, he lived secretly, during the course of several years, in commerce with a woman, the sister of Osi-

Holy Spirit, and *compels* the compliances of the reprobate. To render them more convicted, and inexcusable, he insinuates himself into their minds, as far as his goodness can be tasted, without the spirit of adoption. They are raised up by the just, but inscrutable, judgment of God, to illustrate his glory, by their damnation.” The pen recoils with horror from the task of quoting these horrible blasphemies. There is nothing to be found in paganism, half so shocking. The ancient idolaters fell down before carved images of wood and stone. The Greeks, and Romans, imputed to their imaginary deities the bad passions, and evil propensities, of mankind. One was unchaste; another drunken; a third dishonest; a fourth cruel; and so on. All this is preposterous enough. But, it was reserved for the professors of Christianity to accuse *their* God of having created the greater part of mankind, on purpose to consign them to neverending torments.”

ander; whilst, also, at the same time, he pretended,—as, in fact, he had solemnly engaged,—to observe the laws of chastity:—of *cruelty*; for, he not only, with extreme ingratitude, sealed the warrant for the execution of Seymour; not only, as Hume remarks, “persuaded Edward to burn Joan Bocker, and Van Paris;” but, besides all this, gave his sanction to many other acts of violence, and persecution:—of *sacrilege*; for, as the friend of the Protector; and the head of the council, during the whole reign of Edward; he was the participator, and sharer, in those shameful profanations, for which that period was so pre-eminently remarkable:—of *treason*; for, he not only concurred in the attempt to exclude Mary, and Elizabeth, from the throne, but he publicly, and ardently, promoted the usurpation of Jane Grey:—in short, of *duplicity, and falsehood*, even in the last closing scene of life; for, when lying under sentence of death, he, in order to save his life, abjured very solemnly the protestant religion; and even called God to witness, that he did this, not prompted by any fear, or by the desire of any favour, but solely from the wish to discharge his conscience; and yet, he died, retracting all his retractations. And can wisdom, I again ask, pretend to canonise such a man, or believe him a real apostle?

Such, then, as these,—for, I need not present any farther specimens,—were the characters of the first founders of the protestant churches,—a set (as I have before said) of obscure, licentious, and discontented, individuals,—a host of monks, and priests, and friars, tired of the awkward restraints of chastity; and indulging themselves in all the voluptuousness of their newly-conquered liberty. So that Erasmus, designing to give a general notion of their conduct, describes them thus: “Give them but wine, and women, they care little or nothing about the rest.”—And yet, these men are still called apostles!

Having thus taken a superficial view of the first authors of protestantism,—of its “lights, and lamps,” as they are for ever called; and of its “pillars, and brightest ornaments,”—let us now, in like manner, just cast a glance upon the state of the churches, which they succeeded so rapidly in establishing. The state of these, since they were, professedly, “*reformations*,” ought, of course, to have been less tainted with corruption, than

was the parent church. Else, to have abandoned this, upon the alleged plea of its disorders, would be an apology, devoid of meaning.

And what, then, was the general state of the protestant churches, soon after their emancipation from the control of the church of Rome,—when, if renovated by the influences grace, they ought to have been the most remarkable for their holiness? Did they exhibit *then*, according to the import of their names, the spectacle of a “*reformation?*” Did they present the correction of those vices, and the cure of those disorders, which were so common, it was alleged, in the church of Rome; and upon whose account it was necessary, it was also proclaimed, for the faithful to abandon her communion? Was such the fact? Why fortunately, we have here again,—precisely as in the preceding case of the lives of the reformers, —the discription of all this, handed down to us, not only by a multitude of contemporary writers, but even by the very men, who, above all others, were interested to have represented (if possibly such representation could have been made) the beauties, and the benefits, of the new order of things.—Behold, therefore, the statements, which these men,—the very authors, and instruments, of the “important work,” —have given us, respecting its situation, at those times, when it ought to have been the most resplendant with the rays of sanctity. Melancton, describing the state of the reformed churches, says of them: “Speaking modestly, any other state of things, in any other age, presents the spectacle of an age of gold, when compared with the confusion, which the reformation has introduced.—The whole Elbe would not supply tears enough to bewail its miseries. The people will no longer bear the yoke, which their love of liberty has induced them to throw off. Our partisans fight, not for the gospel, but for power. Ecclesiastical discipline is annihilated. Men form doubts respecting the most essential truths. The evil is incurable. As for the public, their whole time is devoted to drunkenness, and intemperance; and the vulgar are sunk into ignorance, and barbarity.” (Ep. L. iv.) Even the works of Luther himself abound with passages to the same effect. “Men are now,” he says, “much more wicked, than when they were papists; and, through

the malice of the devil, more avaricious, more cruel, more disorderly," &c. In like manner, Musculus, one of the most ardent promoters of the Reformation, owns: "These professors of the Gospel are even more vicious, and disorderly, than were anciently the very pagans. And, if any one wishes to see a multitude of knaves, and disturbers of the public peace, let him go into a town, where the gospel is preached in its purity: there he will be sure to find them." (Dom. 1â Adv.)*

Neither were these evils confined to Germany alone, or Swisserland. They were the offsprings of every country, upon which "the blessed rays of the Reformation beamed,"—of this country, of France, of Holland, of Sweden, &c. For example, describing the state of the last-named country, its reformed clergy complain, as follows, in their public Liturgy, printed in the year 1570, and reprinted in 1588: "Men now love better to follow the dictates of their own passions, than to hear remonstrances. If you exhort them to go to confession, they reply: 'No one should be restricted.'—The apostles, and their disciples, had commanded men to fast, and pray, upon certain appointed days. But, if you

*It is in the confidential letters, which the reformers used, sometimes, to write to each other, that we may, perhaps, best, trace the sentiments, which those men really entertained of their own revolution, and the gloomy forebodings, with which they calculated its effects. So, for instance, it is thus, that Dudith writes to his dear friend, Beza: "Our people are carried about, here and there, by every wind of doctrine. To-day, it is possible, you may learn, what they think of religion: but no one can possibly tell, what their belief will be, to-morrow. On what single article do the churches agree, which have declared against the pope?—If you will give yourself the trouble to run through their articles, from the first to the last, you will not find one, but which, if admitted by some, is not equally anathematised by others."

Capito, the friend of Luther, and particularly so of Bucer, writes thus to the reformer, Farrel: "Since the credit of the clergy is no more, so, of course, all must end in confusion. There is not, now, the smallest order in society. I feel the great injury, we have done to the church by rejecting with so much imprudence, and precipitation, the authority of the pope. The people are, now, without any bridle, or restraint. They despise all authority; just as if by the abolition of the papacy, they had abolished all the power of the servants of God as well as all the force of the sacraments. Each one now calls out: "I have enough to conduct me; since I have a Bible. And having this, what need can I have of you, either to find out Christ, or to know his doctrine?"

ask them now, why they reject these ancient regulations, they answer: 'God wishes piety to be free.' So that thus, the suppression of exterior acts of piety has nearly destroyed all piety whatsoever."—The case, I have said, was similar also in this country. Indeed, it was, perhaps, still worse. For, our historians tell us, that not only did an "almost universal defection from piety take place,"—but, that corruption, in every bad form of passion,—of lust, avarice, licentiousness, intemperance, &c., prevailed every where,—in every path, and avenue, of society. Whence, the learned, and industrious, Dr. Chalmers, speaking of the general effect of the Reformation, observes: "The Reformation reformed men into vice."

In reality, all this was only natural. Neither will any one deny it, who will give himself the trouble to calculate impartially the nature of effects from the nature of causes. The Reformation was a revolution. It was a revolution: and its leading maxim was liberty; its chief instrument, violence. It was a storm, which, in its fury, broke down all the fences of authority, and the mounds of piety. It threw open the flood-gates of anarchy; and, of course, the tide of wickedness rushed in. "There are always," observes Erasmus, "a multitude of bad men, who, in order to produce evil, want nothing but the opportunity. Thus, let such a set of persons be allowed to tell the ignorant, and the young, that the pope is anti-christ; and that bishops, and priests, are mere phantoms, and lying spirits;—let them proclaim, that the doctrines of the church are falsehoods; and that the will is devoid of liberty;—let them tell the public, that it is quite immaterial what may be the nature of their works,—let them do this," (and this is precisely what the first reformers did) "and men must have lost their reason, if they do not see the consequences."—The obvious effect of the Reformation,—conducted as it was, and with such principles,—was, certainly, as Dr. Chalmers expresses it, "to reform men into vice."

Wherefore, since the corruptions of the Reformation were, at all events equally great, as were those of the church of Rome, (according to the above-cited testimonies, they were far greater) so it, consequently, follows, that to pretend to justify that schism, upon the alleged

score of the abominations of the latter establishment,—upon the pretext, that it is “the Babylon of the Revelations,”—is, surely, a very striking piece of inconsistency. If, indeed, it be true, that the corruptions of Babylon have ever already existed in any Christian society, I know no period, nor any society, in which impartiality might trace them more distinctly, than at the epoch, and amongst the members, of the Reformation. Whence, that saying, before quoted, of Melancton: “Speaking modestly, any other state of things, in any other age, presents the beauties of an age of gold, if it be compared with the disorders, introduced by the Reformation.”

Besides those grosser evils, which I have been alluding to, in the foregoing paragraphs, and which, as Bishop Hurd remarks, were considered as the best justification of “the important work,”—there are others, also, of an inferior magnitude, to which I have not referred; but, which, still, form the theme of incessant insult, and declamation, amongst the enemies of the parent church. They are certain *abuses*,—that alleged mass of superstitions; those acts of persecution and injustice; those impositions upon the credulity of the ignorant; those absurd practices, preposterous legends, and false devotions, —which prevail, it is said, so generally amongst the members of this communion.—However, there can be little or no necessity of my taking notice of these imputations, provided I have already shown sufficiently the emptiness of those, which are founded upon the supposed *corruptions* of this church. “To reason against religion,” says Montesquieu, “on account of its abuses, is miserable reasoning. Thus, if I wished to count up the evils, which the civil law, which monarchy, which republicanism, have produced, what a frightful tale could I not tell!” In reality, the circumstance of abuse, in any object, or institution whatsoever, forms, in the eyes of an enlightened man, little or no objection in its regard. Men abuse every thing; and, generally speaking, they abuse the best things, the most. They abuse liberty, speech, thought, the arts, the sciences, Christianity, and virtue itself. They abuse the food, which is given to nourish them; the strength, which is designed to sustain them,—and so on. In an immense society, therefore, like that of the catholic church, composed of men of eve-

ry form of character,—of the weak, and wicked, and ignorant, as well as of the wise, the good and learned.—that in such a society, there should exist abuses, and even very gross abuses, is a point, which, although it may afflict the piety, yet never surprises the reason, nor discomposes the faith, of the enlightened Christian. In such a society, great abuses are as natural, and as necessary, as great shades from great bodies.—Wherefore, in relation to the long series of abuses, which I have just enumerated, and which are so triumphantly urged against the catholic church,—greatly as they are to be lamented, and censured; and sometimes pitied.—yet are they not of such a nature, as to present any substantial grounds, either for apostacy, or for schism. They are disorders, which have prevailed,—and, if you will, which still prevail,—in this church: but, they are not the disorders of this church. They form no parts of its laws, of its doctrines, or of its constitution. They are neither approved by its councils, nor sanctioned by its authority. On the contrary, they are evils, or follies, which it condemns severely. In short, they are those “tares,” which, notwithstanding all the industry of the most diligent husbandman, will, for ever, in the exuberant field of this life, grow up, and spread, mixed with “the good grain.” They are those “scandals,” which our divine Redeemer has said, “should necessarily come.”*

* There are no objects, against which our English writers direct their eloquence, and declamation, more frequently, and with more effect, than against the two following,—*the superstitions* of popery, and its spirit of *persecution*. Against these they inveigh incessantly:—holding up the former to the sneer of public ridicule; and thundering against the latter, with all the severity of inflamed indignation. The descriptions, in particular, of popish superstitions form, perhaps, the most prominent, and striking feature in the generality of our modern publications,—not of the works of theology alone, but of books of every kind—histories, biography, novels, voyages, travels, &c. These are, nearly all of them, full of tales, and stories, and anecdotes, and gossip,—delightful, and charming things!—the most childishly ridiculous, and the most pitifully absurd. Knowing the taste of the public, it is thus, that the enlightened authors of these enlightened productions endeavour,—and are sure,—to gratify it;—thus, that they awaken interest, and excite curiosity;—and thus that they ensure a ready sale for works, which, without this beloved seasoning, would be absolutely insipid, and remain unread. I only wonder sometimes, how men of real talents can ever be induced to stoop to so mean, and miserable, a trick.

There are superstitions in the catholic church. True. But, are there not superstitions likewise in the protestant churches? I am, in-

Thus, then, I have presented to the protestant reader those principal apologies, by which the advocates of the Reformation have attempted to justify that schism. It is not for me to say, what sensations my observations, and the various facts, and authorities, which I have stated, may possibly have produced in his mind. This is a circumstance, which must have depended upon the degrees of candor, and prudence, with which they have been attended to. However, I cannot help thinking

deed, sure of this, that, if the men, who inveigh so loudly against popish superstitions, would look attentively at those, which prevail in their own communities,—if they would judge without partiality; and “remove from the eye that beam,” which blinds it,—they would in this case, tracing acts, and scenes, the most disgusting and reprehensible,—hush their declamation, and suspend their censures. The fact most certainly is,—and every well-instructed, if candid, protestant will own it,—that there prevail in this country, in Scotland, and in Wales, amongst immense portions of the public, superstitions far more criminal, and sometimes more ridiculous, than any of those, which are practised by the insulted catholic,—superstitions, which consist, not like those of the latter, of preposterous acts of well-meant piety, but of acts, not unfrequently, the most irreligious, and profane. “It is clear to me,” says a very zealous protestant, Mr. Dallas, “that the Reformation has generated the most absurd superstitions. And I cannot conceive, that there is a man of unbiassed mind, and good sense, who would not rather embrace all, that has been retrenched from the catholic creed, than adopt, the spurious abominations, and blasphemies, which, every where, disgrace the world.”—If there be any portion of this empire, that is free from superstition, I will venture to assert it,—it is the English catholics. The English catholic (and I challenge the most inquisitive protestant to investigate the fact);—the English catholic, who is well-instructed in his religion, practices no superstitions:—proof this, that superstition is no part of our religion: for, no catholics are more truly catholic than are the English catholics.

The catholics have been persecutors. Be it so. But have not, then, the protestants been persecutors too? If, indeed, the reproach of persecution can, with justice, be imputed to any church, or nation, it is to protestant England. The necessity of persecution was even long one of its established tenets. “It was inculcated,” says M’Crie, “as one of the most sacred of Christian duties.” And, then look at its penal code against popery. It is more barbarous far, and far more horrible, than were ever the frightful laws, either of a Nero, or a Domitian. “It was savage,” says Burke, “as any thing, that ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.” I say nothing of its execution. The history of its execution is dreadful. “Even in the ten persecutions,” observes Dr. Johnson, “there is no instance of such severity as the protestants in Ireland have exercised over the catholics.” The case in England was but a trifle better. Whence, Bayle himself in his “Avis aux Réfugiés,” says: “The English are more superstitious, and far more intolerant, than the papists. They, who declaim so loudly against the Inquisition, have, nevertheless, by a series of laws, enacted with full deliberation, surpassed, both the barbarity, and the iniquity, of that tribunal. The Inquisition, even in its cruelties, supposes forms;

this,—that, where they have been attended to, with candor, they must, in the minds of the thoughtful, have produced some serious feelings. They must, I conceive, at all events, have awakened *doubts*. For, I have shown, upon the testimonies of the best protestant writers, that the church of Rome, notwithstanding all its alleged errors, and corruptions; retained, at the era of the Reformation, its divine character; and was still, acknowledgedly, the only true church of Christ. But if so, was it not, then, wrong to leave it?

But, having done this, I will now proceed to the discussion of another part of my subject, which is not less important than the preceding. It is a question, too, which, like the preceding, is to the protestant replete with difficulties. I allude to the defence, or to those various systems, which are employed by the different sects of the Reformation, in order to explain, and prove, the supposed delegation of their respective pastors. For, although it were even true, that there did exist, at the time of the Reformation, sufficient motives to have justified the protestant churches for having separated themselves from the parent institute,—still, unless it can be moreover proved, that the pastors of these new establishments have been really “sent,” and commissioned, by the divine authority to replace the catholic ministry—their pretensions ought, in such case, to appear,—as they are,—completely groundless, and unsatisfactory. How interesting, therefore, is again this subject; and how well deserving all the attention of the prudent protestant!

and admits differences, both in crimes, and in punishments. What it punishes, is not so much the misfortune of having adopted an erroneous worship, as the obstinacy of persisting in it. The first falls are punished only by ecclesiastical penances. And it calls in the secular-arm only against determined relapsers. Its first maxims are to be sparing of human blood, by the correction of error. And what the passions of its ministers have added as defective in practice, is not in the spirit of the institution. But, in England, the proscription of popery; and the punishment of death, pronounced against its ministers, admit neither modification, nor abatement. Let a catholic priest be only convicted of having exercised any one of his functions, he is at once condemned, and sent to the gallows. A catholic priest may, no doubt, abstain from saying mass in London. But, the law, which attaches an ignominious punishment to such an action, is, surely, a law, far worse than inquisitorial. And it ill becomes those, who made it; and whose religion presents gibbets, as the reward of an indiscreet zeal, to find fault with *the Carochas*, and *the Sanbenitos*, of the *Auto-da-fé*.”

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE GROUNDS OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES.—
FIRST, ON THE GROUNDS OF THE REFORMATION.

“The ministry of things divine is a function, which God himself did institute. So neither may men undertake the same, but by authority, and power, given them in a lawful manner.”—HOOKER, ECCL. POL.

It was on account of the infinite importance of the pastoral ministry, and of the necessity of ascertaining that, which, *alone*, is divine, that the wisdom of God, in the sacred Scriptures; and the tenderness of our Redeemer, amongst his various instructions, have so often cautioned the public upon this subject. It is hence, that we are forewarned, so urgently, “to beware of false prophets, and false teachers; and not to give credit to every spirit:”—hence, that Christ bade the Jews “not even to believe in him, unless he did the works of his Father,”—that is, unless he established by the plainest proofs the absolute certainty of his own divine commission.—Similar, too, to these were the admonitions, which we, every where, find in the writings, and addresses, of the holy Fathers, whenever there was question of the artifices of schism, and innovation,—cautioning, upon these occasions, their respective flocks to be carefully upon their guard; to beware of the threatening danger; and to ascertain, with prudence, the claims, and titles, of the bold intruder. Indeed, such, upon such occasions, is the palpable necessity of doing this, that even the very reformers themselves,—reluctantly, no doubt,—have acknowledged it. Thus, Luther—when his disciple, Carlostadt had begun to out-reform his master,—not only reproached the insolence of so much daring, but, he call-

ed upon him loudly to produce,—as otherwise undeserving of any credit,—the testimonials of his divine commission.—“Nothing,” says Beza, “is, in religion, half so pernicious as to allow each one, who pretends to be enlightened by the word of God, to preach, and to form new congregations. It is an act of licentiousness, of all others, the most criminal. It is the crime of the libertines; and of those false prophets, who have excited every where so much confusion; intruding themselves, every where, without any real commission.”

At the opening, therefore, of the sixteenth century, when Luther, and his associates, and ere long, a multitude of other teachers, and reformers, came forward to introduce a new order of things into the church,—the first questions, which the prudence of the public ought at once to have put to them,—and which, also, every prudent protestant should put to them still—are these:—“Who sent you? Where are your credentials? Show us your charter; or at least, present to us some proof or other, that your alleged commission is divine.” Such are the questions, which the faithful ought then to have put to those pretended apostles. They are the questions, which, upon the occasion of the introduction of any innovation, the good sense of every thoughtful Christian should never fail to put to the bold intruder, who is endeavouring to seduce him. Without this precaution, simplicity is rendered easily the dupe of hypocrisy; and even piety itself, the victim of fanaticism.

Accordingly, conducted by these maxims, a multitude of prudent individuals did, it is true, at the time of the Reformation, propose the above, and such like, questions to Luther, and his associates; calling upon these men,—since they declared themselves to be the envoys of God,—to shew their testimonials; or to give some proof or other of their awful designation. This was the case, of course, particularly with many of the ancient pastors, as well as with a considerable number of the more enlightened portions of the public; insomuch that the subject became then, and continued long, the leading point, that attracted, and engaged, attention. It was the point, to which the catholic directed all the force of controversy; and which the protestant defended with equal animation, and with all that ingenuity, which art,

and artifice, and learning, could devise. In short, being *then* the most important of all other subjects; and “the question of questions,” as it was called,—so it, hence, awakened all the talents, and excited all the ardor, both of the catholic, and of the protestant. It called forth from each party innumerable publications.

In order to reply to the questions of the catholics,—“Who sent you?” &c.,—or to explain the grounds of their new churches, the reformers, and after them, a multitude of the defenders of the protestant cause, have had recourse, not to one plain, and simple, argument,—which ought to have been the case, on a subject so vitally momentous,—but to a variety of perplexing subterfuges, and systems, which,—if sometimes artful, are completely irreconcilable with each other. It is not, however, my intention,—neither is the thing, now, necessary,—to enumerate them all. I will state only the few following ones,—to which, indeed, the others may easily be referred, as being, either more or less subordinate; or else, sometimes, immediately dependent on them.

The first of the systems, by which the reformers undertook to reply to the questions of the catholic, and to explain the grounds of their newly assumed authority,—was to maintain, that *the mission of Luther was EXTRAORDINARY*. This was the first defence of the protestant cause; the argument, by which its leaders most strenuously sustained its interests; and by which, with such astonishing success, they triumphed over the credulity of the public. Inculcated with the most daring confidence; and having also, at the same time, a variety of other motives to second, and support, its influence,—it, hence, produced, every where, effects, the most rapid, and instantaneous.

The second system was this:—A considerable portion of the followers of Luther began, ere, long, to entertain, serious doubts, respecting this apostle’s presumed delegation. They became, therefore, now unwilling to consider it, or to assign it, either as the grounds of the new pastoral power, or as the foundation of the new establishments. Wherefore, in their great ingenuity, they invented the following device: They contended, that “there had indeed always, and in every age, existed a true church of Christ on earth; and a church even, which had constant-

ly possessed a set of lawful pastors, invested with apostolic powers. But then, this church," they added, "and these pastors, were, both of them, until the time of the Reformation, *invisible*: or if, indeed, the latter were occasionally known to each other, such privilege was rare,—the effect of an extraordinary light, imparted in an extraordinary manner, to a very small number of highly favoured individuals." Such was the second pretext. It was, for some time, a very favourite one,—maintained by a multitude of the most eminent abettors of the Reformation, by Calvin, Jewell, Napper, Boucher, &c.; and subsequently, by many other protestant writers, in almost every sect, and country. The great reason, why they adopted the strange, intangible, and Platonic, notion, was this,—that, besides being dissatisfied with the alleged claims of Luther, they were perplexed to conceive, how, without such a plea, they could possibly pretend to vindicate their right to separate from a visible church, which, at the same time, was allowed (for, the reformers, nearly all, allowed this, in relation to the church of Rome) to be the true church. This they deemed inconsistent. They, therefore, declared, that the true church, and its lawful pastors, had been, for many ages before, *invisible*.

Condemning both the above systems,—the former, as groundless; and the latter, as a piece of nonsense,—there now came forward a set of men, of more moderate, and apparently more rational, principles, who adopted a defence, very different from either of the preceding ones. They maintained, that their pastoral commission is the *ordinary* one,—that same divine delegation, which Christ had originally conferred upon his own apostles. But, here occurred the difficulty:—it was, to explain by what means they had come into its possession. Here, upon this point, they were divided into two very different classes; making out of *one*, nominally the same, system, *two* very opposite systems. By one portion of these men it was contended, that the commission, once granted by our Redeemer, had been, long since, forfeited, and lost, by the pastors of the catholic church; but, that it had been carefully preserved, and handed down to the era of the Reformation, by the pastors of certain societies, which had been cut off, at various periods, from her com-

munion. Such, they said, were the Albigenses, the Vaudois, the Wickliffites, and Hussites. To these, therefore, they linked themselves; pretending to have inherited from them the *ordinary* apostolical prerogatives.—By the other party it was declared, on the contrary, that the *ordinary* pastoral delegation, so far from having been forfeited, or lost, by the ministers of the catholic church, had been always, by them, carefully preserved, and regularly transmitted down to the sixteenth century. Therefore, it was from these, they asserted, that they had received the divine inheritance;—declaring solemnly, that it was solely upon this ground; that they now undertook to erect the fabrics of their newly reformed religion. Amongst the defenders of this opinion the most ardent were,—and are still,—the members of the church of England.

Again, dissatisfied with all the above pretensions, there rose up, soon, another society of men,—and these, too, some of the most learned advocates of the Reformation,—who proposed a method of arrogating to themselves the pastoral delegation, which is very different from any of the preceding ones. They asserted, that this important prerogative is vested, not in the hands of any established prelacy, or priesthood, but *solely in those of the PEOPLE*: and, that, consequently, what alone renders men the real pastors of the faithful, and the ministers of God's sacraments, is *the election, or sanction, of the people*. This was the opinion,—and so it is still,—of nearly all the Calvinistic sects. In the Synod of Gap, it was so strongly insisted upon by the members, assembled there, that, after having decided, that no other method of claiming, or explaining, the pastoral mission, could, possibly be defended,—they decreed, as follows,—“that none of their societies should, for the future, upon any account, allege either the ordinary, or the successive, delegation of pastors, as the source of spiritual power; seeing that this, in relation to the recent protestant ministry, is a pretence, too bold to be defended; or a fable, too preposterous to be appealed to.”

I will cite but one other method of attempting to explain the awful difficulty. It is that which, above all at present, is become very general in this country,—the favourite system of immense portions of its simple, and

sincere, but greatly deluded, members. It consists in this,—that the real basis of all pastoral power is founded, not upon any *external* call; nor yet upon any external principle whatsoever, but solely upon the *inward call of the Holy Ghost, and the internal workings, and impulses, of the Spirit*. Such as these are the notions of all those enthusiasts, and fanatics; as well as of nearly all those sects of dissenters, who now form the largest portion of this nation; crowding all its paths; and threatening, ere long, to destroy,—as they are certainly rapidly undermining,—the fabric of the established church.

Thus I have stated, in general terms, what those leading pretensions are, by which the advocates of the Reformation have attempted, and attempt still, to account for the pastoral commission, or grounds, of its various churches. To the protestant, who considers the subject seriously, there is much, I conceive, that ought to strike him forcibly. He thus remarks, that all is perplexity, and contradiction, where the beam of evidence, and the ray of truth; ought essentially to be the brightest. He sees all the learning, and wisdom, of protestantism at variance with each other. He sees its most illustrious heroes, and distinguished writers, opposed mutually to one another;—not only, on some occasions, refuting one another; but even treating, as nonsense, and as fables, what some of them revere, as the most vital, and sacred, truths. The fact most certainly is, that the subject,—although, of all others, the most interesting,—is, perhaps, of all others, to the protestant, replete with the greatest difficulties:—insomuch that there is not one single method of explaining the alleged grounds of the protestant churches, adopted by any one sect of the Reformation, which is not, at the same time, rejected by the great majority of the others.—But, I will now proceed to make a few observations upon each of the systems, separately.

The first argument, as I have been stating, by which the reformers undertook,—and many of their defenders undertake still,—to vindicate the grounds of their reformed churches, is the bold pretext, that *the commission of Luther, &c. was EXTRAORDINARY*;—that, selected by the divine wisdom, and mercy, this man was immediately deputed to supersede the established pastors of the church, and to organise a fresh ministry, which, by the influences

of its new authority, might take upon itself the charge of conducting the faithful, and of calling back religion from its fallen, and degraded, state. This was, undoubtedly, the first, and great, claim of the arch reformer himself; and the only basis, upon which, both he, and his associates, pretended to found the whole justification of the revolution, which they were labouring to effect. "Open thine eyes," exclaimed emphatically the daring hero,— "open thine eyes, poor Germany. Behold, it is I, that am sent unto thee; commissioned to bring back to thee the light of heaven. I am the evangelist, sent by God for the salvation of the world. Whosoever obeys not *me*, despises Christ. All, that I teach, is the truth. All have been blind, but myself. I know, I have the spirit of Christ, by which I can judge all, but none can judge me. I will have no judge;—nothing but submission." These, and such as these, were the arguments, expressed incessantly in language like the above,—by which this revolutionist arrogated to himself the right of governing the faithful.

Neither were they peculiar to Luther. They were also the very arguments, and even the only arguments, by which, for some time, and until the first surprise had begun to subside,—the friends of the innovation had the confidence to presume to defend it. They were the arguments, employed by Melancton, Corlostadt, Bucer, &c.;—the arguments of our own English reformers,—Cranmer, Jewell, Whitaker, Fulke, &c. These men, in the effusions of their admiration, describe Luther as "a second Elias; a second Baptist; another Paul; the mouth of God; the trumpet of the Holy Ghost."—They were the arguments, which even Calvin, Zuinglius, &c., for some time, (for they, ere long, condemned him) pressed forcibly upon the public mind, as the best defence of the new order of things. "Luther," says Calvin, "is indeed the apostle of Christ, deputed by the Holy Ghost." In short, they are the arguments, which the reader, if he please, may find repeated in the works of half of our own protestant writers. These men, even still, denominate the hero, "heaven-born; heaven-sent; heaven-taught; the very voice, and agent, of the Holy Ghost." They do this incessantly: whilst at the same time, by a strange piece of inconsistency, they reject the

man's religion. But, the case is,—“the hero of every revolt is always a saint to the revolted.”

After a certain interval, indeed, when the first surprise created by the boldness of the arch-apostle, had begun somewhat to abate,—a few individuals, who, like the crowd, had been the dupes of their own credulity, began now,—since they could trace no evidences of the alleged investiture,—to entertain doubts of its reality; to speak out even their suspicions of the fact; and to suggest, that,—considering the nature of the Christian church, and the character of its pastoral ministry, it would be more prudent, as well as more consistent, in the reformers to lay claim only to *an ordinary* commission, transmitted to them by the catholic priesthood, through the medium of holy orders. This idea,—which was afterwards adopted by the English church,—was, now, inculcated by a few timid, and more thoughtful, friends of the Reformation. But see, how, indignant, and astonished, at the proposal, Beza comes forward to reprobate it. “What!” he exclaims “and shall any one believe, that these popish ordinations, which are nothing else but an infamous commerce with the whore of Babylon, and which God has forbidden to be admitted into his temple—shall any one believe, that these are good for any thing? With what mouth; with what face; with what conscience, is it possible for the protestant to pretend to have renounced popery, if he have not, at the same time, renounced these empty ordinations!”—The only rational method this man, accordingly, declared, by which the now order of things could consistently be defended; and the faithful be lawfully withdrawn from the direction of their ancient pastors,—was to maintain, that the mission of Luther, and his coadjutors, was *extraordinary*,—the effect of an extraordinary interposition of God's mercy, in favour of his “abandoned, and degraded, creatures.”

Neither was this opinion peculiar, either to the first authors of the Reformation; or to the disciples and followers, of Luther. At a period, long subsequent to that, which I have just referred to, the notion was adopted,—not, indeed, as a mere *notion*, but absolutely as *an article of faith*,—that the only pretext, by which the ministers of the reformed churches could justify, with any thing like consistency, the liberty, which they had assumed,

of preaching, and administering the sacraments, was "*an extraordinary vocation.*" Thus, the Synod of Gap, delivering its sentiments upon the momentous subject, decrees, (in language the most uncouth) as follows: "There being question concerning the vocation of our first pastors, and their authority to reform the church; or else, to teach, in consequence of the mission, which they had received from the church of Rome,—the Synod decides,—that upon these points, men should be regulated by the article of an *extraordinary vocation*, by which God pushed them, in an *extraordinary manner*, into the ministry; and not by any little remains of an ordinary vocation from the church of Rome."—Such is the determination of an assembly, composed, according to the testimony of the writers of the party, of men distinguished for their talents, and erudition.—There were, also, several other Synods, which issued the same kind of declaration. The following passage, however, extracted from the thirty-first article of the Calvinistic Confession, may suffice to point out, what the general sentiments were of the Calvinistic churches in relation to this subject. "We believe," says the article, "that no one ought to intrude himself, of his own authority, to govern the church. But, in our time, the state of the church has been interrupted. And God has, *in an extraordinary manner*, raised up men to erect it anew."

Thus the reader sees, that it was not merely Luther, and a few of his associates, that have defended the claim of an extraordinary mission, as the real basis of the Reformation, and as the grounds of its various churches:—but, such, also, he has equally remarked, was the fixed, and coolly-determined opinion of nearly all the wisdom of protestantism,—that is, of all its first apostles; and of its early Calvinistic sects. The case was this;—Those men had considered well; and seriously compared together, the greater, and the less, conveniences,—or rather, the greater, and the less, inconveniences,—to which they should expose themselves, by laying claim to an ordinary, or to an extraordinary, mission. They weighed the great subject carefully. And after mature deliberation, they concluded, that, whilst the claim of an extraordinary mission was, beyond any other, the best calculated to strike the public, it was also, at the

same time, *the most specious, and the most consistent.* It was, they conceived, *the most specious:* because to pretend to lay claim to an *ordinary* mission from the church, against which they had rebelled; which condemned them; and which they condemned equally,—to lay claim to any delegation from such a church,—this, they had the good sense to feel, was both inexplicable, and absurd. It was too,—they likewise felt,—*the most consistent:*—because having loudly declared, that the church was sunk in idolatry, in heresy, and corruption, they, hence, inferred, that, as she could not, in such case, herself enjoy any lawful power, so she could not, of course, impart it. Their inference was logical, and correct: and completely conformable to the doctrine of the holy Fathers, who, all of them, contend, that no idolatrous church, nor yet any heretical church, can possibly enjoy the sacred privilege of a lawful mission. This is repeatedly urged by St. Cyprian, in his replies to the Donatists; by St. Jerome, in his refutation of the Luciferians; by St. Athanasius, and St. Hilary, in their controversy with the Arians. “How,” says the former, “can men pretend to be pastors, if the persons, from whom they had received their consecration, were heretics?”—It was for these reasons, therefore, that the first protestants, nearly all of them, maintained, that if their pastors, did enjoy any divine commission, it was not an ordinary. but an *extraordinary, one.**

What the nature of an extraordinary commission is; and what are the evidences, by which it may be ascertained,—these are points, so plain, and obvious, that it must appear almost superfluous to undertake to explain them. If, indeed, I do so, it shall be, merely for the

* This, to the members of our established Church above all, ought, I think, to appear peculiarly obvious. For, in their Book of Homilies—which “contains,” says the thirty-nine articles, “a Godly doctrine,”—it is solemnly declared, that, “for eight hundred years, and more, the whole world was buried in idolatry.” In this case, and in so frightful a state of things, when truth, piety, and religion, must have been lost,—and lost even for such an immeasurable length of ages,—to imagine, that the divine commission of the priesthood had, alone, remained, unimpaired, and perfect,—this, to me, as it did to the first reformers, appears preposterous, and inconsistent. Like all other holy things, this sacred object must, in such case, have perished in the general shipwreck. And I wonder greatly, how any individual, who believes in the “Godly Book of Homilies,” can possibly believe the contrary.

sake of a few less instructed readers.—An *extraordinary commission*, then as the word itself expresses, is a commission, or investiture of authority, derived,—in the language of St. Paul,—“not of men, nor by men,” but immediately from God himself; having, for its design, some signal benefit to mankind,—either to recal lost piety; to re-establish anew the decayed, and violated, order of religion; or to impart some fresh, and important, blessing. Such, and for the sake of such objects as these, were those delegations, which, in the effusions of his mercy, God has, on several occasions, imparted to some of his holy servants. Such was that of the prophets; such, that of Moses; such, that of our divine Redeemer; and such, likewise, that of the first apostles. The commission, which, upon each of the above occasions, was given to each of the above personages, was *extraordinary*; —“not of men, nor by men;” but immediately, “of, and by, God.”

The character of an extraordinary mission being thus understood to be the effect of an unusual interposition of the divine wisdom, and mercy,—it, of course, must appear obviously to follow, that, in order to engage men to admit it,—or lest they should unfortunately reject it,—there ought to exist certain marks, or evidences, to point it out,—certain testimonials to prove, that the individual, or individuals, who lay claim to the grand prerogative, are not impostors, sporting with the public credulity; nor fanatics, seduced by their own passions, or conceits,—but really the persons, whom they call themselves,—the true envoys of the Almighty. The proofs, indeed, in such cases,—so vast is their importance,—ought to be peculiarly clear;—so clear, that men cannot, without imprudence, reject them; or rather, such,—so full, and manifest,—as to compel the reasonable mind to admit them. All this is but the dictate of common sense. And accordingly, it is what, we find, has always taken place, upon every occasion, whenever God has been pleased to grant to any of his servants the honour of an extraordinary deputation. He always, upon each of those occasions, took care,—as, in his wisdom, he was bound to do,—to furnish the favoured envoy with the most ample, and incontestable, testimonials, that his delegation was from above;—conferring upon him, for this

purpose, along with a variety of other graces, some striking, and particular gift,—the gift, for example, of prophecy, or the power of performing miracles. It was thus recommended, that he sent his prophets; thus, that he deputed Moses; thus, that he conciliated belief to the first apostles. It was thus even, and only thus, that he recommended, and enforced, the mission of his own Eternal Son. For, when this great Being appeared amongst men, as their Redeemer; and as the Delegate of his Father,—he appealed, in proof of these facts, not to his own testimony, and word, but to the works alone, and to the wonders, which he performed. “If,” he said, “I bear witness of myself, my testimony is not true. It is *the works*, which bear witness of me, that my Father hath sent me.”

So obvious, indeed, are these principles, that, although both the reformers, and their advocates, were particularly interested, if not to deny, at least to contest them, yet did they never presume to do either. They were admitted by Luther, Calvin, Melancton, &c., who, each of them, allow, that no man should pretend to arrogate to himself the honour of an extraordinary mission, unless he can prove it clearly; and prove it even by the attestation of *a miracle*. So that, when, ere long,—after the first successes of Luther,—Muncer boldly took upon himself to reform the reformation of that apostle, indignant at the act of insolence, the latter exclaimed: “If God has really sent him, let him prove it by a miracle: because it is always thus, that God declares himself, whenever he alters the ordinary form of mission.”—Such, too, is the general sentiment of protestant wisdom. “I cannot think,” says Tillotson, “that any pretence of conscience warrants any man, that is not extraordinarily commissioned, as the first apostles, and first preachers of the Gospel, were; and cannot justify that commission by miracles, as they did, to affront the established religion of a nation.”—“Whenever,” says Mr. Sykes, “God hath granted an extraordinary commission, he hath uniformly empowered his servants to give the world ample satisfaction upon this point, by granting the power of performing miracles.—So that should any clergyman pretend to a call from heaven, we have the same right to put that question to him, which the Jews put to our blessed

Saviour : ‘ What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing, thou doest these things?’ Now, if any man, pretending to an extraordinary commission, will suddenly cure the sick; at a word, call the dead again to life, &c.—then we can no longer withhold our belief.” Such as this is the language of all enlightened protestants;—as in fact, it is but the suggestion, I have said already, of common sense. For, if men,—if the artful, the fanatic, the enthusiast, &c., proclaiming themselves the envoys of heaven, or the pastors of the faithful,—were to be believed, upon no other testimony but their own declaration, how soon would there be an end to all truth, piety, and religion?

Wherefore,---these principles admitted,---what now remains to be done is simply to make the application of them to Luther, and his cooperators.—This, again, is a point, which, besides being curious is also highly interesting to the protestant. For, if thus it be ascertained, that those men were not invested with any mission;—if it be proved, that they were impostors, and false prophets,—then should he,—if consistent and prudent,—conclude, that the Reformation was guilty of schism; and its churches, the sinful violations of the order of Christian unity. Hence,—every partiality, and prejudice, laid aside,—let him consider the important question, with calmness, and attention.

According to the declarations, then, both of Luther, and of the other early reformers, the commission of these men was *extraordinary*: and it was solely in virtue of this prerogative, that they took upon themselves (they solemnly protested) the great work of altering the established order of religion. Wherefore, the consequence, as I have just shown, must be,—that, if they did really enjoy that honourable distinction, they ought, of course, like all other similar envoys, to exhibit those testimonials of it, which prudence cannot mistake.

The first testimonial, I have observed, of an *extraordinary* commission, both as confirmed by experience, required by common sense, and exacted even by protestant writers,—is the evidence of *miracles*. They are the criterions, by which, upon every occasion of such deputation, the divine wisdom has thought proper to recommend it.—And did Luther, therefore, or any of his confederates, present these criterions, in testimony of their

alleged commission? Did they, any of them, call back the dead to life?—give hearing to the deaf, or sight to the blind? In short, did they do any thing, that could be wisely deemed a miracle? Remonstrating with them, the catholics used to say: “You pretend to be invested with a new, and divine commission: and the fact may be such. But then, pray give us some proof to show it. When the prophets, and apostles, were thus deputed, we know, that they exhibited the most striking attestations of the reality of *their* commission. They opened, and shut, the heavens; they instantly cured the sick; nay, they, in some instances, performed even greater miracles, than did Jesus Christ himself. Therefore, if you be the men, whom you represent yourselves to be;—*if you are indeed* the extraordinary envoys, and ambassadors, of God,—then only evince it, in the same way in which all others have done, before you. Else, do not wonder, if we disbelieve you; and reject you, as mere impostors.” Thus did the prudence of many catholics reason with these men. And it is thus, that the prudence of every protestant ought to reason with them, still.

Did, then, Luther, or his confederates, perform any miracles?—Alas! we have here a very striking attestation, how easy it is for art, and cunning, and violence, to deceive, and excite, the public;—and, how easy, still more,—when they have thus imposed upon them,—to lead them on to any thing.—No; they did not perform any miracles. “They did not even,” says Erasmus, ridiculing their pretensions, and laughing at the credulity of their followers,—“they did not even so much as cure a lame horse.” In reality, good, modest, men,—although this is, perhaps, the only instance of their modesty,—they did not pretend to the honour of working miracles. Upon these accounts, therefore, it was, that, ere long, a considerable number of their adherents,—men, who had been seduced by their professions, and misled by their artifices,—seeing, that they gave no proofs of their boasted mission; that they wrought no miracles, where miracles were so essential,—abandoned their society; and returned again to that church, which they had deserted too inconsiderately. This was the case, in particular with the celebrated Puccius, who, having waited, a great while, for miracles, but finding

none, became, at last, convinced, that the reformers were a set of mere impostors; and their pretended mission, a bold piece of cunning, adopted solely for the purpose of imposing upon the ignorant, and the weak.

The next criterion, which, after that of miracles, is designed to point out an extraordinary delegation from the Almighty to his creatures, is the character of the individual, or individuals, whom he thus commissions. It is, no doubt, evident, that, on an occasion, where there is question of establishing virtue; and above all, of recalling lost religion, it would be worse than preposterous to imagine, that God would, or even could, employ, as his chosen instruments, men, that are corrupted, and immoral. This would be an inversion of order; and a violation of every rule of decency. It would be repugnant to every notion, which we entertain of the divine sanctity, and wisdom; and destructive of the very end, for which it was supposed to have been designed. The lives of the agents, upon such occasions, corresponding with the holiness of their task, ought essentially to be unimpeachable, if not sanctified. At least, they should not be such as to disgrace the sacred charge, with which they declare themselves intrusted. All these are propositions, so very palpable, that it would be a waste of time to undertake to prove them.

Accordingly, let us now apply them to the authors of the Reformation. Actions speak a language, which all, even the most ignorant, understand. Well; and what, therefore, was the conduct of the first authors of protestantism? What, for example,—for, this is the most important circumstance,—what was the conduct, and character, of Luther? Was this boasted apostle really distinguished, as all the extraordinary messengers of heaven have been, by the splendor of his virtues, and the sanctity of his life? I need not here reply to this question; because I have done so already, in the preceding chapter. I will only, therefore, say, that, both according to his own acknowledgments,—which I have cited,—and the testimonies of his own disciples, he, most certainly, was not distinguished for his virtues. *Not*, as he owns himself, *for his chastity*: he even describes himself, “as mad almost with the flames of lust.”—Not for his *humility*: he boasts, that “his pride is equal to that of

the devil.”—Not for his *meeckness*: “his asperity,” says Mosheim, “was absolutely brutal.” “Nay,” adds Roscoe, “the very appearance of moderation in the man was but a symptom of approaching, and increasing, violence.”—Not for his *piety*: himself informs us, that “he had frequent conferences with the prince of darkness;” from whom, he likewise tells us, he learnt his leading doctrines, relating to the Holy Eucharist.—Not for his *consistency*: nothing can be more incoherent than his various creeds. The divines of Zurich, taking notice of this, have observed, that, on the single article of the Eucharist, he had maintained six and thirty different systems. “The devil,” says Zuinglius, “strives to get possession of the man; and it is not an uncommon thing to see him contradict himself in every page of his writings; whilst to see him in the midst of his followers, you would think him possessed by a whole phalanx of devils.”—Not, of course, *for the truth of his doctrines*: his doctrines, besides being, many of them, false, are, at the same time, some of them, preposterous, and immoral. Such is that, for example, which,—in order to do away the catholic motive of praying for the dead,—denies the immortality of the soul; contending, that, by a new operation, God will, hereafter, create the body and soul, anew. “Dreadful shift!” observes D’Israeli, “for a man, who pretended to be guided by divine inspiration.”—Not for the *temperance of his language*: nothing can possibly be more insolent, and disgusting. Never, perhaps, did passion, or the wild licentiousness of any imagination, carry scurrility, and indecency, to a greater length than he did.—In short, says Erasmus, in one of his letters to Sadolet, speaking of Luther.—“such is the man’s general character, that his very disciples, disgusted at it, begin to grow tired of him; and to declare, that he is, not only devoid of the spirit of the Gospel, but abandoned to the delirium of his passions.” Such was Luther. And if any one can seriously believe him to have been the *extraordinary envoy of heaven*, I can only say this,—that he possesses, himself, a very *extraordinary* degree of *extraordinary* credulity.

It is not necessary for me to attempt to delineate the character of the rest of the reformers, in order to make it appear, that those men were not, upon the score of

their virtues, any more than their master, entitled to be looked upon as the extraordinary delegates of heaven. The reason is,—that, if the commission of Luther were not an extraordinary one,—so neither, of course, was theirs. For, theirs,—they had the candor to admit,—was entirely dependent upon his. They acted, but as his assistants, and co-operators,—supported by his authority, and conducted by his direction. So that if the reader be once convinced, that the pretensions of this man were groundless, then it is superfluous to attempt to prove to him, that the claims also of his fellow-labourers were equally so. For this reason, I will not even etch their portraits. I will only make this general reflection on them,—that, in relation to the circumstances of moral character, the features of nearly all the first reformers were very strikingly alike,—very similar to those of their chief conductor. They, nearly all, resembled him, in intemperance, in lust, in violence, in inconsistency, &c. There was, perhaps, in the whole troop, but one exception,—the amiable Melancton. He, mild, gentle, spirit, stands alone—a solitary instance of decorum in the midst of a scene of licentiousness, and confusion:—although, indeed, he has been accused by many protestant writers, of tergiversation, duplicity, and of various errors. Such were the fathers of Reformation. Can piety, I once more ask, believe seriously, that the commission of such men was divine? “Their real mission,” says Mr. Roscoe, “was the hatred of the pope; and their Reformation in general, the work of policy.”*

* Our protestant authors, not unfrequently, forget themselves; and along with the most fulsome eulogiums of the reformers, and their Reformation, let fall very awkward acknowledgments to their discredit. I could cite many instances of this incoherency from the works of some of even our most bigoted writers. So, for example, take the following passage, extracted from a work, which is, just now, lying, by chance, before me,—the Bampton Lecture of Dr. Gray. “The vehement, and uncharitable temper of Luther; the yielding softness of Melancton; the rude, and overbearing harshness of Calvin, should be forgotten,” says the charitable Doctor, “as the defects of illustrious characters. We cannot, however, but lament the errors, which were admitted into their confessions of faith. The defective morality; and the undefined, and imperfect, discipline, of the Lutheran church, hastily settled, in days of controversy, and dissension; and the doctrines of absolute predestination, and controlling grace, so peremptorily asserted by Luther, are subjects of deep regret to his friends.—The intolerance, and Erastian principles; and the notion of the Eucharist, as merely a

Another criterion, by which, whenever there is question of an extraordinary mission, it is proper, and at the same time, easy, to judge, either of its reality, or its nullity,—are *its fruits*,—the good, or the bad, effects, which it has generated. This is even the great rule, which the wisdom of Christ Jesus has recommended to us, as the surest medium of ascertaining, upon such occasions, the will, and the work, of heaven. “By their fruits,” he says, speaking of real, and of pretended, reformers,—“by their fruits, you shall know them. The good tree does not produce bad fruit.” So that here, in relation to the reformers, the question is simple, and the inference plain. If the alleged mission of those men were really divine,—then, according to the above maxim of our Redeemer, their “fruits” must have been good. If their commission was extraordinary; and they were really what they professed themselves to be.—“the envoys of heaven; and the organs of the Holy Ghost;”—then every fair form of goodness, and truth; and the whole lovely group of sister virtues,—chastity, charity, humility, &c., would have united, and followed, in their train: for “beautiful are the footsteps of those, who preach good tidings.” Therefore, if their “fruits” were bad;—if, instead of virtue, they produced vice; instead of piety, licentiousness; instead of order, confusion,—the consequence then is, according to the principle of our divine Redeemer, that their altered mission was a vain pretext; and their assumed authority, a daring imposition upon the credulity of the public:—they were thus,—to use his language,—“false prophets; and wolves in the clothing of sheep:” for, “the good tree does not produce bad fruit.”

And what, therefore, were the fruits, produced by the first reformers? I have already, briefly,—although per-

commemorative rite, of Zuingle, cannot but be condemned.—The extravagance of Carlostadt produced unhappy effects.—In Denmark, the civil constitution was deranged by the violent abolition of the episcopal power.—The frenzies of the Antinomians, and Anabaptists, were extravagantly pernicious.—The opinions of the Calvinists, concerning absolute decrees, perseverance, justification, and ecclesiastical discipline, are to be lamented, as permanent blemishes of their church.” Such,—drawn by a hand, which is infinitely tender to every thing that is protestant,—is the portrait, given by Dr. G. of the leading authors, and of the effects, of the Reformation. To the mind of the prudent Christian, it does not, I think, convey the idea, either that the former were the chosen delegates, or the latter, the work, of God.

haps sufficiently,—stated this, also, in the foregoing chapter. Hence, I need only to observe here, that the fruits, which they, every where, produced, were not certainly, those, which, either piety, or reason, should expect from a revolution, which is extolled, as the work of grace. They were not the recall of lost innocence ; not the revival of extinguished fervour; not the renewal of those bright days, which the first missionaries of Christ established amongst the faithful. So far, indeed, was this from being the case,—and I say it upon the avowal of the reformers themselves ; and upon the general testimony of history,—that on the contrary, the first fruits of the Reformation were vice, corruption, error, confusion,—in short, a complete emancipation from every restraint of virtue.* With

* It is a wonderful thing," says Luther, " to remark, that, since the pure doctrine of the Gospel has been recalled to light, the world goes on, every day, from bad to worse."—(Serm. Conv. Ger.)

"Men," he adds, "are now come to that pitch of disorder, as even to boast, that they need no preaching to ; and would not even give a farthing for all our sermons put together. And what is still worse, it is in vain to reproach them with all this. For, they care nothing about the life to come. Their conduct, accordingly, is conformable to their belief. They live like swine ; believe like swine ; and die like swine."—(Serm. on 1 Cor.)

Calvin, after having lamented the general immorality of the reformed public, thus also describes their pastors,—his own fellow preachers. "There is another evil," he says, "more deplorable still. The pastors ; yea, the very pastors themselves, are now become the most scandalous examples, both of perversity, and vice. For this reason, their sermons, obtain now no more authority than the fables of a theatre. And yet these men complain, that they are despised, and pointed at by way of ridicule. For my part, I am surprised at the patience of the public : and I wonder, that the very women, and children, do not cover them with filth and mud." (L. de Scandal.)

"The persons," says Erasmus, "whom I had formerly known, virtuous, candid, full of amiable simplicity,—now, since they are gone over to the sect, are completely altered. I see them, now, talking about women ; addicted to gaming ; laying aside prayer, and devoted solely to their own interests ; the most impatient ; the most vindictive ; the most frivolous, of beings.—I have not seen even so much as one single protestant, who, by virtue of the new Gospel, is not become a worse man, than he was before." (Ep.)

The following is the description, given in Strype, of the state of religion in this country, even during the reign of Elizabeth, when the first excesses of the reforming mania had subsided (as is the case, after a certain time, in all revolutions) into comparative moderation. "Sad," says the historian, "was the state of religion, at this time. The churchmen heaped up many benefices upon themselves ; and resided upon none. Many of them alienated their lands ; made unreasonable leases, and waste of goods ; and granted reversions, and advowsons, to their wives, and children. Among the laity, there was little

profane hands, the authors of the awful tragedy, had, for the convenience of their followers, broken down every mound, and unlocked every floodgate, which the prudence of preceding ages had erected, with so much care, against the torrents of the human passions. So that the history of the early dawn of the Reformation,—the very time when, if it were the work of the divine beneficence, it ought to have been the most particularly distinguished for the splendor of every virtue,—is in reality, little else than the history of every species of disorder.

If, therefore, according to the rule laid down by our wise Redeemer, we ought to judge of the tree by its fruits,—that is, if we ought to judge of the reality, or of the nullity, of the commission of those men who call themselves “the messengers of heaven,” by the effects, which they produce,—then I think, the inference is plain, and undeniable,—*that the alleged commission of Luther, and his coadjutors, was not divine.*

There is, however, one argument, adduced in favour of these men, which I ought not perhaps here to omit. It is one, which has been, and is still, often cited, as a kind of miraculous attestation, that their delegation was derived from God. It is this,—*the very extraordinary success which attended their labours.* “Success,” these reasoners observe, “is the seal of God’s approbation; and the well-known testimonial of his favour, and support.” “Now,” they add, “the success of the first apostles of the Reformation was, no doubt, very extraordinary: and therefore, their vocation, and commission, must have been extraordinary, too.” “For,” they again say, “how is it possible to suppose, that a commission unsanctioned, and unblest, could really have produced effects so astonishing, and so sudden, as did the preaching, and the labours, of those men?—Such notion is, surely, absurd: and the Reformation, consequently, must have been the work of the divine beneficence.” Such is the reasoning, and such the triumphant proof, by which multitudes of protestant writers have convin-

devotion; the Lord’s day greatly profaned, and little observed; the common prayers not frequented. Some lived without any service of God at all. Many were mere heathens, and atheists. The queen’s court was a harbour for epicures, and atheists; and a kind of lawless place, because it stood in no parish: which made good men fear some bad judgments, impending over the nation.”

ced themselves, and their readers, of the wisdom of this conclusion.

Qui vult decipi, decipiatur. It is easy for men to deceive themselves:—and when once they are partial, or prejudiced, they love to do so. But so far, in my opinion, is the above conclusion from being wise, that, if the circumstance of the successes of the Reformers be considered candidly, and with the eye of enlightened religion, it will present an inference, directly the reverse.—The subject is interesting; and I will, therefore, devote some pages to its consideration.

“The successes of Luther and his associates, were extraordinary, therefore, their commission must have been divine.” To this mode of reasoning I will simply, in the first place, reply,—that the mere fact of success, considered abstractedly, and independently of the causes, and motives, which gave it birth, is not, by any means, an attestation of the divine approbation; or a satisfactory evidence, that the individuals, who were employed to create it, were, upon this account, the instruments of God’s beneficence. History, all the annals of religion, and a multiplicity of events, present the most striking testimonies to the contrary. So, for example, in the annals of religion, do we not find, that success, even the most rapid and astonishing success, has, upon many occasions, attended the propagation of error;—and of error, too, not unfrequently, the most pernicious, and sometimes the most absurd? It was so in the propagation of Arianism; of Pelagianism; of Donatism; Nestorianism;—so, even in the establishment of Mahomedanism itself. In short, the instances, presented to us in the history of religion, of the triumphs of error, and heresy; of fanaticism, and superstition,—are innumerable. Whilst, in like manner, on referring to the civil histories of states, and nations, we find, that the conquests of ambition over justice, of violence over moderation, and of artifice over piety, are innumerable likewise. Why, what a spectacle of the most wonderful success have we not witnessed, ourselves, but a few days past, in the proud elevation of a tyrant, whose frown, or smile, decided, for years, the fate of nations? So that success, it is manifest, is not, by itself, and without reference to the causes which create it, either the sure test of truth, or the criterion of

God's approval. It is, perhaps, more frequently, the effect of the divine displeasure.*

• "It is wrong," says Balzac, "to judge always of the merit of a thing by its success. Let us not thus suffer ourselves to be imposed upon. What the Greeks, and Romans; and what we ourselves, call prudence, was nothing else, very often, but fortunate rashness.

"There have been men, whose lives were full of wonders, who yet were neither saints, nor designed to be such. And still, heaven favoured all their faults, and crowned all their follies.

"You see that man,—that guilty man. He should have perished, the very first day of his bold career. But, God made use of him to punish mankind, and torment the world. His justice demanded vengeance; and he chose this individual, as the instrument of it.

"Reason might conclude, that he ought to have fallen by his own maxims. But, he stood, sustained by a higher power, which propped him up. He was sustained by a power, not his own; by a power, that supports weakness;—by a hand, which stops the falls of men, who, else, would throw themselves headlong;—by a force, which has nothing to do with good maxims in order to ensure success. This man has, therefore, lasted, in order to work at the designs of providence. He was gratifying his own passions; and still executing the plans of heaven. Before he perished, himself, he had brought destruction upon states, and nations; he had set fire to the four quarters of the globe. He had spoiled present, and future happiness, both by the evils which he did, and the example which he gave.

"A little share of talent, and great authority,—these are the principles, which have nearly always, ruled the world; sometimes with, sometimes without, success; just according to the humour of the age, and the dispositions of the public, precisely as men were more or less violent,—or more or less gentle.

"However, this is the point, to which we must always come;—that there is always something or other divine; or rather completely divine in all the maladies, and the disorders, of states. Those dispositions, those humours, that fever of rebellion, that lethargy of slavery, all come from a much greater height than men in general suppose. God is the poet: man is but the actor.

"Those great theatrical pieces, which have been so often exhibited on the theatre of life, were got up, and composed in heaven. And, often, it is the greatest villain, that plays the part of Atreus, or of Agamemnon.

"When Providence has once decided upon a plan, it matters little to it, in general, what the instruments are, which it makes use of. In its hands, every thing is thunder, and storm, and deluge;—every one is a Cæsar, or an Alexander.

"Indeed, speaking of these men, God himself says of them, that 'He sends them in his anger; and that they are the rods of his indignation.' However, do not here take the one for the other. For, it is not the rods alone, that strike, and wound. It is his anger, and his fury, that render the rods so terrible.

"It is, therefore, this invisible hand, which inflicts the blows, that the world so often feels. It is true, human insolence appears to threaten; but the force that overwhelms, is entirely the arm of God."

It is true, however, I will next admit, that there are occasions, when the circumstance of the rapid, and successful propagation of a new order of religion is a striking testimonial in its favour; and when even it affords an absolute evidence, that the system, thus established, is the dictate of the eternal wisdom. It is so, for example, in an instance like the following:—Suppose the new order of things, which is thus propagated, to be one, which lays a restraint upon every passion; and upon every bad, but darling, inclination of the human heart. Suppose it to be a system, which proposes to the understanding a code of doctrines, the most incomprehensible; and to the will, a form of discipline, the most repulsive, and severe. In short, suppose it to be an institution, which, besides requiring the cultivation of every moral virtue;—besides commanding men to be chaste, humble, temperate, &c.—obliges them, moreover, to be mortified, and penitential; to love poverty; to court hardships; to practise observances, the most painful to flesh and blood, and the most distressing to the delicacies of self-love. Suppose a system, such as this. If, indeed, *it* succeed in diffusing itself with rapidity;—if notwithstanding every obstacle, raised up against it by the powers, and princes of the world,—*it*, every where, engage men to adopt it;—if triumphing over the pride, the corruption, and the selfishness, of the passions, *it* early subdue whole nations to its empire,—nations, too, the most polished, as well as the most barbarous,—planting, in every place and in every society, virtue in the room of vice;—order in the room of licentiousness; and sanctity in the stead of corruption;—if *it* do all this, then, no doubt, the conclusion is not only reasonable, but manifest, that *such* an institution *must be* divine; that it is the gift, and dictate, of the eternal wisdom; and that the individuals, employed in its propagation, were indeed the agents, and the envoys, of the Almighty. Here, in a case like this, success is certainly an attestation, which piety, and prudence, cannot mistake: it is the indisputable evidence of a divine delegation. And it is accordingly thus, by the force of this very kind of demonstration, that we prove invincibly, and beyond the power of any rational doubt, both the divinity of the religion of Jesus Christ, and the extraordinary mission of his apostles.

But, let us now again suppose, on the other hand, the propagation of another system of religion, not absolutely the reverse of the preceding, but still, differing very materially from it. Let us suppose a system, offered to the belief, and proposed to the acceptance, of the public, which holding out, indeed, the strongest assurances of future happiness,—still dispenses, at the same time, with all, or nearly all, the rigid rules of penance, and self-denial; which emancipates the mind from the belief of various mysteries; and treats, as mere acts of superstition, whatsoever almost is painful to the feelings of self-love,—such practices, for example, as are those of confession, fasting, celibacy, &c. In short, let us suppose a system, which, softening down all the austerities, and painful duties, of piety, reduces the whole business of salvation to an order of things, so easy, so gentle, so convenient, that hardly sensuality itself could presume to murmur at it. Suppose such a system as this: and suppose it, too, pressed upon the public mind with all the artifices of zeal, and the energies of industry, by a set of men, interested for its adoption; and possessing talents, eloquence, and strong lungs, to recommend it,—supposing all this,—would the successful propagation of *such* an order of things, under such circumstances, be any attestation of its divinity? or would it form any wise presumption, that the men, who had thus established it, were really the delegates of heaven? Most assuredly, not. Its rapid propagation, under all the above circumstances, would be but natural,—the obvious effect of the weakness, the credulity, the self-love, and corruption, of the public: for,

“A downhill reformation goes apace.”

Our divine Redeemer has, indeed, told us, that “men love darkness better than the light;” and that, hence, the apostles of error, and imposture, would be sure always to meet with followers.

In reality, as I have often remarked already,—it is with revolutions in religion, as it is with revolutions in the state. As these are very easily effected, whenever men,—the bold, the artful, the wicked, and ambitious,—are permitted, without any restraint, to address, and excite, the vulgar,—so, also, it is in the order of religion. Only allow men here,—allow the crafty fanatic; the dar-

ing, and interested enthusiast,—the opportunity of seducing the multitude;—suppose them clothed in the garb of piety, and the mask of holiness;—give to them talents, eloquence, a voice of thunder, and the cant of hypocrisy, —with these facilities, and acquirements, it is easy at once to form new societies; and above all, if the nature of the systems, which they inculcate, be congenial to the feelings, and the interests, of human self-love. Indeed, where the apostles of error are thus privileged, and thus qualified, they may do any thing;—may either establish any religion, or any irreligion. They are, in such cases, levers, that may move mountains, and overturn empires. In short, the whole history of mankind attests this,—that, where the growth of error is not impeded by the exertions of wisdom, its diffusion is easy, and its progress rapid. Generated, often, by the fever of the strongest feelings; or, coming in contact with hot dispositions, it spreads its poison, with a celerity, which no remedy can stay, no antidote counteract.* And would to God, that effects, such as those, which I have here described, may not, ere long, prove, in this country, the history of a sect, whose increasing numbers, and growing influence, are already in the eyes of the thoughtful, very awfully alarming omens.

It being, therefore, thus understood, that the circumstance of success is, by no means, always a test of the divine approval,—what now I have to do, is simply to consider the boasted triumphs of the reformation; and by the light of the maxims, which I have just laid down, to examine whether it be indeed reasonable,—as the pro-

* “He is little acquainted, either with the history of the human heart, or the history of religious opinions, who does not know, that, if men are, or appear, but in earnest, not only men of a superior description, but the most ignorant, the most crazy, the most wicked, invariably obtain followers. The public mind is loose, and incoherent. Its element is restlessness, and agitation. And he who teaches an easy, and compendious way of becoming wiser, and better, than our neighbours, will never want proselytes.”—*QUARTERLY REVIEW*.

“A reformer of Luther’s temper, and talents,” says Bishop Watson, “would, in five years, persuade the people to compel the parliament to abolish tithes; to extinguish pluralities; to confine episcopacy to the overseeing of dioceses; to expunge the Athanasian creed from the liturgy; to free dissenters from test acts; and the ministers of the establishment from the subscription to human articles of faith.” Which, in fact, is saying, that, in five years, such a man as Luther would overturn the established church.

testant contends it is,—to look upon them, as the proofs of any extraordinary commission, given to Luther, and his associates; and as the effects of a very singular mercy.

That the success, or the triumphs of the first authors of the reformation were exceedingly great, and rapid, this is a point, which I have owned repeatedly. But, what therefore,—for, these are the questions which, good sense ought here to ask,—what was the *nature* of the system, which they inculcated? and what were the *means*, which they employed in its propagation? Was their system, either in relation to its doctrines, or its discipline, remarkable for its peculiar sanctity; or distinguished by any of those properties, which rendered its belief, and cultivation, unpleasing to human pride, or distressing to human self-love? Was it repulsive, severe, and rigid? more repulsive, more severe and rigid, than that, which, hitherto, the public had been used to follow, but which, now, they were exhorted to discard? Was such the case? For if so, then the fact of success is, no doubt, a very powerful argument. No; it was not. The new order of things, proposed to the public by Luther, and his associates, so far from being remarkable for its peculiar sanctity;—so far from being more repulsive, and severe, than that of the parent church,—was, on the contrary, very strikingly the reverse. It was a system of the broadest liberty; and an emancipation from almost every restraint, enacted by ancient piety. These were, nearly all, rejected with contempt;—branded with the odious names of superstition, and idolatry. Of course, that the public,—loving, as they do, what is most congenial to their inclinations,—should ardently have embraced so easy, and convenient, a method of salvation, (for its authors confidently attached the strongest assurances of salvation to it,) this is a circumstance, which ought not to excite surprise.

And what, next, were *the means*, which the reformers employed in its propagation? I have described these, too. They were such precisely as men make use of, on the occasions of civil revolutions,—violence, insult, declamation, the flattery of the bad passions,—in short, all the springs, and artifices, of seduction. For, the reformation, it should be recollected, was not merely the contest of the alleged love of truth against the alleged

reign of error ;—but, it was, moreover, the combat of pretended slavery against pretended tyranny. For thus did Luther, and his followers affect to represent the character of the catholic church. Hence, in order to pull down the venerable fabric the more effectually, they enlisted under their banners all the strong principles of human action,—animosity, hatred, persecution, plunder, &c. They made it even the unhappy interest of almost every passion to join their ranks. Avarice had now the opportunity of growing rich, without the slenderest fear of punishment; impurity, of being licentious, without any apprehension of disgrace; ambition of augmenting its power, without the dread of opposition; sacrilege, of being profane, even with applause, and approbation;—in a word, hypocrisy, of doing what it pleased, provided only that it covered itself with the mantle of religion.* Such were *the means*, (and I say it upon the testimony of protestant writers) to which the successes of the reformation ought principally to be attributed.—I say nothing of the works, which were published, or the sermons, that were preached;—insulting, deriding, and misrepresenting the ancient worship. The press daily

* “The reformation,” says the protestant minister Starke, “owed its success to a great variety of passions,—to the avarice of princes, to the love of liberty; to the hatred of Rome; to rival interests; to pretensions; to the ambitious views of the different orders; to the dislike of celibacy amongst the corrupted members of the clergy, and the religious.” “Indeed,” says Picart, another protestant,—speaking of the last named cause, “the permission for priests to marry was one of the chief means, that increased the party of the reformation.”

“Every thing,” observes Mons. Bonald, “in the reformation of the sixteenth century, was in favour of the multitude. The liturgy, now used in the vulgar idiom, was agreeable to the ignorant, who did not understand the Latin; nor foresee, that doctrines would alter with a living language. Salaries, replacing the properties of the ancient church, and a form of worship devoid of pomp, and splendor, appeared to the lower class of society, and to men, who had no ideas of dignity and elegance, objects, completely natural. The pastoral ministry, and the superintendance of the church, now consigned to the care of laymen, were things, peculiarly gratifying to the parish officers: whilst the abolition of the austere practices was pleasing to a set of men, who dislike all those restraints, which the commerce of the world imposes upon the well-educated; and who love to be at their ease with God, exactly as they are, or love to be so, with men. The voluptuous found in it the facility of divorce; the interested, the riches of the church, and the means of usury; the learned, the pleasure of disputing, and the satisfaction of insulting kings, and popes, in Greek and Latin.”

groaned with the former ; and the pulpit resounded hourly with the latter. "The pulpits," says Starke, "were now the theatres of battle. And the public mind was kept in a state of constant fermentation. Whosoever will read the works of the protestant divines of this period, or the sermons of the preachers, will find, that this picture is correct." Wherefore, with causes, and instruments, such as these, can it reasonably be wondered at, that the growth of the Reformation was rapid ? Or can good sense imagine, that success, under such circumstances, was really the effect of grace ? *

* A multitude of writers, protestant as well as catholic, have attributed the successes of the reformers to the ignorance principally, and to the unsuccessing simplicity, of the public. This is the remark of Hume, "The rapid progress," says the historian, "of the Lutheran doctrine, and the violence, with which it was embraced, prove sufficiently, that it owed not its success to reason, and reflection. The books of the reformers, full of vehemence, declamation, and rude eloquence, were quickly propagated ; and the minds of men were prepared for novelty."

Indeed, whoever will give himself the trouble to trace the progress of the Reformation, will, at once, discover, that its successes were every where porportioned to the measure of the public ignorance. This, too, is an observation ; which has been made by several learned protestants. "It is," says Fuller, "an observation, founded upon a hundred facts, that the nations, most degraded by superstition, have always abandoned religion, with the greatest facility. Thus, the north of Europe, buried in ignorance, and stupid credulity, received the doctrines of Luther, without opposition ; while the south rejected them, with contempt. At such periods, among such people, a Wickliff, a Huss, a John of Leyden, effected the most striking revolutions, with astonishing facility. But, in France, where the sciences were cultivated, religion retained its vigour, its dignity, and splendor, even amid the vices, and arts, of philosophy."

A circumstance, which, alone, suffices to show, that it is not reason, or the sense of piety, that conducts men to protestantism, is this—that, at the present period of comparative illumination, when men are better informed, than they were, at the time of the Reformation, we never witness such a spectacle as that of an enlightened, and *moral*, catholic, renouncing his faith to become a protestant. Although even the invitations to such acts of apostacy are incessant ; and the temptations, in point of temporal advantages, sometimes alluring ;—yet are such scenes,—save amongst the most ignorant, or else, the most worthless, portions of the catholic body,—now unwitnessed and unknown.

We have seen, it is true, within the last fifty years, a few renegadoes abandon their parent church. But, both the motives of their conduct, and the features of their characters, were, in every case, sufficient to prove, that it was not any conviction of the falsehood of catholicity, nor any conviction of the truth of protestantism, that produced the metamorphose. The apostates have been a few weak, and eccentric, priests, anxious to get rid of the awkward restraints of celibacy, (for, their very first act was always the solemn comedy of a marriage ;) a

But, without needing to have appealed to any of the foregoing arguments, I might at once, by the following simple consideration, have pointed out to the reader the emptiness of the alleged pretext. It is this ;—that, hardly had the Reformation subsisted, for the space of but a few years, when a scene of general confusion took place, which divided, and subdivided, its followers into sects, and societies, without end, or number. Alarmed at this misfortune, certain leading members of the revolution, who possessed a peculiar influence over the minds of the public, contrived to counteract, more or less, the growing evil ; and they succeeded even in uniting their respective admirers into five great, and distinct, communions. These, the reader knows, were the Lutherans ; the Calvinists ; the Anabaptists ; the Church of England ; and the Socinians. The multitudes, that associated themselves to each of these classes, were very great ; and perhaps, nearly, for some time, equal :—whilst, also, each class included amongst its members men of equally distinguished learning, wisdom, and abilities. Such were, early, the five great churches of the Reformation. Now, I am not going to investigate, what the reasons could have been, or what the principle was, which engaged the public to embrace any one of these institutions in preference to the other,—whether it was grace ; or the suggestions of good sense ; or chance ;

very trifling portion of our nobility, and gentry, ambitious to figure,—although they never did figure,—in the exalted rank of senators ; and here and there an unfortunate individual, who having renounced the *morality* of his religion, thought it not worth while to trouble himself about its *faith*. “The conformity of a catholic,” observed lately Lord Nugent, “to the tenets of the established church never fails to bring with it the irremovable suspicion, that faith, and conscience, have been surrendered for the base hope of temporal advantage.” Indeed, nothing is more certain, than that, in these pretended conversions to protestantism, the catholic is hardly ever,—if ever,—sincere. Doctor Johnson even contends, that he *cannot* be sincere. “There is,” he says, “so much laceration of mind in them, that they cannot be lasting, and sincere :—a truth, adds Boswell, “which may be confirmed by many, and eminent, instances.” The approaches of death, and the return of reflection, have, almost always, we find by experience, recalled our apostates home again. Whence, laughing at such men, Lord Chesterfield used to say of them, that “they always intended to cheat the devil, before they died.” Such, too, is the general notion, which the good sense of the protestant public attaches still constantly to the apostacy of a catholic. They never believe him sincere :—and the consequence is, they, almost every where, despise him.

or policy ; or ignorance ; or passion. This is not here the question. The observation, which, alone, I desire the reader to make, is this,—that success, and nearly the very same share of success, attended the propagation of each of the five religions. They, each, and all of them, grew, and diffused themselves, with equal, and even surprising, rapidity ;—although they were still, all of them, at variance with each other ; retaining hardly any feature of mutual resemblance, except their common, and deep-rooted, aversion to that church, which they had, all deserted. And what, therefore, I now ask, is the rational inference ? Does then, the fact of success, under circumstances such as these, prove any thing ? Is it here any mark of the divine favour ; or any attestation of a divine commission ?—Does it prove, that all the five religions are the dictates of the eternal wisdom ? and that the men, who established them, were, each, the delegates of heaven ? This is impossible ; because, in such case God would be the author of errors, and the encourager of contradictions. He could not sanction five distinct, and opposite, systems of belief.—But might it not be said, that, at least the alleged success gives a sanction to some *one* of them ; and attests the divine mission of *one* class of their founders ? No, neither can this be wisely supposed : because it applies just equally to them all ; proving,—if it do prove any thing in their favour,—that they are, *all*, alike entitled to be respected, and adored ;—an absurdity, this, which, surely, requires no farther observations to refute it. Therefore, the real, and plain, consequence, which results from the *success*, that attended the propagation of the Reformation, is precisely this,—that it proves nothing at all ;—or at least, it proves merely that truth, which I have so often repeated,—namely, that, where men have the opportunity, and the talents, to cheat, and mislead, the public, there is nothing more easy than to do so. To call it,—as most protestants do still call it, *miraculous*, is a piece of credulity, for which we can no otherwise account, but either by the blindest partiality to protestantism, or else, by the rankest prejudice against popery.*

*If the catholic were disposed to argue from the extraordinary events, which occurred,—and this, too, very frequently,—on the occasion of the introduction of the Reformation ; and to infer from these,

I have thus, therefore, considered the first of the various systems, by which the reformers once pretended, and many protestant writers attempt still, to explain, and justify, the grounds of the Reformation,—the supposedly *extraordinary commission of Luther*, and his fellow-labourers. The artifice, because the boldest, is certainly the best, that the spirit of schism, and innovation, could have suggested. It was even, at the opening of that revolution, the necessary, and perhaps the only, method of awakening the general interest, and attention, of the public. I have, however, I conceive, said sufficient to convince every candid, and impartial reader, that the whole pretext was but an empty stragem, founded upon no proof, save the declarations of the reformers themselves; and unattested by any one of those evidences. which, upon every occasion of a divine interposition, have always accompanied an extraordinary delegation. There was certainly nothing, either in the lives, and conduct of the first reformers; nothing in their methods of propagating their revolution,—not one single sign, or seal, from heaven,—that can reasonably appear to show, either that their commission was from God; or that their innovation was the work of grace.

what, most probably, was the will of Heaven.—he might easily adduce much stronger facts, and more striking testimonies, in condemnation of that revolution, than aught which the protestant brings forward in its support. However, I am not going to insist upon this point. I will merely make the reflection,—that many protestant writers, distinguished, both for their learning, and talents, have acknowledged, that the events, which ushered in the Reformation, were truly awful, and terrific. Thus, speaking of its establishment in this country, they own, that misfortunes, very heavy misfortunes, befel nearly all its chief authors, and promoters; that the judgments of God pursued, very generally, the plunderers, and the purchasers, of the property of the church; and that a series of calamities afflicted the whole nation. Spelman, who was no bigot, nor ye any great friend to popery, has stated innumerable instances of these frightful visitations. And Wood, alluding to the same occurrences, says of them: “It must be granted, that many of the instances, (and those too well attested,) are so terrible in the event; and in the circumstances, so surprising, that no considering man can well pass them over, without a serious reflection.” Even Dr. Gray, the severe enemy of every thing catholic, is so candid as to say, in his Bampton Lecture, that, “the fate of many of those, who shared the plunder of the church, may, without superstition, be allowed to have been remarkable; whatever conclusion may be drawn from the subject.”—So that if the circumstances of the occurrence of extraordinary events, in the establishment of the Reformation, be considered as the expression of the will of God,—most certain it is, that these make far more against that innovation, than they do in its favour.

CHAPTER X.

OTHER ALLEGED GROUNDS OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

“As nobody can represent a prince, without a deputation, so neither can any person seal covenants in our Saviour’s name, and govern his church, without a delegated power for that purpose.”—COLLIER, HIST.

It is the property of error to vary, and invent ;—by its variations amusing, and by its inventions seducing, the credulity of its unhappy partisans. This observation, applicable to a great many heresies, is particularly applicable to the heresies of the Reformation. For, it is a fact, which no one, who is at all versed in the history of this revolution, will deny,—that protestantism has more frequently varied in its doctrines ; has had recourse to more expedients to defend itself, and to deceive the public, than any other heresy, which is recorded upon the rolls of history. Conducted, for ever, by the circumstances ; and acting under the pressure of this, or that, necessity, it has constantly been engaged in adopting fresh systems, and soon again discarding them ; creating new maxims, and ere long rejecting them,—exactly as the temper of the times, and the urgency of its wants, or the arguments of the catholics, appeared to render the alteration useful. So that the history of the protestant religions is, in reality, little else than the history of endless contradictions. True, in relation to a multitude of objects, this assertion is true also here, in regard of that, which is the subject of our present investigation.

I have said, in the foregoing chapter, that the second system, by which the reformers,—and these, too, some

of the most learned members of that body,—attempted to account for their own commission, and for that of their fellow-preachers, was the singular device of an *invisible church*. That is, they contended, that, for many ages before the Reformation, there had always, and regularly, subsisted a true church of Christ on earth; which, yet, had been concealed, and hidden, in the bosom of the church of Rome. It was, therefore, to this, they maintained, that they had linked themselves; and from its pastors that they had derived their present ministerial powers. Such is the second method,—by which Calvin, Jewell, Fulke, &c., once attempted to explain the mystery of a protestant pastoral delegation.

The system, I have observed, is no doubt, singular. It is the offspring of perplexity, and the child of ingenuity. It has some defenders, even still, because, there are men still, who, like its first inventors, are unable, without it, to explain, either the perennial subsistence of the Christian church, or the conveyance of the pastoral commission to the present order of pastors. However, except among this slender portion of exalted fanatics, the strange opinion is now totally abandoned. It has answered its original purpose,—that of amusing, for a time, the public credulity; and it now ranks, along with a variety of similar artifices, amongst those monuments of folly, which, at present, reason, and moderation, contemplate with astonishment, or contempt. For these reasons, it is almost needless to make any observations on it. Mine shall be very succinct.

In the first place, I will remark, that the notion of an invisible church is both repugnant to all the descriptions, which the Scriptures present to us, of the character of the Christian church; and inconsistent with the dictates of common sense. It is repugnant to the descriptions of the sacred Scriptures. For, in these, the Christian church is constantly represented, as an object, peculiarly great, magnificent, and conspicuous,—an immense empire, extending its authority, and diffusing its benefits, through every corner of the globe. It is, hence, compared to those things, which are, of all others, the most easy to be seen,—to the sun, the moon, &c.,—“to a city, placed upon the summit of a mountain;” and still more, even “to a mountain, that is reared upon

the mountain's top." It is exhibited, as "a city," where the watchmen shall never hold their peace;—where the word of God shall be always preached; where the sacraments shall be constantly administered; where the appeals of the faithful shall be heard, for ever. So that the idea of an *invisible* church is a manifest contradiction of the holy Scriptures.—It is inconsistent, too, with the dictates of common sense. For, according to every suggestion of reason, the church of Christ is essentially *a society of men*. But, if so, then, of course, it must be *visible*. It is a society, instituted for the instruction of mankind, and for the direction of moral agents. Therefore, to suppose it *invisible*, is at once to maintain, both a gross absurdity, and a palpable contradiction.

But, the system, besides being thus preposterous, is again a mere visionary fiction. "There existed," say its authors, "within the bosom of the church of Rome, a little church,—a protestant church,—concealed, and separated, from it, which neither believed its errors, nor joined in its idolatry." But, where, let me only ask, are the proofs of all this? Where, in what nation; in what city; in what nook, or corner, of the universe, did they pretend to trace out this wonderful institution? Where even did they affect to have discovered so much as one single vestige of it? Most certainly, no where. It was a mere castle in the air; the empty fabric of a vision. There is nothing in the rolls of history; nothing in the series of human occurrences, that give the slenderest intimation of such society. Or if indeed there had, at the time of the Reformation, existed such a society,—then, of course, was the occasion, when its members,—those *invisible* protestants,—emerging from their invisibility, and oppression, ought,—and if there had been such, most certainly *would*, —have now declared their sentiments, and belief;—would have now loudly proclaimed to the astonished universe, that their religion was precisely the same, either with that of Luther, or else, of some other of his fellow-teachers. But neither was this the case. Not even did a single individual present himself, on the occasion, to declare, that his religion, hitherto concealed, had been similar to that of any one of the first reformers. Indeed, not even did any one of those

revolutionists themselves,—neither Luther, nor Calvin, nor Zuinglius, nor Bucer, nor,—so much as pretend, that, previously to their own innovations, they had ever believed in any doctrines, or revered any institution, save those of the church of Rome. Whence, the system of a long-subsisting, but invisible, protestant church, in whatsoever point of view it be considered, is nothing more or less, than a miserable, and pitiful, illusion;—although, indeed, as I have just remarked, there are individuals still, so fanatical, as to continue to admit it.

The next method, adopted by another portion of the early reformers; and which, too, has always had, and possesses still, a certain number of advocates, is very different from both of the two preceding ones,—neither so daring as the former, nor so fabulous as the latter. It is, in fact, professedly, very modest, and very simple. It is the claim of an *ordinary mission*.—Acknowledging, then, as the wisdom of protestantism has always acknowledged, that, where there is no commission, there is, consequently, no church,—yet, refusing to admit that of the catholic priesthood;—unwilling to allow the extraordinary delegation of Luther, because he gave no proofs to attest it;—and unwilling still more to give any credit to the fable of an invisible church,—the men, to whom I am now alluding, deemed it, for these reasons, essential to look well around them; and to find out, if possible, some different, and better, platform for the grounds of their new establishments. Accordingly, they did so. They looked very carefully around them: and, prying into the annals of ages past, they there discovered, that there had existed,—and this, too, for a considerable length of time,—a certain number of sects, which, at different periods, had detached themselves from the parent institute.—Therefore, they thought proper at once to attach themselves to these;—contending, that it was through this medium, that they had inherited the ordinary pastoral, and apostolical, delegation. The sects, I have already said, to which I am here referring, were the Albigenses, the Vaudois, the Wickliffites, and Hussites. These, the defenders of the present system strenuously maintained, were the real ancestors of the protestant religion; and the depositories of those sacred powers, by virtue of which the reformers,—and themselves too,—had un-

dertaken to conduct the faithful. Neither, again, were the advocates of this pretext a set of obscure, and illiterate, individuals. They were, on the contrary some of them, the very heroes of the protestant cause,—such men as Beza, Claude, Basnage, &c. The case is, that, where there is question of religion, men always feel,—provided that they reason,—the necessity of antiquity; and are anxious, where the thing is possible, to give the appearance of its sanction to their innovations. It was so with the authors of this system. They sought for the important characteristic *somewhere*; and were glad to find even its mere shadow, *any where*. Indeed, the protestant is always sure to find protestantism in any thing, and in every thing, that is anticatholic.

“It was from the Albigenses,” &c., say the defenders of this system, “that the protestant pastors have derived their ministerial powers.” Well; let this supposition be admitted. What is still the consequence? It gives, no doubt, a certain air of antiquity to the protestant religion. But then,—for, this is the vital question,—does it give to it antiquity enough?—sufficient, that is, to establish, upon this plea, the sanction, and the evidence, of a divine commission? To give to it merely a few ages,—unless it can be proved, that those ages are linked to the apostolic chain,—is, in the eyes of Christian wisdom, giving nothing. Because a religion, or alleged commission, which began but a few ages back, (unless, indeed, it had been established, in virtue of an *extraordinary* interposition) is no more a true religion, or a really divine commission. than if it were only to begin, to-day. And what, therefore, is the antiquity, which protestantism, engrafting itself upon the forementioned sects, can thus, by this artifice, pretend to claim? Why; we know precisely the dates, and the origin, of them all; as well as the whole series of their respective histories. The date of the rise of the Albigenses,—the most early of these sects,—is towards the close of the twelfth century. That of the Vaudois is a somewhat later: whilst that of the Wickliffites, and Hussites, every reader knows, is so late as the fourteenth and fifteenth, centuries. So that, comparing the origin, and duration, of these sects with the origin, and duration of the Christian church, it

is thus manifest, that, after all, they are but recent, and trifling, things.

But, might it not be contended, that these sects,—or, for example, the Albigenses, the first of them,—were connected with some other society, similar to themselves; and which had, some ages before, preceded them? No; neither can this be asserted. For, you seek in vain, in any corner of the universe;—you explore in vain all the annals of religion, to find out, before the above-cited period, one single society, or even the vestige of a society, which resembled any one of them. There did, indeed, exist, in those times, certain sects of Manichæans. But, to these,—so detestable and profane, were their maxims,—the Albigenses did not so much as pretend to unite themselves. So that the consequence is thus, such as I have just stated,—namely, that all the forementioned societies, if they must be called ancient, are yet not half ancient enough: and the reformers, by linking themselves to so short a chain, instead of benefiting their own cause, have, in reality, betrayed its weakness.

In the next place, in order to maintain, with any degree of consistency, that the reformers, or any sect of the Reformation, have derived their pastoral powers through the medium of the above-named religionists, it should be proved, by some argument or other, that those men did, themselves, enjoy such prerogative:—for, if they did not, themselves, possess it,—of course, they could not have transferred it to their successors. And is there, then, any evidence to render this important fact incontestable? or is there even any, the very slenderest voucher, that can seem to make it probable? No; not even this. For, in reality, from whom could those men have received the sacred gift? Not, surely, from the catholic church. This pretext would have been too preposterous: and they did not so much as allege it. Not from the Manichæans. For, neither did they cite these, as their predecessors. Therefore, they could not have enjoyed it at all: because except the catholic church, and the Manichæan sects, there did not, at the epochs, when they prevailed, and in the parts of Europe, where they flourished, exist any other institutions, that professed to revere the Gospel.

But the circumstance, which, in all this singular defence, is perhaps, the most singular, is this, — that the religions, or doctrines, of every one of the above sects, were extremely different from all the religions, and doctrines, of the Reformation. It, surely, ought to be the case, that, where any church, or society, pretends to have derived its pastoral powers, or to trace its spiritual genealogy, through the medium of another church, or society,—there ought, of course, to exist some kind of relationship, or affinity, between them. Because for men to affect to link themselves together, whose maxims are at variance with each other,—this is a piece of palpable inconsistency. Accordingly, adopting this rule, let common sense decide by it, how groundless is the pretence of the protestant churches having derived any spiritual delegation from the pastors of the forementioned heresies. I will, however, just cite a few of the various tenets, professed, respectively, by each of them.

One of the leading tenets, for example, professed by the Albigenses,—a wretched band of the most miserable fanatics, —was this,—that there exist two distinct principles, the one good, the other bad; the one, the author of invisible, the other the creator of visible, things;—opinions, which, it may be, they had borrowed from the Manichees. In like manner, they again admitted two distinct Christs;—the former good, the latter bad;—the good, like the good principle, invisible, and who had not yet appeared on earth;—the bad, visible but yet, clothed only in a fantastic body; apparently dying; and apparently rising up again. To these opinions they added, also, a multiplicity of others, which, if not equally absurd, were, perhaps, nearly equally pernicious. Thus, they reprobated matrimony; rejected all the sacraments; denied the resurrection of the body, &c. So that it, surely, was no great act of wisdom in the reformers, nor of prudence in any protestant, to have pretended to have inherited any pastoral delegation from a sect of believers, such as this.

The Vaudois, in point of doctrines, believed, certainly, very differently from the Albigenses:—though, still, there is not much in their faith, that should seem to make the protestant ambitious of claiming them for his predecessors. They, too, like the Albigenses, were lit-

tle else than a mere mob of deluded fanatics. immersed in the grossest ignorance.* Their leading tenets were precisely consonant to the interests of a set of men, whose chief aim was plunder ;—repugnant, not only to the maxims of Christianity, but subversive of social order. Thus they reprobated, as a very heinous sin, the sentence of the civil magistrate, who condemned to death any criminal, however great might have been his crime. They believed, and taught, that the administration of an oath, or taking of any oath, is a mortal sin. They maintained, that it is unlawful for the clergy to possess any kind of property whatsoever; and that, if they did, any of them, possess any property, they became, by this mere act, reprobates; and ceased completely to be any longer the ministers of Jesus Christ. Such were some of the leading doctrines of the Vaudois:—whilst, in relation to many others, they were strictly catholic,—admitting, as the catholics did, the seven sacraments; the mass; transubstantiation; the veneration of images; purgatory, &c. So that thus, again, it is imprudent in the defenders of the protestant cause to pretend to attach their genealogy to a sect of religionists, such as this.

The Wickliffites were a trifling sect, confined to the limits of this country. In their various tenets they united a great deal of the impiety of the Albigenes to the fanaticism of the Vaudois; whilst, also, they were equally notorious, as were either of those two societies, for their excess, their violences, and their profanations.—Amongst other errors, they maintained, for example, that every thing is the effect of necessity; that man sins necessarily; and what is still more horrible, that God approves of sin. It was, also, one of their principal doctrines,—absured as the thing is, and completely inconsistent with the foregoing maxims,—that all authority in the church, and all power in the state, are, at once, forfeited by the commission of a mortal sin. And hence, pretending to trace sin every where,—in all the pastors

* Their head, and founder, as the historians of this sect,—Simon De Voyou, Crispin, &c. admit,—was only a layman,—Peter Waldo. His followers were the same. They were a crowd of abject beings, seduced from the pursuits of industry, not so much by Waldo's discourses, as by his alms. They were, hence, denominated, “the Poor Men of Lions.”

of the church, and in all the ministers of the state,—they still farther, by a series of very logical deduction, contended, and inferred, that, consequently, all authority had now ceased in both of these two departments;—that it had devolved back into the hands of the people; and was, of course, *now*,—(this was the grand conclusion,)—*theirs*.* Such as these, where they differed from the sentiments of the catholic church, were the tenets of the Wickliffites. What wonder, that, with such principles, the system grew, and attracted followers!—However, it is here again proper to observe, that just like the Vaudois, the disciples of Wickliff continued, in relation to the far greater part of their opinions, still catholic;—admitting, along with the catholic church, the seven sacraments; the mass; transubstantiation; the invocation of the saints; purgatory, &c. So that whether we consider the errors, which these men introduced; or the truths, which they still continued to revere; the fact is manifest, that there is little or nothing in either, that can reasonably appear to assimilate them to the professors of protestantism; and that, therefore, it is a piece of gross inconsistency to pretend to claim them, as the lawful predecessors, of this sect.

I will not describe the errors of the Hussites. These were an insignificant class of religionists, suffice it to say, very similar to the followers of Wickliff. They borrowed from the latter nearly all his seditious, and unchristian, principles;—believing for example, that all superiors, both in the church, and state, lose all their power by the commission of a mortal sin; and that even (which

* So forcibly impressed was the government of this country with the pernicious errors, and seditious principles, of the Wickliffites, that, during several protestant reigns, it was the custom to oblige the sheriffs, ere they entered upon their office, to swear, that “they would seek to suppress all errors, and heresies, commonly called ‘Lollaries.’” The following is part of the oath, as it is cited by D’Israeli. “You shall do your pain, and diligence, to destroy, and make cease, all manner of heresies, commonly called Lollaries, within your bailiwick,” &c. This oath, observes D’Israeli, was suppressed, only in the reign of Charles the First, in consequence of the remonstrances of Sir Edward Coke. He remarks, too, the inconsistency of such an oath, imposed by a protestant government. “The Lollards,” he says, “were the most ancient of protestants; and had practised Luther’s sentiments. So that it was, in fact, condemning the established religion of the country.”

is, if possible, still worse) they forfeit all claim to obedience, whenever any individual chances, or thinks proper, to conceive, that their commands are not just, or reasonable. Such, too, were some of the tenets of the Hussites:—whilst, again, in regard to the chief part of their other doctrines, they believed like the church of Rome.

Thus I have presented another of those methods, by which another illustrious portion of the members of the protestant churches have attempted to explain, and justify, their grounds. They deemed the system infinitely important; so much so even, as to regard it the best defence of the Reformation; and the only means, by which, in their opinion, it was possible to account for the transmission of the apostolical delegation into the hands of the protestant clergy. Their opinion, too, has been always that of a very considerable number of protestant theologians. But, surely, the reader, if he has weighed the strange device attentively, must have felt its emptiness. What! a few hordes of miserable, and deluded, fanatics, rising up only in the darkest ages; unconnected with any preceding association; and unconnecting even with one another;—a set of men, presenting no single attestation of a divine commission; and teaching doctrines, which the protestant abhors,—these the platform of the boasted fabric of the Reformation!—these the ancestors of the protestant clergy; and the links, that unite them to the apostolic chain! The thing, surely, is quite impossible! The pretext is dishonourable; at the same time that it is completely groundless.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE ALLEGED GROUNDS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The catholic pastors were, doubtless, the ostensible pillars, and visible representatives, of the Christian ministry ; and as members of the sacred lineage, transferred to their followers the privileges, and functions, of their appointed office. DR. GRAY'S BAMPTON LECTURE.

I HAVE discussed, in the foregoing chapters, three of the various methods, alleged by the protestant churches, in the vindication of their reputed grounds. I come now to the consideration of a *fourth* ; which, to the generality of my readers, may, perhaps, appear, of all others, the most important. It is that, which is set up by the members of the established church, in the explanation, and defence, of the peculiar dignity, and supposedly divine authority, of this magnificent institution.

The plea, which, for this purpose, is set up by the established church, is very different from any of those, which I have hitherto detailed. It is not, like them, the dictate of little else than empty fiction ; but, as might be expected from the wisdom of a very learned body of men,—it is a system, apparently, sober, plausible, and wise. It presents, indeed, a real veneration for antiquity, and a respect for the genuine principles of enlightened theology. In fact, it is the attempt to place the fabric of the established religion upon those same grounds, upon which, originally, the church had been

erected by the hands of its sacred Founder,—upon the sanction of that same immortal charter, which this divine Being once granted to the first apostles;—and which constitutes, in reality, the sole basis of all pastoral power.

Having stated this, I have equivalently stated, likewise what the whole nature of the system is. It is completely catholic. Conducted by the light of the holy Scriptures, and by the torch of experience, the clergy of the established church have constantly acknowledged, that our divine Redeemer, when he founded his spiritual kingdom, was pleased, in his wisdom, to consign the government of it to his apostles; and in them, to their successors, constituting these, by a sacred, and unchangeable investiture, the sole rulers of his subjects; and ordaining, at the same time, that their commission should be perpetual. This order of government is what they denominate, “episcopal;”—contending, that bishops, and the individuals, ordained by bishops, are, *alone*, the lawful pastors of the faithful;—*alone*, authorised to rule the church, or to interfere in spiritual things:—and not only this, but moreover, that those bishops alone possess these important privileges, who, through the lapse of revolving ages, and in a direct line of succession, have inherited them from the first apostles. Such are the leading maxims of the religion of the church of England.

Accordingly, guided by these opinions, the first founders of this establishment, at the era of the Reformation, looked carefully around them to find out, where the above order of things,—where this sacred economy,—at that time, subsisted. It subsisted, they discovered,—and they candidly owned the fact,—in the communion alone of the church of Rome,—whose pastors alone, in a direct line of succession, they equally admitted, had inherited the commission of the first founders of the Christian church. The consequence, therefore, was;—they solemnly declared, that they linked themselves to these. They proclaimed these, as their real predecessors; asserting, that it was from them, that they had inherited the right to conduct the faithful; and the authority to administer the sacred mysteries.—Such are the claims; and such the alleged grounds, of the church of England. The reader may find them asserted,—and as-

serted even with peculiar exultation, in the works, both of the ancient, and modern defenders of this establishment;—affecting particularly, by this argument, to point out its very prominent superiority over all the institutions of all our recent sectarists, and dissenters.

It is not, of course, to the principles themselves, thus adopted by the English church, that I am going to make any objections. Those principles, I have been observing, are completely catholic. What alone I here object to,—and what every separatist from the establishment condemns equally,—is *the application* of those principles. This, indeed,—*this application*,—is singular: and, if less fabulous than are the pretexts, which I have thus far discussed, it is not, I conceive, one jot the better founded. I am sure even, that if the members themselves of the establishment would consider the thing with care,—with minds, unwarped by partiality, and uninfluenced by worldly interests,—there would be few, if any, but would allow, that it is pregnant with the most perplexing difficulties,—a system, at once *incoherent*; *improbable*; *inconsistent*;—and, in relation to all the other sects of protestantism, *peculiarly unkind*. It is *incoherent*:—for, as the dissenters daily remark, concerning it,—it proves, if it do prove any thing,—not the commission of the established clergy, but that only (since there do not subsist two divine commissions) of the catholic clergy.—It is *improbable*: because although it be ardently defended by the members of the established church, yet it is rejected by all other classes of believers,—not merely by the catholics, but by every other sect of protestantism.—It is *inconsistent*: for, surely, it is inconsistent to pretend to have derived a divine commission from a church, which was sunk, it is contended, in the abysses of idolatry.* It is, in relation to all the other sects of protestantism, *unkind*. Its effect is absolutely to *unchurch* them all. For, as Dodwell states,—and his

* “How astonishing,” says Towgood, “it is, to see, that from this idolatrous, and apostate church, you derive your spiritual, and sacerdotal powers; and boast, that from her you can trace, by an uninterrupted line, your ecclesiastical descent! Strange! that, without shame, you declare yourselves before the world the offspring of this ‘filthy, withered, old harlot,’ as your church expressly calls her. What absurdities are here!”

opinion is the genuine doctrine of the established religion,—"where there is no episcopal ordination, there is no ministry; no sacrament; no church." This, doubtless, is cruel: for, the protestant, at all events, should be kind, and lenient, to the protestant.—But, having premised these general observations, I will proceed to examine the important question, a somewhat more minutely.

On what pretension, therefore, is it, that the hierarchy of the established church affects to link itself to the golden chain of the catholic priesthood; and to have received from these, its commissions, and its sacred privileges? Is it because its bishops now occupy the sees, and its parsons now fill the livings of their catholic predecessors? Surely, not. For, if the circumstance of a set of pastors merely occupying the sees, and livings, of those, who had gone before them, constituted succession, and inheritance, in religion, it would then follow, that wherever, either by violence, injustice, or the artifices of human policy, one body of clergy took the place of another, they would consequently, become invested with all the rights, and prerogatives, of their predecessors,—a proposition, which, in theology, is false as it is pernicious. In wise theology, or in the order of religion, the mere fact of replacement is nothing. What alone, in religion, constitutes succession, is that replacement, which is *regular, and canonical*,—that is, which is founded upon those venerable laws, and established by those sacred constitutions, by which the order of the Christian hierarchy has been always regulated.

And was not, then, the succession of the protestant clergy to the situations of their catholic predecessors of this nature? Not even is this so much as pretended. The only laws, and canons, which subsisted, at the time of the Reformation, were, of course purely catholic,—formed for the regulation of the catholic religion, and for the order, &c. of its pastoral ministry. To have pretended, therefore, to have organised a protestant church, or to have sanctioned a protestant prelacy, and priesthood, by virtue of these, was a piece of folly, of which the sagacity of our first reformers was incapable. The organisation of the established church, according to the then existing constitutions of religion, was completely uncanonical.

But, might it not be said, that the catholic pastors, when they became superseded by the protestant clergy, —seeing, that they could now, no longer retain their sacred trust,—resigned it into the hands of the latter, as to a set of men, more competent than themselves to instruct, and conduct, the faithful? No; neither can this be asserted. The truth is, that the catholic clergy, upon that occasion, so far from resigning their commission;—so far from transferring any portion of their sacred prerogatives into the hands of the men, who now took their places,—they, on the contrary, asserted them with all their power, by protestations, remonstrances, &c.,—withdrawing reluctantly from their sees, and livings; and not giving up the government of their flocks, until the strong hand of tyranny, and violence, had rendered their retirement an act of absolute necessity. They then solemnly declared,—and so also did the whole catholic church along with them,—that the newly intruded pastors were a set of schismatics:—and as such, excommunicating them, they cut them off from the general fold.—In short, the fact is, that not only did not the ancient pastors resign their divine credentials to the men, who now took their places, but they could not, although even they had willed it, have done so. For, nothing is more exactly regulated by the wisdom of our Redeemer; nothing more correctly defined by the prudence of all ages, than the order, and succession, of the pastoral ministry. This forms an inviolable, and immortal chain, which no revolution can invert; no human policy break asunder; no power transfer to a new order of new believers. So that it is not upon the pretext of any resignation, like the above, supposed to have been made by the catholic pastors, that the established clergy can, with any thing like reason, pretend to explain the grounds of their present power.

But, at least, may it not be contended, that the catholic pastors, on the occasion when they were superseded, and removed from their sees, and functions, *forfeited* their former delegation, and prerogatives; and that thus they passed into the hands of the present clergy? Might not this supposition, at all events, be defended? I reply,—that this is, perhaps, the very best argument, which can be urged in favour of our present national

church, and the most rational system of accounting for its presumed authority. Such supposition is here, in fact, quite necessary. Because, if the clergy of the church of England do now really possess the divine pastoral delegation, the consequence must then necessarily be, that the catholic clergy must have lost it. They could not,—they cannot possibly,—both of them, possess it: because the sacred privilege is essentially *one, and indivisible*. It is even an absurdity to imagine, that it could, or can, subsist in two opposite religions. To suppose this, is putting God at variance with himself; and contending, that he commissions men to preach contrary doctrines, and to establish opposite churches. So that the inference, as I have just said, is manifest;—that, if the present established clergy are now invested with the real pastoral deputation, the catholic clergy must have lost it. Else, if both enjoy the divine prerogative, it then follows, that the former have a commission from God to pull down catholicity; and the latter the same sanction to build it up;—that the former are deputed to establish protestantism; the latter, to reprobate protestantism;—the former, to teach one creed; the latter, another;—propositions, surely, which,—as they are the immediate result of the pretext, which I am now discussing,—are, alone, sufficient to make it appear incredible.

However,—the supposition being thus made, that the protestant clergy did really become the heirs of the apostolic charter; and that, therefore, the catholic clergy must have forfeited the sacred trust,—this singular supposition being thus made,—it, of course, behoves the former to explain, by what means; or by what accident; at what precise time; or upon what occasion, these astonishing acts of disherison, and inheritance, could possibly have taken place. In religion, possession is a still stronger title than it is in human things: and above all, the possession of fifteen hundred years (for, so long the catholic clergy, it is admitted, had continued, without any interruption, to enjoy the pastoral government) is a truly serious claim. And how, then,—from what cause, came the important possession to be lost? What then did the catholic pastors do, to have incurred the unhappy forfeiture? Did they, for example, either broach any new, or abandon any ancient, doctrines? Did they

violate any principles, which, until now, they had venerated, as divine ; or else, reject any authority, which, hitherto, they had respected, as sacred ? In short, did any revolution now take place in their regard, in relation, either to their faith, their maxims, their practices, or their forms of government ? Surely, without some such events ; without some accident or other of the above nature ; it is difficult to imagine, how men, who, but yesterday, were the heirs of the apostolic powers, could, to-day, have lost them ;—how men, whose claims were founded upon the prescription of fifteen hundred years, could, all at once, have sacrificed their sacred rights !—And did there, then, I now ask,—did there occur to the catholic clergy, either any such events, or any such accidents, upon the occasion of their supersedure, as those, which I have just referred to ? I need not say it :—there, certainly, did not. They still continued, in their faith, principles, and practices, what they had always been before ; and what, also, their predecessors had equally been, before them. The only revolution, which they underwent,—and which, indeed, was a great one,—was that, which they experienced from the injustice of their oppressors ;—and which even they experienced, only because they refused to submit to any alteration of their religion. But, if so ; and if at that period they possessed,—as they confessedly did possess,—the apostolical delegation, then I defy any ingenuity to explain, how, either on that occasion, or since that occasion, the catholic clergy could have lost it. Hence, I infer :—*they have not lost it.* And the ulterior conclusion must be :—*therefore the established clergy have not obtained it.* The reason is palpable : the divine prerogative is *one, and indivisible* ; and the idea of a divine commission, existing in two opposite communions, is a contradiction.

The arguments, which I have thus far proposed, as the methods of explaining the grounds of the established church, are those, by which its advocates ought,—if the thing were possible,—to have defended it. They are the most specious reasonings, by which the claims of spiritual authority can be asserted. However, it is not to them,—so replete are they with perplexing difficulties,—that the defenders of the establishment are

plased, in general, to appeal. The argument, which they most commonly make use of, is the following,—not that the catholic prelacy, either resigned, or lost, their own ministerial delegation,—but, that having imparted to the newly-established clergy the sacred institution of *holy orders*, they, hence, along with it, imparted to them, likewise, all the prerogatives of the Christian priesthood,—the right to preach, and to administer the sacraments; and the power to conduct the faithful. It is thus,—that is upon the presumed virtue, and sanction, of this sacred rite,—that they principally found the claims of the established church. “It is by the virtue of this institution,” says Archbishop Laud, “that the bishops of England derive their succession, and mission, from St. Peter.” This boast is common. We find it frequently in the works, both of the early, and modern, defenders of the establishment; who, hence, exultingly proclaim, that this magnificent institution is founded upon the rock of the apostles: that it is thus eminently distinguished from all the churches, and associations of the dissenters; and that its clergy, undoubted heirs of the apostles, are the genuine pastors of the Christian fold.

Men are the easy dupes of error, when once they are under the influences of partiality, or prejudice: and they will eagerly defend, what it is their inclination, and their interest, to support. For, although we give to the above-stated pretension all its force,—that is, supposing it to be true, that the established clergy have really received, and inherited, from their catholic predecessors the sacred institution of holy orders; and that by virtue of this, they are linked, in some respect, to the apostolic chain,—still it does not, for this reason, follow, that they have therefore received, and inherited, the apostolic delegation, or the divine right to conduct the faithful. It is true, indeed, that the reception of holy orders is an essential condition, without which, no one, according to all the venerable maxims of religion, should presume, or pretend, to perform any pastoral function whatsoever. It is the necessary preliminary, and introduction, to the sacred ministry. But, it is simply this. Of itself, the action of consecration, or the impartition of holy orders, confers no mission; communicates no power to conduct the public. If it did this; and if the

mere circumstance of ordination conferred such power,—it would then follow, that whosoever has received that rite, would be, therefore, a competent minister of the Christian church,—a proposition, which is false, as it is manifestly pernicious. For, the consequence would then be, that the pastors of all those sects, and heresies, which have on various occasions, rebelled against the church,—provided only that they had received, and retained, the episcopal consecration,—were still, for this reason, the real pastors of the faithful. So that thus, the ministers of the Donatists; of the Eutychians; of the Nestorians, &c.,—sects, both at variance with the parent church, and with each other,—were, according to this principle, invested, all of them, with the apostolical delegation. For, certain it is, that they had, all of them received, and continued piously to retain, the institution of holy orders; and this, too, in its pure, and unadulterated, forms. However, the above is a conclusion, which no enlightened member of the church of England will admit. *Therefore*, it equally follows, in relation to the established clergy, that the mere circumstance of their having inherited, and received, the consecration of holy orders, does not, of itself, suffice to invest them with divine authority, or to render them the real pastors of the Christian fold.

Indeed, not only is this consequence the result of the foregoing considerations, and of the plainest maxims of sound theology; but it is, moreover, acknowledged, and even regularly acted upon, by the members themselves of the established church. The established church, both in its doctrines, and its principles; both in its canons, and its instructions, distinguishes accurately, and very carefully, between the act of ordination, and the act of mission. It never confounds these two things together;—except upon the occasions, when it defends its claims as derived from the parent institute. The act of ordination it very properly considers as a mere step to the pastoral office; as a sacred ceremony, preparing, indeed, the receiver of it to perform the functions of the spiritual ministry; but not conferring any actual commission to perform them. It imparts, say the writers of this church, “a dignity, but not a service; a rank, but not an employment.” This is so true, that in the office itself of or-

ordination, the person, who is consecrated, so far from receiving, by virtue of this action, any power to perform the functions of a minister,—is, on the contrary expressly restricted from such performance. He is commanded to abstain from all *actual service*, until he shall have received “farther powers.” Nay; he would even subject himself to very serious difficulties, if not to serious punishment, if, without these “farther powers,” he presumed to take upon himself the charge of executing any pastoral duty. The reason is, that according to the laws, and canons, of the establishment; as well as according to the theology of its ablest writers, it is these “farther powers,” that really constitute the pastoral delegation. So that here again the consequence is, that, although even it be conceded, that the established clergy did actually inherit, and do now actually possess, the sacred institution of holy orders; and that, therefore, they are, in virtue of it, really invested with the sacred characters of the priesthood, and the episcopacy,—still, unless they can likewise show, that, along with these dignities, they have received, moreover, the “farther powers,”—that is, the divine commission to exercise them,—unless they can do this, they, in reality, present no proof whatsoever, even according to their own principles, that they are the true pastors of the Christian fold, or the lawful governors of the faithful. It is the commission, not the ordination, that, by the maxims of the church of England, legalises the Christian pastors, and that gives effect to his sacred functions.

Now, that the established clergy did not receive any “farther powers;” or any commission to exercise their priestly, and episcopal functions from their catholic predecessors,—this is a point, which I have already discussed sufficiently. They, most certainly, did not receive from these any such prerogatives. So far from it, they were even deprived of those, with which they had hitherto been invested; and declared schismatics, and innovators. So that to pretend to fix the grounds of the established church, or the authority of its clergy, upon the plea of its having inherited the sacred rite of holy orders, is, in reality, placing them upon a claim, which, besides being involved in inexplicable difficulties, is, moreover, almost as little founded upon wise theology, as are some

of those pretensions, which I have discussed in the foregoing chapters.

But, as the question relating to the English ordinations is both interesting, and curious, I will make it, for these reasons, the subject of some farther considerations, in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE ORDINATIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

“ It is evident unto all men, diligently reading the holy Scripture, and ancient authority, that, from the apostles’ time, there have been three orders of ministers in Christ’s church,—bishops, priests, and deacons; which offices were, evermore, had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, &c. ;—and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands were approved, and admitted thereto by lawful authority.”

PREFACE to the ORDINATION SERVICE.

SUCH is the doctrine of the church of England. It believes, like the catholic, that Christ Jesus has instituted an order of ministers in his church; that these are initiated into it by the application of the episcopal consecration; and that such only, who have received this holy ordinance, are to be considered, either as the pastors of the faithful, or as the administrators of the sacred mysteries. Whence, in conformity to such opinion, it considers the dissenting ministers of every sect, and description, as a mere set of *laymen*, unauthorised to perform any spiritual function, and unfitted to administer any sacrament;—their ministry, no ministry at all; their churches, no churches, according to that statement of Bishop Dodwell, which I have cited already: “where there is no episcopal ordination, there is no ministry; no sacrament; no church.”

I have not, in the foregoing chapter, called in question, nor so much as appeared to suspect the validity of the ordinations, employed by the church of England. I have rather, on the contrary, supposed, or seemed to suppose, that they are valid: and that, consequently, by virtue of them, its prelates are truly bishops; and its

parsons, truly priests. I have, hitherto, seemed to allow all this. But, what then, must the consequence be, if it should so turn out, that its ordinations are, after all, *null*? and that, notwithstanding the confident claims, which it arrogates to itself of having inherited the genuine forms, and rite, of holy orders from the parent church,—still, it does not possess them? The consequence, in such case would be most serious; and indeed, according to the maxims themselves of the establishment, ruinous to its pretensions. For, it would thus, according to the words, just cited from Dodwell, “be no church; have no ministry; no sacrament.” Such would confessedly, be the effects, that would result to the established church from the nullity of its ordinations.

The consideration, therefore, of this awful question is, to the members of this religion, an object of the most vital interest. It has, accordingly, both at the early periods of the Reformation, and on many occasions since, awakened all the solicitude, and stimulated all the talents, zeal, and ingenuity, of its best defenders. In fact, no question deserved their attention better.—However, to the catholic, the subject,—though certainly very interesting,—is yet, after all, but a matter of secondary moment. Because, since even valid ordinations do not, of themselves confer any *commission*,—the real grounds of all pastoral power,—so, of course, not even would the certainty of the validity of the English orders suffice, by any means, to prove the divine foundation of the established church. It would prove, indeed,—just as it did in the cases of the Donatist, and the Nestorian, clergy,—that the men, who have received the sacred consecration, are really bishops, and priests:—but, it would prove nothing more. It would not prove, that they are authorised, either to conduct the faithful, or to exercise any pastoral function. For these reasons,—although I am quite unable to believe, yet I am not going to *deny*, the validity of our English ordinations. I am going only to state a few of those many circumstances, which, to my apprehension of things,—and according to what I consider the dictates of impartial criticism, appear to render the claim extremely *doubtful, and improbable*.

In the first place, it is a circumstance, which ought, I conceive, to have some weight upon the protestant,

who is not biassed by partiality, or warped by prejudice, —and which should, more or less, abate the confidence, which he is pleased to found upon the alleged pretension, —that, notwithstanding all the ardor, and eloquence, with which it has been, and is yet, defended,—it was, still, very little regarded by the *first* fathers, and apostles, of the English church. For, referring to the sentiments which those men, nearly all of them, entertained, respecting the subject of ordination, and the derivation of any pedigree from the parent church, it will be found, that they were, not only very vague, and slovenly, but completely the reverse to those, which now constitute the general doctrines of the established clergy. “The first English reformers,” says Dr. M’Crie, “by no means considered ordination by the parent church, or descending from the parent church, as necessary. They would have laughed at the man, who would have asserted seriously, that the imposition of the hands of the bishop was essential to the validity of ordination. They would not have owned that person, as a protestant, who would have ventured to insinuate, that, where this was wanting, there was no Christian ministry; no ordinance; no church; —and perhaps, no salvation.”—“The private opinions,” he adds, “of the first English reformers were similar to those of the reformers of Swisserland, and Geneva.—Hooper, in a letter, dated February 8, 1550, informs Bullinger, that the archbishop of Canterbury; the bishops of Rochester, Ely, St. David’s, Lincoln, and Bath, agreed *in all things* with the Helvetic churches. Packhurst, bishop of Norwich, in a letter to Gualter, does the same.—Cranmer says positively, that bishops, and priests, are not two things, but one office, in the beginning of Christ’s religion. Doctors Cox, and Redman, say the same thing. Thirteen bishops, and a great number of ecclesiastics, subscribed the proposition. Latimer, and Hooper maintained the identity of bishops, and pastors, by divine institution. So also did Pilkinton, Bishop of Durham, Jewell,” &c.

Another protestant writer,—Mr. Macdiarmid,—speaking of the notions, which Cranmer entertained upon the subjects of episcopacy, and episcopal power, observes: —“Cranmer so fully considered himself as merely an officer, acting by the king’s authority; and was so fully

convinced, that his episcopal power ended, like that of other officers, with the life of the monarch, who conferred it, that, on the death of Henry VIII, he refused to exercise any jurisdiction, till he had received a new commission from King Edward.”—Indeed, not only did this venerable patriarch of the English church carry his ideas to the foregoing degree of latitude, but he even went so far, Burnet tells us, as to maintain, that no ordination whatsoever is required to make men bishops, or priests, but merely the king’s election, and nomination. “He contended,” says the historian,—who, also, has preserved the document, which attests the fact,—“he contended, in an assembly of bishops, that the king’s election, and nomination, alone, without any ceremony of ordination, sufficed to make priests, and bishops.”—The same notion, Collier also informs us, was, in like manner, entertained by Barlow, the supposed consecrator of Archbishop Parker;—and which, hence, ought here to appear the more striking. “Barlow,” he says, “maintained the same singular proposition.”—Such as these,—so loose, and crude, were the sentiments, which the first founders of the church of England entertained upon the subjects of ordination, and spiritual power. The reason is obvious. They were perplexed.* They felt the difficulty, and the inconsistency, of pretending to have derived a protestant mission from catholic pastors. They considered it an absurdity to affect to have received any spiritual generation from a church, which they had reprobated, as idolatrous; and were actually pulling down, as antichristian. Their opinions, if they be entitled,—as surely they should be,—to the respect of the established clergy, or of the protestant in general,

* We find, that even so late as the year 1562, when Parker, Jewell, Horn, &c., gave out their new version of the Scriptures, distorting the sacred text, they interpreted the χειροτονία, (which antiquity, always, and even modern protestant translators, *now*, interpret “the imposition of hands,”)—they interpreted this,—“ordination by election,”—meaning thus to imply, that the election of the prince, without the need of any episcopal consecration, suffices to make men bishops. This translation was suffered, too, to remain in the approved versions of the Bible, until the reign of James the First, when the ancient letter,—“imposition of hands,”—was again restored to the sacred text. The circumstance of the perverted, but artful expedient, serves forcibly to point out the sentiments of the men, who used it.

ought, at all events, to lessen that overweening confidence, which they found upon the alleged grounds of episcopal ordinations.

However, it is true, that the above opinions, although thus strikingly recommended; and although even they continued to be the prevailing doctrines of the reformers, during the reigns, both of Henry, and the sixth Edward,—yet, on the accession of Elizabeth,—the real foundress of the present establishment,—they appear to have considerably subsided; and sentiments, more consonant to the venerable doctrines of antiquity, again returned to engage the public mind. At all events, this is certain, that Elizabeth had not imbibed the Calvinistic notions of the first reformers. She had been educated more or less a catholic; and although, from motives of policy, and temporal interest, she had resolved to pull down the catholic church,—still, revering many of its institutions, she, at the same time, was desirous to retain them. She was an admirer of the episcopal order; either because she considered it as established by our Redeemer for the government of his kingdom;—because it was consonant to the general wishes of the public;—because it was a splendid, and ornamental thing;—or else, because she looked upon it as the best remedy against the growth of puritanism; which, also, she disliked, as peculiarly hostile to the claims of monarchy. She therefore,—beginning, as she now was, to organise anew, both the church, and the state,—determined to preserve the sacred institution.

But then, there occurred here a very serious, and perplexing, difficulty. It was,—how to procure the consecrators of her new ministry. She had deposed, and imprisoned, the catholic bishops; who, all, save Kitchin, had refused to take the oath of supremacy:—whilst, in relation to Edward's prelates, she seems,—as they were a set of Zuinglians; and as, moreover, their consecration had been declared null, in the preceding reign of Mary,—she seems to have entertained a very mean opinion of their competency to perform the sacred rite. Wherefore, knowing, as she did, that the real episcopal character was vested in the persons of the catholic bishops, she, accordingly, although reluctantly,—for, she had persecuted them severely,—addressed herself

to these. She, in the first instance, indeed,—being apprehensive of a refusal,—applied to Dr. Creagh, the archbishop of Armagh, who was, at that time, a prisoner in the Tower. She urged him to perform the important task,—promising him, upon this condition, not only his liberty, but great rewards. However, the good man refused.—Disappointed in this attempt, she now, therefore, applied to the aforesaid prelates. She issued a commission, directed to the following individuals,—Tonstal, bishop of Durham; Bourne, of Bath; Pole, of Peterborough; and Kitchin, of Llandaff,—joining to them, in the instrument, Barlow, moreover, and Scorey; and directing them to consecrate Dr. Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury. But, the four former, just like the venerable Creagh, resolutely declined the office. Not even could Kitchin himself, with all his mean obsequiousness, be induced to perform it. Wherefore, hopeless of success from any of the ancient prelates, she now issued another commission, addressed to William Barlow, John Scorey, Miles Coverdale, and John Hodskins; empowering these to consecrate, as archbishop of Canterbury, Doctor Matthew Parker. These men, therefore, *according to the testimony of the Lambeth register*,—performed the important action. The ceremony took place, says the same instrument, upon the 17th of December, anno 1559. Thus was created and organised, the present hierarchy of the established church; thus were laid the foundations of its pastoral power; and thus, also, say its defenders, its ministers are now portions of those hallowed links, which constitute the apostolic chain.

But, alas.—such is, for ever, the fate of religious innovations, scarcely had the above act taken place, (if, indeed, it ever did take place,) when a series of doubts, and apprehensions, founded upon a great variety of motives, began to agitate the public mind. The catholics, who still formed the far larger portion of the nation, unanimously denied, not only the competency of the aforesaid men to perform the act of episcopal consecration,—but they denied even, that they had ever, themselves, received such consecration. They contended that Barlow, the chief acting consecrator, (as it was alleged) on the eventful occasion, was no bishop. Such was the lan-

guage of the catholics; who loudly, at the same time, and incessantly, called upon their protestant antagonists to produce,—if the fact were really true—some attestation or other to evince it:—as to evince it, was certainly of the most vital moment to the church of England.—But, so it is:—the attestation was sought for, and has been sought for, till the present day,—*in vain*. Neither archbishop Bramhall, with all his industry; nor Mason, with all his art; nor Burnet, with all his researches; nor Warton, with all his learning, could ever find out the useful instrument. So that Stevens, a learned protestant clergyman, makes the following observation upon the circumstance: “It is a wonderful thing, by what chance, or providence, it happened, that Barlow’s consecration, who was the principal actor in this, should no where appear; nor any positive proof of it be found, in more than four-score years since it was first questioned, by all the search, that could be made by so many learned, and industrious, and curious, persons.” (Great Question.) The thing is, indeed, certain, that the supposed consecration of Barlow is one of those facts, which not all the diligence, nor all the ingenuity, of the established clergy have, ever yet, been able to evince satisfactorily;—a circumstance, surely, which should seem to merit very serious consideration. For, if Barlow, *the consecrator*, were not, himself, a bishop,—then neither could he make Parker, *the consecrated*, such:—since, according to the received principle of the church of England, it is only a bishop, that can make a bishop.*

A circumstance, too, which, possibly, might have increased the unwillingness of the public to believe in the consecration of Barlow, was the well-known opinion, which this man had, himself, long entertained, and publicly avowed, upon the subject of episcopal ordination. It was his professed doctrine, declared solemnly before the assembly of Bishops, &c.; which was held at Windsor, in the first year of the reign of Edward VI.,—that episcopal consecration is an useless ceremony; and that the king’s nomination suffices, alone, to make a bishop. This is a fact, which both Burnet, in his History of the Reformation; and Stillingfleet, in his Irenicon, each of them, admit. The thing, no doubt, was calculated to increase the public suspicion, respecting the man’s own consecration. For, if he had been really consecrated, he would not, they conceived, have thought, and spoken, as he had done. The opinion, too, might have been somewhat confirmed by the consideration of the well-known fact, that, although both Latimer, and Ridley, had acted, as bishops; and sat in parliament, as such, yet they had not, either of them, received any other consecration, save that of

Another consideration, which, at least equally with the preceding, excited a great deal of suspicion, not only in the minds of catholics, but also amongst multitudes of thinking protestants, was this,—that even the very action itself of the alleged consecration of Parker was very generally disbelieved;—as it, certainly, does now appear to be a very dark, and mysterious, question. “If,” said the public, “a ceremony of such infinite importance have really taken place, how then comes it, that there are no undoubted evidences to attest it?—no witness to vouch for it? How comes it, that it has not been generally known, and noticed?” Hence, the catholic writers of that period,—men, too, the most acute, and learned; men, who watched every occurrence; and pryed into every event, in the new order of things; men, moreover, who were, some of them, personally acquainted with the newly-appointed bishops, (they were such men as Harding, Stapleton, Allen, Bristow,) all loudly declared, that the whole transaction was an empty fiction.—They defied their antagonists,—Jewell, Horn, &c.,—to prove the contrary. “You say,” observed Harding to Jewell, “that you are a bishop by the consecration of the archbishop (Parker). But, pray, how was the archbishop himself consecrated? Your metropolitan, who should give authority to all your consecrations, had, himself, no consecration.” To these challenges,—at a time, when, if ill-founded, it was most easy; and certainly most important, to have refuted them,—no satisfactory answer was returned.—The circumstance, too, is singular, that the alleged act of the consecration of Parker is not noticed by any protestant writer, or historian, of that

priesthood. Thus, Fox relates in his Martyrology, that, when these men, previously to their execution, were solemnly degraded by the spiritual power, the officiating minister on the occasion,—Dr. Brooks, the bishop of Gloucester,—“declared them degraded, not from the episcopal character, because they had never received it,—but only from their priestly character.” The situation of Barlow was, probably, similar to theirs. If bishop, he was only such by princely nomination. “Even Cromwell,” says Towgood, “the vicegerent of Henry, could make bishops.”

It would seem as if Bishop Bancroft himself, at the beginning of the reign of James, entertained no very strong conviction of the episcopal character of Barlow. For, when pressed by Dr. Alabaster, on the subject of Parker’s consecration, his reply was: “I hope, in case of necessity, a priest may be sufficient for to ordain a bishop.”

period,—not even by Stowe himself, the warm friend, and confidant, of the prelate. I do not say, that this silence was sufficient to authorise the conclusion, that the ceremony did not take place. But, it was enough to excite,—as it did, and for ever must, excite,—very strong suspicions, upon the subject.

A third consideration, which, again, in the eyes of multitudes, contributed to lessen their confidence in the first protestant ordinations, was the circumstance, that they were completely *uncanonical*;—and indeed not only this, but even *illegal* too. They were *uncanonical*, because they were administered without the consent, both of the metropolitan, and of the bishops of the province;—or rather, in direct opposition to the will of both of them. They were *uncanonical*, because neither Barlow, nor his fellow-consecrators, (supposing these men to have really performed the act; and to have been really, at the same time, bishops) possessed, at the period of the supposed ceremony, one particle of canonical jurisdiction. They were even, at that period, themselves, under the sentence of canonical deposition from every religious function.—I have said, too, that these first ordinations, besides being uncanonical, were, moreover, *illegal*. This, indeed, is certain. Because the first consecrators, when they are supposed to have performed the solemn act, were then actually labouring under the sentence of legal deprivation by the state itself. The case was this:—the laws of Mary, which had repealed the ordinal of Edward, were still in force; not having been, as yet, altered by the authority of the parliament. The ordinal of Edward had been repealed, and condemned, in the year 1553,—the first of Mary. This repeal, and condemnation, continued still, the standing law of the nation, until the year 1562,—the third of Elizabeth. And it was during the above interval, that Parker's presumed consecration, as well as that of a few other prelates, are supposed to have taken place; and that these men did actually take possession of the sees of their catholic predecessors.—So that the whole transaction is thus replete with objections,—a breach of the canons, which it violated; and an outrage of the laws which it infringed. Insomuch that our historians tell us, that the newly-intruded bishops began, themselves, to be uneasy. “It was doubted,” says Neale,

“whether Parker’s consecration was canonical: 1st, because the persons, engaged in it, had been canonically deprived; and were not yet restored; 2ndly, because the consecration ought to have been directed according to the statute of the 25th of Henry VIII; and not according to the form of King Edward’s ordinal; inasmuch as that book had been set aside in the last reign, and was not yet restored by parliament. These objections made the new bishops uneasy. They began to doubt of the validity of their ordination.” *

Indeed, induced by the above considerations, as well as by many others, which I have not cited, there were several protestant writers;—and these, too, very distinguished members of the established church,—who fairly gave up the pretended claim; going even so far as to throw ridicule upon the notion of a protestant church deriving orders from the church of Rome. Such were Whitaker, Fulke, Sutcliff, &c. “I would not have you think,” says the former writer, “that we make such reckoning of your orders, as to hold our own voca-

* We may trace a similar kind of diffidence pervading the minds of the queen’s judges, even some time after the consecration, or supposed consecration, of the new prelate. Bonner had refused to take the oath of supremacy, which had been tendered to him by Horn, the presumed bishop of Winchester. His refusal was founded upon the plea, that Horn was not really a bishop; nor, therefore, properly empowered to enquire, or tender, such oath. The case excited great attention. It was first tried in the public court; and then referred to the consideration of all the judges. These, having long deliberated upon it, decided, that the plea of Bonner should be received, and the case be again committed to a jury, in the county of Surrey. However, here, Heylin informs us, the government interfered; and commanded,—deeming the thing more prudent,—“that the decision of the point should be referred to the following parliament, for fear that such a weighty matter might miscarry.” Here, then, the business appears to have stopped. For, Bonner, although so peculiarly hateful to the protestants, was no more molested. However, it was in the ensuing parliament, (8 Eliz.) that, in order, in some degree, to check the growing scandal, the new bishops were declared, at all events, “legal bishops;”—whence, they long bore the name of “parliamentary bishops.”

And not only did this diffidence prevail, during the earlier periods after the first organisation of the new religion,—it continued, we find,—and this, again, amongst the protestants,—even so late as in the reign of the first Charles. Thus, Panzani, the papal envoy at this prince’s court; and who, from his intercourse with the chief nobility, was peculiarly competent to know their sentiments,—informs us, in his Memoirs, that “nearly all the principal nobility, who died,—although reputed protestants,—died catholics.”

tion unlawful without them. And therefore keep your orders to yourselves." The language of Fulke is similar to this. "You are much deceived," he says, in his reply to a counterfeit catholic, "you are much deceived, if you think, we esteem your offices of bishops, priests, and deacons, any better than laymen; and you presume too much to think, that we receive your ordering to be lawful. Again, with all our hearts, we defy, abhor, detest and spit at your stinking, greasy, antichristian, orders." (Retentive.) Surely, it is not thus, that these men would have written, if they had conceived, that the hierarchy of their church had derived its commission, and received its sacred character, through the medium of the ancient pastors.

The doubts, the misgivings, and apprehensions, which thus pervaded the feelings of the public, were peculiarly injurious to the new order of things; and might even, unless they had been arrested, have proved fatal to it. Elizabeth, and her ministers, were feelingly sensible of this: and they, accordingly, devised a variety of expedients to stay the growing evil. Amongst other contrivances for this purpose, they issued a proclamation, wherein they caution the public against "the slanders," cast upon the new order of the episcopacy; assuring them, that "the same evil speech, and talk, is not grounded upon any just matter, or cause." This, no doubt, was charitable. But, as such assurances did not suffice to allay the general discontent, a remedy, more effectual, was now resorted to. It was this:—clothing herself in the mantle of that spiritual omnipotence, which the laws had conferred upon her; and addressing a commission to the newly-created pastors,—Elizabeth solemnly tells them, that she now, by virtue of her supreme power, dispenses with every defect; and supplies for every deficiency, which may have attended their ordination. "*We supply,*" she says to them, "by our supreme royal authority, whatsoever is wanting, or shall be wanting, in order to the performance of the premises; either in the things, which shall be done by you, or in any one of you, your condition, state, or power, &c.—*the circumstances of the time, and the urgency of affairs, rendering it necessary.*"—Such was the contrivance; such panacea, designed by the ingenuity of Elizabeth, and her ministers, to remove the

doubts, and to appease the apprehensions, of the public, on the score of the new-formed hierarchy. If seriously considered, the scheme was rather calculated to heighten suspicion, than to allay it.

Accordingly, it did not allay it. The doubts, and fears, and suspicions, of the public still remained unabated. Wherefore, she had now recourse (this was in the eighth year of her reign)—she had now recourse to a better, because a somewhat stronger, expedient. She procured an act of parliament to be passed, to give an additional force, and sanction, to the preceding mandate. In this, she again declares to the nation, that, “by her supreme power, and authority, she has dispensed with all causes, and doubts, of any imperfections, or disabilities, that can, or may, in any wise, be objected against the same, &c. So that it is, and may be, very evident, and apparent, that no cause of scruple, ambiguity, or doubt, can, or may, justly, be objected, against the said elections, confirmations, or consecrations. Wherefore, be it now declared, and enacted, that all persons, that have been, or shall be, made, ordered, or consecrated, archbishops, bishops, &c., after the form, and order, prescribed in the said order, and form, how archbishops, bishops, &c., should be consecrated,—be, in very deed, archbishops, bishops, &c.—any statute, law, canon, or other being, to the contrary, notwithstanding.” Such is the act, or rather abstract, of the act, provided by the policy of Elizabeth, for the security of the established church; for the confirmation of its pastors; and for the removal of the public scruples. “It was thus,” says Heylin, speaking of the above law,—“it was thus, that the church is strongly settled upon its natural pillars.”

How far the singular measure may have removed, or is calculated to remove, the scruples of the protestant mind, it is not for me to say. Neale tells us, that “it removed the scruples of the bishops.” (It put these men, let the reader observe, in possession of the privileges, and temporal prerogatives, of their catholic predecessors:—which, no doubt, was, not a little, calculated to cure *their* scruples.) But, is the act itself really of such nature, as to suffice to allay the doubts, and to satisfy the misgivings, of a prudent man? I think not. It admits the defects, to which the public had objected: only, it *dispenses with*

them. But, then, by what authority? By the authority of a female, assuming to herself far more than papal power; and by the sanction of a set of legislators, invested with no spiritual character, but created only for the enactment of temporal, and human, laws. To my feelings, the circumstance appears less calculated to appease old apprehensions, than to inspire, and awaken, fresh ones.

The apprehensions, indeed, still continued general. The catholics pressed the awful subject incessantly upon the public attention. And whilst it annoyed the established clergy, it had, also, the effect of withholding, or withdrawing, multitudes from their communion. Hence, some proceeding, again, more efficacious, if possible, than any of the foregoing ones, became very urgently necessary. The resources of art are infinite: and therefore, the useful secret was, at length, discovered.

One of the great arguments, the reader has seen, which the catholics had made use of to disprove the validity of the new ordinations;—or rather, to give no credit to them,—was this,—that there did not exist any evidence even to attest the alleged, and simple, fact, that the consecration of Parker, the great keystone of the new episcopal arch, had ever, itself, so much as taken place. There was no register, they said; no seal, or document, to prove it. The objection was, certainly, striking; and it gave rise to great perplexity. However, behold, at length, (it was after the long interval of above fifty years) the great mystery became unravelled. Turning over, one day, at Lambeth, a heap of musty records, and long neglected papers, the learned, and curious, Mr. Mason, who was, at that time, the chaplain of archbishop Abbott, chanced to hit upon the very instrument, which had so long been wanted; and which the catholics had in vain, so loudly called for,—*the very register itself of Parker's consecration!* The discovery was deemed quite providential; and at all events, particularly fortunate. In this important document, there are attested, not only the fact of the consecration of Parker, the place, the time, &c.; but the whole process, and order, of the ceremony. So that now it was hoped, that the objections of the catholics would be silenced, at least upon this score.

I have not denied the validity of the English ordinations. For this reason, I am not going to assert, either that the above register was not discovered: or that the ceremony, which it announces, was not performed. My design is only to show, that, in what relates to the new hierarchy, there is always a something or other, that is awkward; and that tends to excite suspicion.—No sooner, then, was the instrument brought forward, and triumphantly proclaimed, than the catholics,—for the spirit of criticism is never still,—protested positively against it. They treated it, as a piece of forgery, — the useful dictate of the archbishop, and the handywork of Mason. Perhaps, they were mistaken. But after all there was, certainly, a great deal in the whole transaction, that was calculated to awake suspicion. An instrument, or attestation, such as the above, was of the highest moment to the protestant cause; both in order to silence the reproaches of the catholics, and to appease the uneasiness of the public. The catholics had incessantly called for it, and challenged the new prelates to produce it. “We say to you, Mr. Jewell,” called out Harding, “and to each of your companions, show us the register of your bishops; show us the letters of your orders.” The challenge was given in vain. No register was produced; no letters of orders were cited. It was only after the long lapse of four and fifty years, that the useful evidence, at last, came to light. Now, whence this astonishing silence? Whence, this long neglect, or forgetfulness, of a document, which must have been of infinite service to the newly-established church? If it had really existed, said the catholics, it could neither have been neglected, nor forgotten. Hence, they inferred, that the instrument was *a forgery*. I have just now said, that possibly their opinion was false. Their arguments, too, are only negative. Still, however, there is much in the whole business, that is singular; much, that, according to the canons of general criticism, it is difficult to reconcile, and solve; and much, therefore, (for, this is all, that I am now contending)—much, that leaves ample room for doubt, and apprehension.

I will consider only one farther circumstance, in relation to the present subject. It is one, which, like those, which I have been discussing, has always been the source

of a great deal of controversy ; and to multitudes the occasion of a great deal of diffidence, and fear. It is a circumstance, moreover, peculiarly important ; and happily, less involved in any obscurity, and more easy to appreciate, than the arguments, just dismissed. It is a circumstance, which, although it may still leave room for doubt to some minds, removes every doubt from *mine* :—insomuch that if there existed no other motive for disbelieving the validity of the English ordinations, this alone would engage *me* to do so. I am alluding to the *form* of ordination, which is prescribed in the ordinal of Edward VI ; and which was, alone, made use of by the established church, during the interval of upwards of a century. If that form be invalid, the whole question is at once decided. For then, invalid also must have been the ordinations, imparted by it. Because it is only a *valid* form, that can confer a *valid* consecration, and therefore, create a *valid*, and real, priesthood. So that nearly the whole dispute, which relates to the established church, might be compressed into the investigation of this single, and simple, question.

It is a maxim, then, in religion, which the members of the established church admit, equally with the catholics ; and which indeed no rational believer will contest,—that, in the administration of the sacraments, or in the dispensation of those external mediums, which our divine Redeemer has established, in order to confer grace, and sanctification, upon the faithful,—it is essential to employ only those *forms*, and to retain that *matter*, which have been selected by his wisdom, and sanctioned by his authority. The reason of this is manifest. It is,—that since grace is not in the power, nor under the control, of man, so it is not, consequently, within the power of any human being to attach its gift, or communication, to any external act, or object. To do this, is only in the will, and power, of him, who is the author of grace, and the source of sanctification.—Accordingly, the consequence is,—and it is also the doctrine of the established church,—that, since episcopacy is a sacred institution, and imparted through the external medium of holy orders,—so, of course, only *that form* should be employed in its communication ;—only *that form* can effectually confer the hallowed dignity, which

has been dictated to us, and established, by the eternal wisdom. It must necessarily be divine. And since, too,—in conformity to the nature of things, and to the properties of all the other institutions of grace,—since it is established, in order to confer *a peculiar grace, and a peculiar character*, so it ought, moreover, to be composed of such words, or of such an order of terms, as are expressive of such grace, and descriptive of such appropriate character. This, too, is a maxim, which the theology of the English church admits.

Wherefore these preliminary observations made,—let us now proceed to examine, what that form of ordination is, which is prescribed in King Edward's ordinal; and which, also, I have observed, was, alone, made use of in the consecration of the English hierarchy, for the space of above a century. The following is the tenor of it: "Take the Holy Ghost; and remember, that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of hands: for, God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and soberness."—That these are the words, which, along with the imposition of hands, constitute the form of the episcopal consecration, is a point, which no one, I conceive, will pretend to call in question. For, except these, there is certainly nothing in the whole series of the rest of the expressions, that can reasonably appear to do so. Whoever weighs all the words, which are made use of in the administration of the sacred rite,—whether those, which precede the above; or those, which follow them,—will feel convinced, that there is not any thing, in either of them, to which it is possible to attach the grace, and virtue, of consecration. The words, which precede the above, imply manifestly, that the individual, upon whom the solemn action is now performing, is not yet consecrated. The words, which follow them, just as obviously imply, that he is now consecrated. In short, if there be any thing in the aforesaid ordinal, that constitutes the form, and can be supposed to communicate the character, of the episcopal order, it is, beyond all doubt, comprised in the terms, just cited," "Take the Holy Ghost," &c.

Now, is there indeed sufficient reason, I here ask, to induce any prudent man to believe, without at least some feelings of apprehension,—that this form is certainly va-

lid?—that it is really that same sacred order of words, which, dictated by the divine wisdom, has served always to create, and to preserve, in the Christian church, the dignity, and distinction, of the episcopal body? I think not; although it were merely for the following reason,—that such form is not only different from that, which had been always hitherto employed in the parent church, but different even from every thing that had ever been hitherto employed in any Christian church. As a form of ordination, it is completely *new*. And this circumstance alone is sufficient, I will not say, to render it invalid,—but, at all events, to render it extremely dubious. It is true, indeed, that, in relation to the words themselves,—being the words of the sacred Scripture,—they are, hence, sacred, and ancient. But then, they are no where prescribed in the holy volume, as the form, or order, of the episcopal consecration. They are words, addressed to an individual, who had, long since, received the episcopal consecration; and containing in themselves little else than a mere exhortation to piety. In short, as I have remarked, they are, as a form of ordination, *new*;—no where, until the recent creation of the church of England, to be found in any ordinal or ritual, either catholic, heretical, or schismatical.—a consideration this, which, alone, should serve to awaken doubt.

I have observed likewise, that, since the episcopal consecration is designed to confer a peculiar character; and to impart an appropriate grace, and authority,—so the terms, which are employed in the sacred rite, ought, of course, to be, more or less, expressive of these benefits. This, too, is a maxim, which, being consonant to the nature of things, the theologians of the English church make no difficulty to admit. “When Christ,” says Mason, who is the great defender of the English ordinations, “when Christ commanded, that ministers should be created, his command implied, that fit words should be used in ordaining of them,—that is such words, as might contain the power of the order, then given. And these words, inasmuch as they denote the power given, are the *essential form* of that order.” Now if this principle be.—as it certainly is,—correct,—behold then, again, in this circumstance, another motive, if not absolutely to deny, at all events to call in question, the validity of the fore-

stated form. For, it is evident, that there is nothing in it,—nothing in the words, which compose it,—that either denotes any peculiar grace, or that expresses any particular character,—nothing “as might contain the power of the order given.” The words relate no more to the episcopal, than they do to the priestly dignity. Indeed, not only this, but they point out no dignity, no office, no function, or character, whatsoever. They are words, which might be used in the administration of any sacrament,—of baptism, of the eucharist, of confirmation;—or still farther, on the occasions of prayer, or exhortation;—as it was, in reality, upon the occasion simply of exhortation, that they were addressed by St. Paul to his disciple, Timothy. So that, hence, I again infer,—that, precisely as there is reason to doubt of the validity of the above form, on account of its *novelty*,—so likewise there is at least an equally well-founded motive to do so, on account of its apparent *insufficiency*.

It seldom chanced, that the protestant will condescend to acquiesce in any kind of suggestion, which comes from the catholic—be this ever so wise, palpable, or even necessary. Prejudice, the fruit of ignorance; or partiality, the effect of habit;—are sure, nearly always, to check the useful act. However, here,—in relation to the question, which is now before us,—singular as the circumstance is, and if well considered, decisive, perhaps, of the whole controversy,—here, the case is not so. Here, we have an instance of wisdom;—an example of one of those slow, and compunctious, returns to moderation, which, only now and then, occur to surprise us in the annals of religious rancour. The catholics had, long, and incessantly, forced upon the attention of the established clergy the very striking imperfections of their form of ordination,—its novelty; its inadequacy, &c.—which the latter, unable, perhaps to see, or at least, unwilling to own, had also, long, and very ardently, defended. However, at length,—either because they were struck by the force of evidence, or because they were alarmed at the idea of their own insecurity,—they began to relent. They now deemed it prudent, not indeed openly to avow the nullity of the above form, (this could not be expected from them) but, very sensibly, to change the terms of it. They did this;—substituting in room of the preceding

terms, others, which are certainly a great deal more rational, and consistent; more conformable to ancient precedent; and expressing, as such an institution ought to express, both the nature of the office intended to be conferred, and the character of the grace appropriate to it. In short, rejecting the long-used form, they now adopted the following new one in its stead: "Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office, and work, of a bishop, in the church of God, now committed unto thee, by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And remember, that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of our hands. For, God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and soberness." (They, too, besides this, made a similar alteration, at the same time, in the form of ordaining priests; because they now considered this, like that for the consecration of the prelacy, imperfect.) The above alterations were effected, in the reign of the second Charles, in the year 1662,—that is, exactly a hundred and twelve years after the introduction of the forms, prescribed in the ordinal of Edward the Sixth. For Burnet dates the introduction of this ordinal, in the year 1550.

It is not my intention to discuss the merits of this new improvement. Neither will I examine, any farther than I have done, what the reasons were, which induced its authors to adopt it,—whether it was in consequence of the suggestions, and importunities, of the catholics, as I have seemed to suppose; or in consequence merely of the dictates of their own good sense. The only observation, which I shall make, and which also is a very obvious one, is this,—that, since, in their wisdom, they did reject their own long-established forms, both of episcopal, and priestly, ordination,—they, therefore, must have deemed them,—I will not say, invalid,—but, at all events, doubtful, and imperfect. For, surely, if this had not been the case; or if they had not considered them defective;—it is impossible, with any thing like reason, to account for their conduct. They would not,—*they could not*,—have rejected, or altered, what they looked upon as perfect, or as an order of things, instituted by the eternal wisdom; or as handed down to them from the apostles. They, most certainly, could not have done

this. It was a piece of presumption, of which they were incapable. *Therefore*, is the consequence obvious, which I have just been stating,—namely, that since the English clergy have, in their prudence, thought proper to change their once-established forms of ordination; they must, consequently, have considered them, if not absolutely null,—at all events, doubtful, and imperfect.

If the supposition be once admitted ;—or, if it be true, that those forms were really invalid,—then are the effects, in this case, truly awful to the established church ;—so awful indeed, as even, according to its own maxims, to destroy all the claims of its ministers to the genuine dignity of the Christian priesthood. For, if those forms were invalid, then, of course, it must follow, that the consecrations of the individuals, to whom they were applied, must have been invalid too :—since it is only a valid form, that can possibly confer a valid consecration. The application of an invalid form, let it be made by whomsoever, or in whatsoever manner, it may, is but an empty, and unmeaning ceremony,—*its effect none*. Consequently, consecrated as were the whole prelacy, and priesthood, of the established church, during the space of upwards of a century, by no other forms than those, prescribed in the ordinal of Edward,—it plainly follows, that, if they were null,—then, null also must have been all the consecrations, designed to have been effected by them. Such consecrations, however solemnly performed, were completely unavailing ;—leaving the individuals, upon whom they were performed, precisely what they were before the awful act,—priests, if hitherto they had been priests ;—laymen, if, until now, they had been laymen.

But, there is another consequence, which results immediately from the preceding one ;—and which again, like it,—and even still more than it,—deserves the most serious consideration of the thoughtful protestant. It is this,—that if the forms of Edward's ordinal were invalid, then are the orders, both of the episcopacy, and the priesthood, long since, extinct in the church of England. The reason is plain :—those forms had, *alone*, been made use of in this church, for upwards of a hundred years ;—its prelates, and its ministers, having been, all of them, during that interval, consecrated solely by

them. Therefore, if they were really null,—and hence, incompetent to communicate the pastoral character,—so it is, of course, evident, that, when the alteration of them took place, in 1662, (that is, *a hundred and twelve years after their first introduction*) this sacred dignity must ere this, have vanished. It is true, that, at the above epoch, the established clergy, sensible of the defects of those forms, introduced, and employed, new ones, far wiser, in their stead. But, then, unfortunately, the improvement, after such length of interval, could not possibly have been of any avail. It came too late. For, if the men, who now began to use the new forms, had not been themselves validly ordained, they could not, now,—the thing is evident,—validly ordain their brethren. They could not impart a character, which they did not, themselves, possess;—could not make priests, or bishops, unless they were, themselves, such;—as it is a maxim of the established church, that it is only a bishop, that can make a priest, or bishop. So that, if once the invalidity of the forms of ordination, prescribed in Edward's ordinal, be established, the consequence, in this case, is undeniable,—that then the real pastoral character, and commission, have been long since, extinguished in the church of England; and that, therefore again, by an ulterior consequence, this establishment reposes upon no grounds, which can be prudently deemed divine; according to that principle of Dodwell, already cited; and which also is a fixed principle of the English church: “Where there is no real, and episcopal, ordination, there is no ministry, no church,” &c.

Such as these,—for I have cited only a few of them,—are the difficulties, which surround the question of our English ordinations,—that, “question of questions,” as it has justly been denominated by several of its defenders. Its difficulties, indeed, to whosoever has discussed the subject carefully, are—besides being very various,—in the highest degree perplexing. It is involved in obscurities, in contradictions, and defects, which no ingenuity can elucidate; no criticism reconcile; no theology explain, *satisfactorily*. I am convinced, that whoever will give himself the trouble to study the great subject well, and with a mind unbiassed by any *partiality*. will

feel himself compelled to acknowledge this;—or, at all events, *he will doubt*. Awful consideration this!—because to be reduced to doubt of the very object, which is supposed to constitute the chief basis itself of the establishment, is, in reality, to be reduced to doubt equally of its divinity:—for, a doubtful ministry makes, of course, but a doubtful church.—However, unhappily so it is:—Few study the important question; although no question deserves more care. Men reconcile themselves easily to any thing; above all, where to do so, is agreeable to their worldly interests, to the spirit of public fashion, and to inclination. But superior to considerations like these, and conducted by the pure love of truth, let any prudent, and impartial, individual explore, and fathom the perplexing subject to the bottom; and the result, I will answer for it, will, at all events, be that, which I have just now stated:—*he will* DOUBT.

CHAPTER XIII.

FARTHER CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING THE GROUNDS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

“The church has by contract, or alliance, resigned up her supremacy, in matters ecclesiastical; and her independency, to the state.”
—WARBURTON’S ALLIANCE, &c.

I HAVE already observed, that there are few protestants, who have studied, or who ever think of studying, the real grounds of their respective churches; the causes, which first detached them from the parent institute; the instruments, to which they owe their introduction; and the methods, by which they finally became established. These, as well as nearly the whole genuine history of protestantism, are points, with which the protestant public are, almost totally, unacquainted. Instructed, from the cradle, to consider every thing *wrong*, that is catholic; and every thing *right*, that is protestant,—they, for these reasons, proceed fearlessly, because blindly, secure, in that path, in which chance, or the accident of birth, has placed them; never once asking themselves the motive “of that faith, which is in them;” nor even so much as suspecting, that, perhaps, is its foundation false. All this,—which is the general case around us,—may, in a worldly point of view, be fortunate,—a pleasing illusion, for the fleeting moment of this life; because it lulls the mind to sleep. But, in relation to the interests of the next life, it is certainly a very great misfortune. Because if the road, that conducts to heaven, be only, as the protestant divines themselves express it, *through the true church*,—then, of course, as to be wisely instructed, in relation to the mo-

mentous subject, is one of the first of blessings,—so, consequently, to be ignorant of it, must be one of the first of evils.

In the two foregoing chapters, I have endeavoured to point out, not so much what really constitutes, as what *does not* constitute, the grounds of the established church. I have shown, that, grand, and magnificent, as this fabric is, yet it is not erected upon that same sacred platform, as was the venerable pile, which had preceded it;—that the pretensions of its clergy to the honour of having regularly inherited the apostolical commission, is but a flattering fiction;—and that even its very claim to the mere enjoyment of valid orders, is a point, replete with the most appalling difficulties. Such are the propositions, which I have thus far endeavoured to demonstrate. What now remains for me to investigate, is this,—to ascertain, if possibly I can do it,—what *it really is*, that constitutes properly the grounds of the English church;—whether it be that divine basis, which was laid by the hands of the apostles, or one, which has been created by the artifices of human policy.—The question, though infinitely important to the protestant, is not difficult. In order to decide it with accuracy, little else is required, than just to take a view of the origin, and formation of this establishment; and to consider the laws, and ordinances, upon which it is erected, and sustained. Wherefore, let the reader do this:—only, whilst he does it, let him be careful, at the same time, to bear constantly in his recollection, what the real character is of the true church of Christ,—that “it is not a kingdom of this world;”—that it is not a political institution; that it does not derive its power from the will of princes, or from the sanctions of the civil magistrate:—in short, that it is a spiritual institution,—its end, its aim, its government, its ordinances, its every thing, being, all of them, designed, and established, for the purposes of man’s sanctification, and for the securities of future happiness. With these ideas present to the mind,—provided, too, that every feeling of partiality, and prejudice, be suppressed,—the reader might, as I have asserted, decide the important point, without much difficulty.—My present survey of the subject shall be rapid.

The rise, and formation, of the church of England present a spectacle, which, in many respects, resembles that, which, but a few years past, we saw exhibited, during a certain period of the French revolution;—when, in despite of all the laws of ancient discipline; in contempt of all the principles of piety, and justice; by the mere suggestions of passion, and the dint of violence,—the civil power assuming to itself a profane omnipotence in every thing, expelled ignominiously the lawful clergy from their sacred charge; and established in their room a new set of pastors,—men, the willing creatures of the vile usurpers, and the mere delegates (although indeed, *they* had been consecrated validly) of the temporal government. Such, whilst it stood, was the revolutionary church of France.—a very perfect copy, in all the above features, of the revolutionary church of England.

The individual,—every reader knows,—who laid the first foundation of our established church, was the tyrant, the eighth Henry. And his motive for doing so, every reader knows it equally, was solely for the gratification of his passions. These are facts, so generally admitted, that I need not adduce any testimonies of our historians to confirm them. “Henry,” says perhaps the best of all protestant historians,—Heylin,—“Henry, being violently hurried by the transport of some violent affections, and finding that the pope appeared the greatest obstacle to his desires, extinguished his authority in the realm of England. This opened the first way to the Reformation; and gave encouragement to those, who inclined to it. To which the king afforded no small countenance, out of politic ends.” Such as this is the language of our historians;—all assigning, like Heylin, “private affections, and politic ends,”—that is, lust, avarice, and ambition,—as the real causes of that revolution, which, ere long, rendered catholic England, protestant.

Neither need I describe the means, the instruments, and the artifices, by which the tyrant was enabled, more or less, to effect his purposes. All these corresponded, of course, to the motives, which had made them necessary. They were persecution, violence sacrilege, &c., exerted by a set of men, who had lent themselves to be the ready panders of Henry’s passions, in order to gratify their own. “To render,” says the elegant writer,—

Mr. Shuttleworth,—“to render the church more respectable; to serve the cause of piety; to uphold the glory of God, never intruded upon Henry’s meditations. The end, and aim, of his insatiable resentment was plunder. And his courtiers entered upon their destructive service, with as little hesitation; and retired from it, with as little remorse, as did the bands of Attila from the pillage of Rome; each laden with what first offered to his grasp. Reformation was the professed object; but, devastation was the consequence. Every thing holy was polluted; every thing sacred, laid low.”—Such, under Henry, were the first beginnings of the church of England.

Under his son Edward, there was still continued the same scene of disgraceful wickedness, suggested by almost equally wicked, though somewhat different, principles. “Next,” continues Heylin, “comes his son Edward the Sixth, whose name was used to serve turns withal; and his authority abused to his own undoing. In his first year, the Reformation was resolved on: but on different ends; and promoted with the like zeal, and industry; but not with the like integrity, by some men about the court, who, under colour of removing corruptions out of the church, had cast their eyes upon the spoil of shrines, and images; and the improving their own fortunes by the chantery lands, all of which they most sacrilegiously divided amongst themselves, &c.”

It is to the same principles, of avarice, and worldly policy, that the candor of this historian attributes the adoption of those laws, which now rendered a more organised form of protestantism the religion of the state. “The parliament,” he adds, “began, on the fourth of November.—And though this parliament consisted of such members as disagreed amongst themselves, in respect of religion, yet they agreed well enough together in one common principle, which was to serve the present time, and preserve themselves; which appears plainly by the strange mixture of acts and results thereof;—some tending to the present benefit, and enriching of particular persons; some again being devised on purpose to prepare a way for exposing the revenues of the church unto spoil, and rapine. And there is no question to be made, but that they came resolved to further such a disposition as should most visibly conduce to the advancement of

their several ends." I might cite many attestations, similar to the two preceding ones, from many other protestant writers—from Collier, Stowe, Wood, &c. However, I will not do this. I will merely state in general, upon the authority of these writers, that it was from the impulse of motives the most profane; by the adoption of means the most violent; under the guidance of a set of men, bad as any thing in the annals of our history;—that the new organization,—such as it was,—of the new church of England, was, at this time, conducted and brought about.* I say, the organization, "such as it was." For, although the business was managed by several men of very considerable talents, yet they were, at the same time, men of such very different principles,—Lutherans, Calvinists, Zuinglians, half papists, and some of them even real papists,—that the creature, which they generated, was the most crude, and imperfect, of all objects imaginable. It was a miserable jumble of all religions; intended, as Hume remarks, by containing a something of each, to please every denomination of Christians.† In short, there was little or nothing in the institution, created by Edward, any more than there had been in that of his father Henry, that can reasonably seem to recommend it, as the work of the eternal wisdom;—neither order, nor moderation, nor piety, nor the love of truth. It was the work of passion, of interest, of ambition, and worldly policy.

It may, indeed, be contended, that it is not, either from the demerits, or the merits, of the established

* "God," says Collier, "was now dishonoured, and religion disgraced. However, there was no redress to be had. All this outrage and injustice, was generally connived at by the great men."

In like manner, Wood, reflecting upon the characters of the leading conductors of the Reformation, at this period, says of them: "They seem to have been born for the destruction of sense, and conscience. However, all the reason, and remonstrance of good men could not prevail with them to baulk their avarice; nor hinder them from settling sacrilege upon their posterity."—"The source," adds Hume, "of the reforming spirit among the gentry was the prospect of pillaging the clergy."

† Latimer, in one of his sermons, describing this strange code, thus quaintly expresses himself: "It is but a mingle-mangle,—a hotch-potch,—I cannot tell what;—partly popery, and partly true religion, mingled together. They say in my country, when they call the hogs to the swine-trough: 'Come to the mingle-mangle: come, puz, come.' Even so do they make a mingle-mangle of the Gospel."

church, as it was founded, during the reigns of Henry, and Edward, that it is right to form any judgment of its present state, or to estimate its present grounds. The churches of Henry, and of Edward, were but temporary things,—the works, and wonders, of a few days. They were destroyed entirely by the industry of Mary; and not rebuilt, either of them, by her sister, Elizabeth;—although, indeed, this princess did make use of many of their chief ingredients, and materials. The church, therefore, which, *alone*, the members of the established religion may *now* deem it a piece of consistency, or of necessity, to defend, is that which was constructed by Elizabeth. She is the real foundress of what, in its present shape, constitutes the church of England. So that it is according to the *motives*, which gave birth to this institution; and to the *methods* which were employed in its completion, that it is proper for men to form their judgments of its character. Let the reader, then, adopt these criterions. By them, he may be enabled to decide, with tolerable accuracy, whether indeed this stupendous fabric is justly entitled to be revered as the work of God; or whether good sense can, without any undue partiality, look upon its foundations as divine.

And what, then, in the first place, where the *motives*, assigned by the protestant writers themselves, which induced Elizabeth to renew again the schism of her father, Henry, and her brother, Edward;—when pulling down the church, which, on her accession, she had found rebuilt by Mary, she now erected a new one in its stead? The motives are obvious. There is not any mystery, or any secret, in them. “Elizabeth” says again the learned Heylin, “knew full well, that her legitimation, and the pope’s supremacy, could not stand together: and that she could not possibly maintain the one, without discarding the other. But, in this case, it concerned her to walk very warily; and not unmask herself too much at once, before, she had put herself in a posture of ability to make good her actions. Notwithstanding, upon a serious debate of all particulars, she was resolved to proceed to a Reformation, as the time should serve.” Such, there is no doubt, were the chief motives, which engaged Elizabeth to renew the schism, and to found her new establishment. “With a predilection for religion,”

says Dr. Whitaker, "Elizabeth could have induced herself, I fear, either to continue a catholic, to adopt the creed of the church of England, or to take up with the wild worship of the puritans,—just as the scale of her interest inclined her. Her interest," the same writer observes, "inclined her to the second: and' *she became hence,*" he adds, "the mother of the church."

And what, next, were the *methods*, which she now adopted in this new, and arduous, career? Were they those, which piety recommended: or those, which,—consonant to the motives that had suggested them—were the dictates of artful policy? Her first steps were these: she called round her a set of men,—men of great talents, and resolution,—whom she knew to be devoted to her cause. "At her first entering upon the government," says Collier, "she selected a sort of cabinet council from some few of the protestant party; and with these she concerted measures for retrieving the Reformation."—Having done this,—the succeeding measure, and the still more important one, was to organise a parliament, composed, like the cabinet council, of members, equally subservient to her designs. Accordingly, she did this also. "Now," says Heylin, "a parliament draws on, summoned chiefly in reference to the Reformation, which was therein to be established. The queen's design in order to it could not be so closely carried, but that such lords, and gentlemen, as had the management of elections in their several counties, retained such men for members of the house of commons, as they conceived most likely to comply with their intentions for a reformation." * Thus it was,—by these, and such like, artful expedients,—that that great revolution was prepared, which, at once, overturned the ancient church; and founded upon its ruins the present establishment.

* Not only, indeed, was this the case, but, as our learned, and elegant, historian,—Mr Butler,—remarks, in his *Memoirs of English Catholics*, Elizabeth nominated, herself, a considerable portion of the members; whilst her party employed violence to obtain others. "The court party," he says, "found it necessary to use violence, in the ensuing election of members, to serve in the lower house of parliament. Five candidates were nominated by the court to each borough, and three to each county; and by the sheriff's authority, the members were chosen from among these candidates."

A cabinet council being, therefore, thus formed, and a parliament thus packed together,—the two great levers of the state,—it cannot seem difficult to calculate, what, of course, must have been the result. The parliament met. And it was immediately proposed to it to confer upon Elizabeth the supreme government of the church, along with all those same prerogatives, and privileges, which, in the like capacity, had been enjoyed by Henry, and her brother, Edward. Accordingly, the measure was debated; and though I have just said, that it is easy to calculate, what would certainly be the result,—yet, such was the respect, which the members, many of them, still entertained for the decencies of religion, that it was carried through the house, spite of every artifice, and precaution, with very considerable difficulty. “When,” says Heylin, “the act of parliament, concerning the supremacy, came to be debated, it seemed to be a thing abhorrent even in nature, and policy, that a woman should be declared supreme head on earth of the church of England.” However,—I need not say it,—the act did pass:—for, what cannot power effect, when, besides being armed with passion, it possesses, at the same time, all the means of enforcing, and all the allurements of buying submission? It passed. And by it, the second schism was consummated; catholicity was abolished; and a new church created in its room. The queen by it was solemnly invested with an authority, which no female on earth had ever possessed before;—made the basis of the new establishment; the source of all pastoral jurisdiction; the arbiter of the nation’s worship; and the guide, and ruler, of its faith, and discipline. “For,” as Hume remarks, “She always maintained, that, in quality of supreme head of the church, she was fully empowered by her prerogative to decide all questions, which might arise, with regard to doctrine, discipline, or worship.”

After the foundations of the new establishment had been thus strongly laid, there remained little or no difficulty in raising the superstructure on them. This was, indeed, very soon accomplished;—although not, certainly, in the way, which the spirit of religion should seem to demand; but according to the dictates of that same policy, which had, thus far, conducted the recent revo-

lution. A fresh creed was early drawn up. But, it was drawn up, under the eye, and direction, of the female head, with the advice, and assistance, chiefly of a few favourite courtiers. "The matter," says Sir Richard Baker, "was carried on so closely, that it was not communicated to any but the Marquess of Northampton, the Earl of Bedford, and Sir William Cecil."—Collier, like Sir Richard, takes notice of the great secrecy which was observed upon this singular occasion; only he adds a name or two more to Sir Richard's list. "The question," he says, "was asked, Who were to be privy to the design? And the answer was: None but the Marquess of Northampton, the Earl of Bedford, the Earl of Pembroke, the Lord Gray, were to be trusted with the secret." However, the thing, ere long, came forth,—an obscure, crude, imperfect, instrument, which no one has, ever yet, understood; and which no one ever will understand. It was laid before the parliament; and adopted by it,—that is, by a small majority of its members,—as the law, and religion, of the nation. Such is the history of the process, by virtue of which the new code of faith, and the Book of Common Prayer, were made to supersede the religion of fifteen centuries.

In the formation of a new order of religion, or in the regulation of new forms of worship, nothing ought to appear more natural, or more consistent, for the Christian to expect, than that the important transaction should be, at all events, conducted by the ministers of religion. This is, certainly, the most obvious order of things. However, this, in the revolution of Elizabeth, was not the case. Her new order of religion, so far from being conducted, and regulated, by the ministers of religion, was, with very few, and these very trifling exceptions,—opposed, and rejected by them all. It was opposed, and rejected, by the bishops, notwithstanding every artifice of persuasion, as well as the threatenings of punishment, to extort their approbation of it.—It was opposed by the whole body of the convocation, which, meeting at the same time with the queen's first parliament, protested solemnly against it, expressing, moreover, their unanimous adherence to the doctrines of the parent church.—It was opposed by the members of both the universities, which again, in imitation of the convocation, signed, each

of them, an instrument, declaring their decided belief in the doctrines solely of the old religion.—It was opposed, and rejected, by an immense majority of the inferior clergy,—the rectors, vicars, religious, &c.,—who, steady to the faith of their ancestors, and predecessors, came forward, almost every where, with boldness, in its defence. In short, it was rejected, and condemned, even by the chief portion of nobility; by most of the greater commoners; and by the larger share of the enlightened and respectable members of the whole body of the laity:—for, these had, nearly all, after the wanderings, which they had gone through, during the reigns of Henry and Edward, returned with eagerness to the ancient pale of catholicity. Insomuch, that, speaking of the nation in general, Burnet himself remarks,—that if the reign of Elizabeth had not been so long as it was, the public would, most probably, have relapsed back again into popery.

In consequence of the opposition, thus strenuously maintained by the catholic clergy, they were, of course, removed from their situations,—the bishops deprived of their sees; and the rectors, &c., expelled from their livings. Here, then, the perplexity became considerable. The difficulty was, how to fill up the awful chasm. However, this, too, was, ere long, accomplished:—for, interest, and passion, and persecution, and the smiles and frowns of a prince, are levers, which, artfully employed, are sure to produce their effect. In order, therefore, to gain over a body of men, obsequious, and subservient to the new order of things, every expedient was resorted to, that the refinements of cunning could devise,—solicitations, and promises; threats, and commands; rewards, and punishments; the assurance of wealth, and honours; the prospects of wretchedness, and distress;—in short, every thing, that could excite the feelings of the weak, and depress the resolution of the strong. In order to ensure, if possible, the acquiescence of the bishops, Elizabeth herself, assuming an air of moderation, invited them all, who then chanced to be resident near the court, to wait upon her. They accordingly did so. And having communicated to them her designs, she anxiously solicited them to sanction them by their submission. They remonstrated with a great deal of reverence, and respect; but yet positively refused to do so. Offend-

ed at what she deemed an act of obstinacy, she instantly commanded them to quit her presence; bidding them to remember, "that she should look upon whosoever opposed her supremacy, as the enemy of God, and of the crown:"—"They were, hereupon," says Heylin, "deprived of their bishoprics."

In order to gain over the inferior clergy, and the religious, there were deputed into all the different dioceses, and into almost every corner of the nation a multitude of commissioners, appointed by the court. These men were nearly all of them, laymen; and their remunerations for the important service were immense. Their authority, commensurate to the serious task, was also most awful, and extensive. They had power to condemn, and deprive, whomsoever they found refractory; and to remunerate, and promote, whomsoever they found submissive. The following are stated by Collier, as a few (for I shall not state all the expedients, mentioned by this historian) of the many instructions, given to these individuals, and employed generally by the agents of the ministry, for the purpose of effecting the projected revolution: "to throw all the papists out of commission, and bring in none but protestants;—to purge the universities, and place new masters in the schools;—to put papists out of business, and take care to sink their character;—to reduce the noncomplying bishops by some new parliamentary provisions; and play the *premunire* against them: and when once they are *in misericordiâ*, not to pardon them, without entire submission; to hamper them well, and press the laws close upon them," &c. Such were some of the instructions, given by the ministry of Elizabeth to its agents. How well they executed them, and what was the success which attended them, I need not say. They executed them, with the most unjust, and relentless, vigour. And the consequence was, that, expelling a great multitude of virtuous, and enlightened pastors from their flocks, they seduced likewise a considerable number of others, whom they appointed to fill up the vacancies. "And it was thus," remarks Sir Richard Baker, "that the religion in England was changed, and supremacy confirmed to the queen."

What the general character was of this newly-organised pastoral ministry, thus created by Elizabeth, and

the faction of her court, is a circumstance, which, curious in itself, is peculiarly deserving the attention of the thoughtful protestant. Where there is question of renewing lost religion, or of recalling it to its pristine beauty, the instruments, selected for these sacred purposes, ought, no doubt, to be distinguished, both by the purity of their faith, the excellence of their morals, and the wisdom, if not extent, of their mental acquirements. Good sense does, certainly, expect all this in the real agents of the divine benificence.—And what, then, was the character of the new pastors? They were, with very few exceptions, men of the very meanest, and most contemptible description,—the mere scum, and refuse, of the church, which they had just deserted. In the choice, and selection of them, there was paid little or no attention to their principles, and opinions; to their virtues, or vices; to their talents, or qualifications. All, that was required, was simply this,—that they should not be catholics. Hence, we are informed by the protestant writers themselves, that the new establishment was now filled by a crowd of men, the disgrace of the clerical order,—men, professing every kind of creed; and teaching, some of them, the wildest errors;—men, singularly ignorant, and illiterate; men, neglectful of every religious obligation; and intent, multitudes of them, solely upon their own temporal interests. “The church,” says Heylin, “was now filled with an ignorant, and illiterate clergy, whose learning went no farther than the Liturgy, and the Book of Homilies.—On the other side, many were raised to great preferments, who, having spent their time in such foreign churches, as followed the platform of Geneva, returned so dissaffected to episcopal government, as, not long after, filled the church with most sad disorders; not only to the breaking of the bond of peace, but likewise to the extinguishing the spirit of unity. And not to speak of private opinions, *nothing more was considered in them than their zeal against popery.*” Such were the first clergy of the church of England. Can partiality itself possibly believe, that such men were the agents of the God of truth?

I might enumerate some of the various measures, by which the ministers of Elizabeth, after having thus organised their church, succeeded, but too fortunately;

both in adding to the number of its members, and in giving security to its future stability. The ministers of this princess were a set of the most artful, and unprincipled, politicians. Higgon asserts, that "no reign ever beheld a more wicked ministry." And Whitaker, another protestant historian, says of them: "They triumphed in the happy inventiveness of their souls for mischief; exulting over their long, and laboured train of misery; and making themselves the very demons of vengeance to all within the sphere of their activity." (It is the observation of Hume, that the government of Elizabeth resembled that of Turkey.)—However, it was against the catholics, that all "the inventiveness" of this female's ministers "for mischief," and all the severity of their vengeance, were most frightfully directed. In order to give stability to the establishment, which they had just created,—as well as for many other selfish, and ambitious motives,—they conceived,—and the idea was politically wise,—that the most effectual method was to persecute the catholics.—"Persecution," observes Hume, "in such a case, becomes a necessary piece of policy." Accordingly, persecution was resolved on. And a code of laws was now framed against the ministers, and members, of the old religion, of a character the most rigid, and severe. It was a code, as I have said already, that would have done credit to the brutality of a Nero, or to the barbarity of a Domitian;—a code, which even the illiberality of the modern bigot,—although he would gladly persecute us still,—has now the moderation to condemn. It reached to every thing, that was catholic;—not only proscribing every act of the ancient worship, as a piece of treason against the state, and condemning, therefore, its *whole* priesthood, as so many traitors,—but subjecting all its professors to every form of grievance; denying them all the comforts of social life; refusing them the benefits of education; and imposing upon them fines, forfeitures, &c. the most oppressive, and insulting. Such was the penal code of Elizabeth, enacted against the catholics.

I shall not attempt to describe, in what manner it was enforced. It was enforced, I will merely say, with the most unrelenting cruelty. The prisons, and dungeons,

throughout the whole nation, were crowded with sufferers.

The clergy, above all, were its principal victims. These were, every where, hunted out, like wild beasts, in woods, and rocks, and caves, and in every kind of recess, where the savage ingenuity of their pursuers could possibly conceive them to have taken refuge. "Commissioners," says Stowe, "were sent out into all parts, and divisions of the realm, to inquire out priests, and such as were reconciled by them; farther charging all manner of persons to retain none in their houses." The numbers, that were thus found, and seized, were immense: and they were consigned to dungeons; there to endure every thing, that the inventiveness of cruelty could suggest,—not only filth, and nakedness, and hunger, and insults, and derision; but racks, and tortures, and various other kinds of punishments. From amongst the number, some were selected for execution. We have upon record the names of a hundred and forty-one of these,—I will not say, unhappy, but—happy martyrs, along with the mention of a hundred and five others, who were kindly sent into banishment. But, let moderation judge, how countless must have been the multitude, that perished in the public prisons, (the abodes, at that time, of every thing that was horrible) through wretchedness, privations, hardships, &c.

The sufferings of the laity,—if, by some shades of difference, they were less than those of the clergy,—were, also, exceedingly severe, and cruel. Like the latter, they were, in immense numbers, in every part of the kingdom, thrown ignominiously into the public prisons; where, also, like their pastors, they were made to endure every species of human misery. They were often tortured upon the rack. Many of them were put to death; several, banished; all, subjected to oppressive fines; and multitudes of them, notwithstanding even their acknowledged loyalty, robbed of their whole splendid, and magnificent estates. Bridgewater has given us a list of twelve hundred of these unjustly persecuted individuals, who either lost their property, were imprisoned, or banished, on account of their attachment to the ancient faith. Whence, Hume himself at-

laws, that "the catholics, with justice, complained of a violent persecution."

I need not observe to the reader, that, where measures like those, which I have just alluded to, were employed in the erection of the new establishment, there must, of course, have been many other subsidiary, and secondary instruments, co-operating with them, for the same design. Such expedients are, in fact, necessary, when either there is question of any revolution, or of the commission of any great act of injustice. Accordingly, in order the more effectually to rear the new fabric upon the ruins of the old one, and to reconcile the public to the change,—the ministers of Elizabeth, besides the acts of violence, just enumerated, had recourse to a multitude of minor, but still perhaps, not less useful, artifices than the preceding. They, every where, employed the pulpit to pour out the most insulting, and atrocious calumnies against the church, which they were so industriously pulling down. And the press they engaged equally in the same important service. There is no form of ridicule, no shape of slander, which these two powerful movers of feeling did not, daily, strive to stamp upon the public mind:—whilst, at the same time, as Hume remarks, "the catholics were completely restrained." The catholics had neither the privilege of preaching, printing, nor yet complaining. The advantage of all this to the protestant cause, and its injury to that of catholicity, are manifest.—However, not even did all these injustices suffice to satisfy the relentless hostility of the protestant faction. For, in order still farther to depress the few remaining influences of the old religion, the ministers had, themselves, recourse to contrivances, still more hateful, because more insidious,—than any, which I have yet enumerated. They imputed to the catholic body a series of plots, conspiracies, and designs of rebellion, for which there was not so much as a shadow of real foundation; but which they, therefore, pretended to establish by the means of counterfeit letters; confessions, extorted by the rack; and all the artifices of forgery. "They designed," says Higgons, "to make the English Roman catholics desperate by ill-usage, in hopes they would rebel; and forfeit their estates. But, when truth enough could not be found against them, Walsing-

ham, by counterfeit letters, and confessions, extorted by pains, and terrors, of the rack, tumultuated the people with chimerical dangers." Above all, it was *forgery*, that, upon these occasions, contributed powerfully to promote the protestant cause. It was one of the chief instruments, employed by Elizabeth's ministers against the catholics. "Forgery," says the candid Dr. Whitaker, alluding to those men, and to the reign of Elizabeth,—"forgery,—I blush for the honour of protestantism, while I write it,—seems to have been peculiar to the reformed. I look in vain for one of those accursed outrages of imposition amongst the disciples of popery. Forgery appears to have been the peculiar disease of protestantism."

If, therefore, it be true, that the propagation of religion should be conducted in the spirit of religion,—or if the establishment of any church, in order to be prudently considered as the work of God, ought necessarily to be regulated under the influences of truth, charity, and moderation,—then I think, that no impartial individual, consulting attentively the methods, to which the church of England owes its formation, can possibly revere this, as the effect of the divine beneficence. The little etching, which I have presented, and which, also, I have borrowed chiefly from protestant writers, evinces this fact.—that it is the monument, principally, of policy, and passion,—the first motive for its introduction having been interest, and ambition;—its leading authors, a set of unprincipled laymen; and the chief causes of its final successes, violence, artifice, injustice, and persecution—all those same unbecoming instruments, to which nearly every revolution is indebted for its victories.

The foregoing considerations were designed, and are sufficient, to point out the general character of the English church. But they do not, perhaps, explain sufficiently the precise nature of the *grounds*, upon which this establishment is erected. Hence, it is proper, that I should now proceed to the more direct investigation of this momentous circumstance. For, such exactly, as I have so often stated,—such is the nature of any church, as are the grounds, upon which it is erected,—*divine*, if these be divine;—*human*, if these be human. Wherefore, I now ask;—what are, in reality,—or what, in the

eye of impartial reason, appear to be, the genuine *grounds* of the established church,—the true source of the delegation of its pastors, and the foundation of their alleged authority? Are these divine or human; sacred, or political?—Instead of giving a direct reply to this question, I will merely present to the reader's consideration a few authentic documents, from which he may form his own opinion. From them, if he reason candidly, he will deduce, I think, the same conclusions, which I do.

It is a fact, then, with which every reader is acquainted, that the government of the church in this country had been always, until the reign of the eighth Henry, vested in the hands of its prelacy, and priesthood,—in conjunction, at the same time, with the supreme ruler of the sacred fold, his Holiness, the pope. To these, by virtue of their divine commission, it had been always understood, that Christ Jesus had confided the care of the faithful; and the regulations of the order, and interests, of religion. Such, too, were the notions, of the Christian public; and such, every where, the state of things, until the era of the Reformation. However, at the period, above alluded to.—unhappily for the nation, and still more unhappily for religion,—there came forward a tyrant,—the prince, just named,—who, impelled by motives the most criminal, and armed with the omnipotence of power, presumed, for the time, to disturb, and ere long, to destroy, the blessed harmony. The authority of the pope, and the influences of the clergy, were the chief obstacles, he conceived, to the gratification of his passions. Therefore, he resolved to destroy both of them. And as the state of the nation was then such,—so mean, so abject,—that there was nothing in it to control his will,—so he soon, and without any difficulty, effected his design. He now took the government of the church into his own hands; compelling his parliament solemnly to declare him the supreme head of the church of England, and to invest him with all those prerogatives, and privileges, which, until now, had been constantly respected, as the exclusive appendages of the spiritual order.—that is, of the papacy. and the episcopacy. “Hurried on.” according to those words of Heylin, which I have cited before,—“hurried on with the trans-

ports of some private affections; and finding, that the pope appeared the greatest obstacle to his desires, he extinguished his authority in the realm of England. And this opened the first way to the Reformation."

The following is the important law, which conferred upon the prince the new and singular distinctions; and which, moreover, still entails them upon his successors, be these whosoever, or whatsoever, they may,—females, infants, idiots, or persons, the most profligate, and irreligious:—"That, albeit the king is supreme head of the church of England, and had been so recognised by the clergy of this realm in their convocation, yet for more corroboration thereof, and also for extirpating all errors, heresies, and abuses of the same, it was enacted that the king, his heirs, and successors, kings of England, should be accepted, and reputed, the supreme head on earth of the church of England, and have, and enjoy, united, and annexed to the imperial crown of this realm, as well the title, and style, thereof, as all honours, dignities, preeminencies, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities, to the said dignity of supreme head of the same church, belonging, or appertaining. And that our said sovereign lord, his heirs, and successors, kings of this realm, shall have full power, and authority, from time to time, to visit, and repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend, all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which, by any manner of spiritual authority, or jurisdiction, ought, or may lawfully be reformed, redressed, repressed, orderd, corrected, restrained, or amended, most to the pleasure of Almighty God; the increase of virtue in Christ's religion; and the conservation of the peace, unity, and tranquillity, of the realm: any usage, custom, foreign laws, foreign prescription, or any thing, or things, to the contrary thereof, notwithstanding."

In a subsequent act, it is again decreed:—"That he is vested with all power to exercise all manner of ecclesiastical jurisdiction: and archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by, and under, the king's majesty; who hath full power to hear, and deter-

mine, all manner of causes ecclesiastical; and to reform, and correct, all vice, sin, errors, and heresies, whatsoever, which, by any manner of spiritual authority, or jurisdiction, ought, or may be lawfully reformed."

Such are the laws, the fundamental laws, of the established church of this country,—the laws, which first created, and have, always since, supported, the imposing fabric. They constitute the very essence of its worship; and are the bulwork of its strength. For, although they were introduced by a tyrant, and enacted by a parliament of slaves;—still they have been adopted in the subsequent reigns of each protestant successor, not only as the grand platform of the established religion, but as portions also of the British constitution. Singular, and astonishing innovation!—the most singular, perhaps, which, until the era of the Reformation had ever been described in the annals of the Christian church. It has no precedent in any foregoing century. Neither even, in all the extravagances of protestantism, any where, amongst protestants, any imitations that resemble it.

According to the acts, just cited, the monarch of this country,—that is, a mere layman and civil magistrate,—is the supreme head of the church of England; invested with full authority to rule its pastors, and to control its members. He is rendered, by virtue of them, the sole source, and fountain, of all spiritual power; possessing all those same prerogatives, which had once been claimed by the bishops of Rome, or enjoyed by the catholic prelacy; adorned with the mitre, as he is with the crown; and armed equally with the crozier, as he is with the sceptre. That such is the import of those acts is a point, which, to me, seems manifest. For, by them it is declared, that "the king is supreme head of the church of England;"—that he is vested "with all manner of ecclesiastical jurisdiction;"—that none have any authority, "but by, and under, him;"—that "he has full power to reform, and correct, all errors, and heresies whatsoever," &c. Such are the wonderful prerogatives of our monarchs. The inference, consequently, resulting from the circumstance, is plain,—"that the real grounds of the pastoral power, which is possessed by the clergy of the established church, are derived, not at all from their catho-

lic predecessors, but solely from the chief magistrate.”*

But, in order to seem to render this construction of the above laws still more palpable, let us just refer, first, to the conduct of our princes in the exercise of their spiritual functions; and next, to the conduct, and concessions, of the clergy under their direction.

The first, who, taking advantage of the new prerogative, began to exert its influences, was, of course, the man,—Henry,—whose tyranny had compelled the parliament to confer it on him. In virtue of it, he at once abrogated within his dominions all the authority of the pope, as well as that of the whole episcopal order. He altered many of the laws, and discarded many of the regulations, of the old religion. Or rather, considering himself as the ruler of the faithful, and the arbiter of their faith, he composed for them a new code of doctrines, and instituted a new religion. And not only this,—but, in the omnipotence of his supremacy, he made it heresy to call in question his innovations; and death, even, to oppose them. Such, under the sanctions of the laws, just cited, was the conduct of Henry.—Respecting the behaviour of his clergy under them, I need to say little. The behaviour of the great majority of them was most pusillanimous, and disgraceful. “The bish-

* The ideas, which are entertained upon this subject by all the learned portions of the dissenters in this country, are precisely similiar to those of the catholics. They, too, like the catholics, consider the established church, as a civil, and political, institution. “The church of England,” says their catechism, “is a civil establishment; it being framed by human authority; its laws, founded upon acts of parliament, and enforced by civil sanctions; and the chief-magistrate, as such, being its supreme head.”

“Before the reformation of our religion took place,” says Towgood, “there was a constitution in church, distinct from, and independent of our constitution in state. The church had then its laws, its rights, its officers, and powers; and its sovereign, or supreme head, peculiar to itself, and apart from the state. But, by the Reformation all that independency, and distinction, is abolished. It is now become entirely, and absolutely, a civil system. There are no laws in the church, but what were made by the civil magistratè, and receive all their obligation, and authority, from him. Nor are there any offices in the church, but what were constituted by the authority, and direction, of the magistratè; and are all liable to be unmade, and deprived, again by him. But, that your constitution in church is really nothing but a civil, or parliamentary, constitution, is indeed a truth so plain, that no intelligent, or sober member of your church, will, I apprehend, so much as attempt to deny.”

ANSWER TO WHITE.

ops," says Hume, "went so far, that they took out new commissions from the crown, in which all their spiritual, and episcopal authority, was expressly affirmed to be derived from the king, and to be solely dependent on his good pleasure."

During the reign of Edward, the state of things was nearly similar to the above. For, he, too, although merely a child, — and what was still more intolerable, — the mere puppet of his guilty uncle, the duke of Somerset, — he, too like his father, assumed to himself all the prerogatives, and exercised all the authority, of the supreme ruler of the English church. Just turned the very mature age of *nine*, the spiritual, and imperial infant, in his profound wisdom, and sacred character, now thought it proper to reform the reformations of his royal parent; and to give, as he had done, a new system of religion to his faithful subjects. He accordingly, did so; — preparing for them, and imposing upon them a new creed; establishing a fresh liturgy; and ordaining a great variety of innovations in the order, and forms, of discipline. It is really a subject of amusement to remark the awful manner, with which the important baby ushers in sometimes and imposes, his holy regulations. "It is," he says, "by our authority. And we would not have our subjects so much dislike our judgment, or so much mistrust our zeal, as though we could not discern what were to be done." It is true, the parliament was made to give sanction to the alterations. "But, it was a parliament," remarks Heylin, "so well packed by Sir Ralph Sadler," — the creature of Somerset, — "that there was no need of any farther shuffling, till the end of the game; — a parliament, that agreed well enough together to serve the present time and to preserve themselves." — It was, however, in the assertion of his spiritual character, and in the vindication of his supreme authority as the sole fountain of all pastoral power, that the conduct of the child was, perhaps, the most striking. "It was made treason," Hume observes, "in particular, to deny his supremacy." He, in the most arbitrary manner, compelled all his clergy to acknowledge this; sending agents into all the different dioceses to procure from them their authentic declaration of its admission, and suspending from their functions all those who refused to make it.

He, in reality, obliged the whole body of his clergy to take out fresh commissions from him. "Whilst," Hume again adds, "care was taken to insert in the new commission of the bishops, that *all manner of authority*, and jurisdiction as well ecclesiastical, as civil, is *originally derived from the crown.*"

If we look, next, at the conduct of Elizabeth, we find that her's also,—female as she was.—was exactly similar to the foregoing,—founded upon the same principles, and marked even, if possible, by still greater exertions of her spiritual prerogative.* The conduct of Elizabeth, too, should, in the eyes of the protestant, appear even more interesting still, than that of her predecessors; because she is the real authoress of the established church, under its present form,—it having been her will, that devised its plan; her industry, that reared its columns; her taste, that created the whole shape, and attitude, and splendour, of the "heavenly" fabric.

And what, therefore, was the conduct of this princess?—Possessed of the talents, and ambition, of her father; and seconded by a set of ministers, devoted to her interests; she early commanded her parliament to proclaim her the supreme head of the church, and heiress to all those prerogatives, which had been enjoyed by Henry, and her brother, Edward. And lest the import of her claims should be mistaken, "an act," says Hume, "was, moreover, passed, which gave the crown *all the power*, which had formerly been claimed by the popes." Accordingly, behold the manner, in which the female pontiff was pleased to exert her divine prerogatives. Heedless of all the laws, and canons, of antiquity; regardless of all those principals, by which, untill the era of the Reformation, the regulation of spiritual things had always been conducted, (all these were but cobwebs, which her

* The circumstance of making a female the supreme head of the alleged church of Christ, was a subject, that excited both the astonishment, and the ridicule, as well as the loudest blame, and reprobation, of a great multitude of protestants, in almost every protestant country. "Never," says Chemnitius, one of the most learned amongst the reformers,—"never had the Christian world, until now, heard of so strange a piece of vanity, as that a woman should declare herself a popess, and the head of the church."—Indeed, Heylin tells us, that, "when the act of parliament came to be debated, concerning the supremacy, it seemed abhorrent even to nature, and policy, that a woman should be declared head of the church of England."

new authority at once broke asunder) she early deposed every one of the presiding bishops,—with the exception, indeed, of the time-serving Kitchin, a man, whom both Camden, and Godwin, denominate “the calamity of his see.” She deposed them all; and along with them, those other members of the clergy, who refused to acknowledge her spiritual power. Then in their room, she appointed a new order of pastors; obliging each bishop, as Hume again observes, on the occasion of his appointment, not only solemnly to own the supremacy of the female head,—but, moreover, to do homage to her *as the sole source* of all spiritual power; “he acknowledges, and confesses, that he holds his bishopric, as well in spirituals, as in temporals, from her alone, and the crown royal.” But, neither was this all. For, in consequence, still farther, of her sacred privileges, she, like her father, and her brother, ordained a new code of faith; prescribed new forms of discipline; and supplied from the plentitude of her authority, all those real, or alleged deficiencies, which were imputed to the ordinations, and character, of her newly-organised priesthood. She did all this, along with a great deal more of a similar import. “For, she contended,” as Hume goes on remarking, “that, in quality of supreme head of the church, she was fully empowered, by her prerogative, alone, to decide all questions of doctrine, discipline, and worship.”

From these examples,—and I might cite many others similar to them,—we trace distinctly, what the real import is, and what the proper construction, of those laws, which confer upon our monarchs the supreme headship of the church. We thus see them exercising every prerogative of spiritual power;—unmaking, and making, the episcopal order;—abrogating old, and creating new, creeds; condemning ancient, and commanding fresh, modes of worship;—in short, doing every thing, that constitutes supremacy, if not infallibility, in religion. The authority of our princes, according to those laws, is, in reality, greater in the church, than, by virtue of any other laws, it is in the state;—and greater far, than was ever that, which had been anciently claimed, or exercised, by the popes. In fact, in the English church, the prince, by the laws, is every thing. He is the pastor of its pastors; the common father of all its members; the arbiter

of its faith; the judge of its controversies; the centre of its unity, (if its unity were not impossible) and the principle, which gives life and vigour, and energy, to all its movements. It is true, he does not, himself, administer the sacraments, nor yet preach the word. True: but, then, he does a great deal more than this. For, it is he alone, that supplies those powers, and that gives to all his clergy those faculties, by virtue of which they are enabled to perform any kind of spiritual function. He is the great fountain:—they are but little streams, meandering round it and replenished from its fulness.

As then, in the preceding chapter, I have pointed out what *does not* constitute the grounds of the church of England,—so, in this, I have endeavoured to show, what *does*. What constitutes the grounds of any church, according to the maxims, which has been so often repeated, are the commission, and the authority, of its pastors. And I have shown, both from the history of the formation of the established religion, from the laws of the country, and from the conduct of our princes, acting under those laws, that the whole commission, and authority, of its pastors, are derived solely from the sanctions of the civil power, and are dependant upon the civil magistrate,—that is, upon the will, and confirmation, of the monarch. In this case, the inference is plain:—the institution, thus organised, is not divine, but human,—the monument, it may be, of political sagacity, but not of Christian wisdom. It is thus, at least, that the catholic has always viewed it: and not, indeed, only the catholic, but the whole body of the dissenters equally.*

* “Ecclesiastical authority, “says Towgood, speaking of the established church,—“ecclesiastical authority, as distinguished from civil, you may rest assured, there is none. Ask your learned bishops,”—he adds,—“and they will utterly disclaim it. Ask your able lawyers; and they will tell you, that you incur the danger of *premunire* by presuming to exert one single act of authority of this kind. Ask all the knowing members of the convocation itself; and they will answer, with one voice, ‘It is not in us: Authority we have none.’ Yea, ask the meanest novice in the history of the Reformation, and of the establishment of your church, and he will presently acquaint you, that your ceremonies, and forms, were not ordained by *both* ecclesiastical, and civil, authority, but by civil authority *only*;—the ecclesiastics in convocation; and in the two universities, obstinately refusing to give their concurrence; and even entering their solemn, and zealous protest against it.”

“It is from the king, and parliament, that all the officers of this church receive their whole authority; and are directed, how to act. In

And I cannot help thinking, that whosoever, devoid of partiality, and prejudice, would consider the subject well, would entertain,—would feel himself compelled to entertain,—the very same ideas, which we do.

all their ordinations, jurisdictions, ministrations, its bishops, and priests, act entirely by an authority, committed to them by the civil magistrate. This (I appeal to all, who know our constitution) is the real, and true nature of your boasted episcopal ordination, as it now stands in your church. It is an ordination, performed by a civil officer,—i. e. by one, who officiates only by an authority, derived to him from the civil magistrate. Ordinations, then, in the church of England, if traced to their proper origin, and rightly considered, are in truth, nothing but merely civil or popular ordinations. This power of ordination was once delegated to Cromwell, a layman, as vicegerent of the king; and by the constitution, and laws, of England, this layman had then as much authority to ordain, as any bishop in the realm; and any priest, whom he had ordained, would have been as much a minister in the church of England; and his ministrations as valid, as if all the bishops of the realm had laid their hands on his head."

"And pray," he asks, "what is your Common-Prayer Book? Is it any thing but a mere statute, or act, of parliament? As really, and truly, such, as any statute in our books of law; and nothing more."
—*Letters to White.*

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CHURCHES OF THE DISSENTERS.

It would almost seem, so great is now the number of preachers, as if we had Moses's wish; "and all the people were prophets." SYKES, ON PAR. COM.

INSTRUCTED by the light of the Holy Ghost, and excited by the spirit of charity, Saint Paul has forewarned us, that the days should, one time, come, (it was to be at the latter periods of the church,) when, misled by the artifices of false teachers, men should turn away from the truth, and run after the illusions of error. "The time," he says, addressing himself to Timothy—"the time shall come, when men shall not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts, or vain conceits, shall heap up to themselves teachers; having itching ears; and shall turn away from the truth; and shall be turned unto fables." Such is the prediction of the apostle;—a prediction, which, if ever prediction were fulfilled, is fulfilled, *now*, to the very letter; and fulfilled, in this country in particular, in a manner, which is singularly striking. For, looking at the state of religion in this country, what do we now see, every where around us. We see immense multitudes of its members,—indeed, the far largest portion of them,—not only "unwilling to endure sound doctrine," but the dupes of the grossest errors, and the victims of the most pitiful fanaticism. We see, every where around us, a spectacle of the most astonishing confusion,—the real image of the state of Babel,—men speaking every language and not understanding one another,—men, who agree in nothing but in contradicting each

other; and in contradicting each other even upon the most fundamental articles of revelation.

“They shall heap up to themselves teachers.” The crowds of teachers, which men now “heap up to themselves,” are, in the eyes of piety, a very awful,—but in the eyes of mere curiosity a very ridiculous, spectacle. These men, (for, teaching is now a trade; and what is still worse, a very profitable trade) these men form, now, an innumerable host; consisting, for the greater part, not of individuals, distinguished for their learning, their education or their respectability,—but of persons, most commonly, of a very opposite character,—of men, who, belonging to the lowest ranks of society, are unable, very frequently, even so much as to read. Such are now, in this country, great numbers of its very popular preachers.

“Having itching ears.” This “itching” in the ears, is a malady, prevalent in this nation, beyond any other. It prevails in a degree, which is almost ridiculous, as it is melancholy. We see the public, in every town, and avenue of society, running eagerly, and in crowds, after every artful imposter, or deluded fanatic, who has the cant to cheat their simplicity, or the lungs to excite their feelings. And they call this, “going after the Gospel.”

“And they shall turn away from truth; and shall be turned unto fables.” This, too, is exactly verified. For, not only is the multitude of our sects, at present, such, that no industry can enumerate them, but they are, moreover, several of them, so fabulous, and absurd, as to be almost equally the disgrace of reason, as they are the calamity of religion.

I have already said, that to account for these evils is a circumstance devoid of difficulty. The fundamental rule of protestantism is, alone, sufficient to account for them all. For, if men be, all, allowed,—as by this rule, they are allowed,—to judge, and believe, each, according to the dictates, and suggestions, of his own private feelings, and capacity,—then it is plain, that every varied form, both of error, and absurdity, is but the natural, and the necessary consequence. And hence it was, as I said before, that the foreboding Melancton, calculating the frightful tendency of such a privilege, exclaimed: “Great God! what a tragedy have we prepared for posterity!” For my own part, I think this,—that, if

there existed no other reason to engage a pious mind at once to reject protestantism, except the above principle, and the evils which are attendant on it,—these alone should suffice to do so. That system cannot be wise, and right, whose leading rule is the source of error, confusion, and absurdity.

It is not, however, solely on account of the pernicious tendency of this maxim, that error, and confusion, are now so prevalent around us. There are other causes, also, which contribute greatly to the same misfortunes. Amongst these, as I have repeatedly observed, one of the most ordinary, and, at the same time, one of the most unfortunate, is that general, and very gross, ignorance, which the public entertain, respecting the nature of the church of Christ, the character of its grounds, and the properties of the pastoral ministry. These are points, which, although infinitely important, as well as peculiarly clear, and easy, the public, almost every where from ignorance, indolence. or indifference, now totally disregard.

I say, “the public” disregard these subjects. For referring to the sentiments of the learned, or well-instructed;—or else, appealing to the doctrines of every organised sect,—we find, that all these, like the catholic, allow, that, for any church to be wisely regarded, as true, its grounds must necessarily be divine;—and that, for any set of pastors to act as the real pastors of the faithful, it is essential, that they should have received a genuine commission so to do. These are points, which the good sense of every enlightened protestant admits. So that the controversy here between him, and the catholic;—or the dispute between the various classes of the protestants amongst themselves, is not respecting *the necessity* of the grounds of any Christian church, but concerning *the nature* of those grounds;—not whether a divine commission be required in order to entitle men to perform the pastoral functions; but, whence this sacred diploma is derived; and where,—in what communion,—it now subsists?—such are the great questions to be decided,—the questions, which, beyond any others, have always employed, and perplexed, the ingenuity of all the reformed sects; and which, also, beyond all others, deserve the serious attention of every prudent protestant.

I have discussed, in the preceding chapters, several of those systems, and devices, by which the early reformers once attempted to explain the grounds of their respective communions;—and I have shown, how little reason there is to consider any one of those platforms as divine. I have exposed likewise the nature of the basis, which sustains the fabric of our established church:—and I have pointed out, I think, its great imperfections, and deficiencies. It, therefore, remains for me now to make some observations, also, concerning the grounds of those various other sects,—the communities of the dissenters,—which compose, at present, perhaps, the far largest portion of the population of this country. These, too, have, all, and each of them, their alleged foundations; and their pastors,—they all, and each of them, confidently proclaim,—are invested with that sacred character, and possessed of those important rights, which entitle them to direct, and conduct, the flocks, which are feeding, so securely, under their protection.

However, seeing, that the number of these societies is so great, and their pretensions various,—it cannot, hence, be expected, that I should undertake, either separately to discuss, or even distinctly to specify, each peculiar claim, upon which they are alleged respectively to be founded. To do this, would be, indeed, both an endless, and a needless task. What I will do, shall, therefore, be only this:—I will state, and endeavour to refute, those *general principles*, upon which the pretensions of all these institutions are supposed to be dependent, and by which alone their defenders undertake to justify them. This, if done correctly, will prove amply sufficient for all the purposes of the present investigation.

The first grand, and leading principle, by which the largest, and most learned portions of the dissenting sects maintain, that the grounds of their respective churches are divine, is the following,—namely, *that the trust and delegation of all pastoral power is vested exclusively in the hands of the general body of the faithful*. For, they reason in this manner:—(their reasoning is specious; and their conclusion would be correct, if their premises were only true.) “If,” they say, “if the authority of the pastoral ministry of the protestant churches be nei-

ther founded upon any extraordinary commission of the first reformers, nor upon any commission, perpetuated by the Albigenses, &c. ; or else, preserved by the pastors of an invisible church ;—if it be neither attached to the episcopal character, nor to episcopal ordination, nor to episcopal succession ;—if it be not confided to the guardianship of the prince, nor to the office of the civil magistrate,—if, in short, nothing of all this nature be the case,—then, of course, since it is the most essential of all the objects in religion, being that, which gives effect to all its various functions, and ministrations ;—and *must, consequently, exist somewhere*,—so it can only exist,—for, there is no other medium,—in the hands exclusively, and in the custody, *of the people*. The *people*, therefore, are the real depositaries of the sacred trust. So that it is from their choice, and election ; or else, from their approbation, or acquiescence, that the pastors of the church derive all their spiritual power.” Such are the outlines, and such the general defence, of this favourite system. It is the system of the Calvinistic sects, not only of this country, but of every other : so that it is that of perhaps the largest share of the protestant community,—and that of an immense portion of individuals, who have been eminently distinguished for their talents, wisdom, and erudition. In reality, there is no wonder that such an opinion should, every where, in protestantism, find admirers. It is both consonant to the real maxims of the Reformation, and it is flattering to the love of liberty.

But, in order that the reader may still better understand the subject,—and to show, that the above representation of it is correct,—I will subjoin a brief explanation of it, in the words of one of its most eminent defenders. “ God,” he says, “ has established a pastoral ministry in his church. But, he has confided his divine will, as a sacred trust, not to the hands of bishops, or of priests, to be transmitted by them to their successors ; but to the hands of the *people*. He has done this ; authorising the latter, moreover, at the same time, by virtue of his promise, not simply to recommend those individuals to be the pastors of the church, who, by their talents, or their piety, may appear to be most competent to the sacred task, but positively to make them such ; and to confer upon them a real apostolical delegation ;—to

render them, by this means, a distinct order of men, set apart from the general body of the faithful,—the ambassadors of Christ, the dispensers of his mysteries, the shepherds of his fold, the preachers of his word;—in short, men, as certainly “sent of God,” as were the first apostles themselves. Such is the nature of this system, as it is explained by its authors, and most able advocates,—by such men as Baxter, Cartwright, Jurieu, Claude, &c. “God,” (just to add one other specimen of its explanation, as given by the last-named writer,—the most eloquent, certainly, if not the most acute, of its defenders)—“God has intrusted his will, as a deposit, to the hands of men. He has instituted an ordinary ministry in his church. This institution contains a promise to authorise those legitimate vocations, which the faithful may be pleased to make, of persons, selected for this charge. Upon this point, there is no dispute. The only question is, to know, who are the depositaries of this will,—the pastors themselves alone; or the body of the church. The catholics maintain the former opinion; we defend the latter.”—Having thus stated the general character of the system,—which, in reality, is but another instance of those extravagancies, into which men run, when once they have abandoned the centre of unity,—I will now proceed briefly to examine it.

“It is in the hands of the *people*,” it is said, “that God has vested the deputation of the pastoral ministry: so that by their election, or approbation, men become the true pastors of the Christian fold.”* But, where, then, I ask,—where, either in the order of nature or of religion, is the proof of this astonishing prerogative? Or, where, in the whole history of the church, is there one single testimony, which, wisely interpreted, can seem to confirm it?—If there be any method of accounting satisfactorily

* The principle is, indeed, very differently explained by some of the Calvinistic sects; and therefore, very differently applied. Thus, some of them contend, that the divine prerogative resides in the great body of the people; whilst others maintain, that it resides in certain portions of it. Some defend the rights of national churches. Others, on the contrary, defend those of each separate congregation. But, these are points, which I shall not discuss separately;—it being sufficient for all the purposes of the present investigation, to show, that the delegation of the Christian ministry is not vested in the hands of the people *at all*,—neither in the hands of the body at large, nor yet, in any portions of it.

for it, it must be by making one or other of the two preceding suppositions,—namely, that, if such a privilege does exist, it must then be the effect, either of *nature*, or of *religion*; that is, it must be the right of the people, inasmuch as they are *men*; or else, their claim, inasmuch as they are *Christians*,—the gift of God, conferred upon *human reason*; or the donative of *grace*, imparted by Jesus Christ. One or other of the two hypothesis must, of course, be made: because, it is only thus, that it is possible to pretend to account for the possession of so grand an attribute. And not only, indeed, this;—but the vouchers, too, of the important object,—such is its infinite dignity,—ought to be, not only highly plausible, but particularly clear,—stamped with the seal of evidence; or at least such as, without imprudence, men could not well hesitate to admit. The Scriptures, history, precedent, the opinions of the learned, and good, during the bright ages of Christian wisdom, ought to appear to sanction, and confirm it. The claim, if unsupported by some or other of these authorities, should seem but a vain illusion.

And is, then, in the first place,—is the alleged prerogative founded upon any of the claims of *reason*, or the privileges of *human nature*? Most certainly, not. To pretend to found it upon these, is, in reality, (although, indeed, these have been urged in its favour) a very palpable inconsistency, which both confounds reason with religion, and implies a complete ignorance of the essential character of the Christian institute. The Christian institute is essentially a *supernatural* order of things. Whence, the people, in their merely *natural* capacity, cannot possibly possess any inherent right to interfere in its dispensations, or to regulate its benefits. It is a system of *grace*,—the fruit of grace, and the medium of grace. Therefore, it is independent of the will, and power, of man; and dependent solely upon the will, the power, the promises, and the enactments, of him, who is its sacred Founder. In like manner, all its divine institutions, established for the sanctification of the faithful,—its sacraments, its authority, its rites, &c., are, in conformity to its general character, objects, that are placed out of the sphere of human things; and in which, consequently, the people, *as mere human beings*, can arrogate nothing to themselves;—or at least, nothing,

save what has been conceded to them by the wisdom, and benevolence, of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, since the pastoral ministry is precisely of the same divine, and spiritual nature, with all the aforesaid objects,—so it manifestly follows, that the public, in their capacity of *mere rational creatures*, have no real claim, either to create it, or to suppress it;—to alter it, or to transfer it;—or, in short, to interfere in its regulation, in any kind of way, except that, which has been conceded to them by the authority of the word of God. Accordingly, all this is so evident, that, with the exception of the few individuals, whom I have just alluded to,—it is conceded even by the defenders themselves of the system. These men, nearly all, allow, that it is not in virtue of any *natural* right, that the people do enjoy the privilege of choosing their own ministers, and of conferring upon them the pastoral delegation; but in consequence of a title, which is far more noble,—*the dignity of their election into the society of the Christian church, and of the prerogatives, resulting to them from this glorious benefit.*

It is, therefore, from the prerogatives of Christianity, that the people possess the right of imparting the pastoral delegation to their ministers. Well; but where, I again ask, is the proof of this? Where,—in what part of the sacred Scriptures,—for, it is from the Scriptures, that as protestants, men should derive their proofs,—is this important attestation to be found? Is there, then, in this holy record, any account whatsoever of any kind of regulation, instituted by the wisdom of our Redeemer, by which he appoints the people, the arbiters of the pastoral mission?—any act of investiture, communicating to them such authority; I will ask, still farther:—Is there, in the whole series of the sacred pages, I do not say, any positive promise of such a privilege, but even the mere insinuation of such a promise? Here, no doubt, as I remarked before, the evidences ought to be peculiarly clear, because here the question is, not respecting a human institution, but divine one; not concerning a natural gift, but a spiritual, and gratuitous; grace;—and concerning an object, therefore, over which neither the man, nor the Christian, can be supposed to possess any authority, or control. Upon these accounts it is, that the silence of the Scriptures,—if they be silent,—should be

deemed,—at least, in the principles of protestantism,—fatal to the alleged pretext.

And are, therefore, the Scriptures silent, in its regard? Yes, they are. There is not to be found in the whole sacred volume one single regulation of our Redeemer, authorising the people to impart the pastoral delegation to the ministers of religion. There is, no where, a text, that can reasonably be interpreted to sanction the power of such an investiture ;—no where the promise, nor yet the insinuation of such a promise, made to the general body of the faithful. In short, there is no where one syllable, which, undistorted by the ingenuity of error, or the illusions of fanaticism, can reasonably seem even so much as to insinuate, that, by the laws of the Christian institute, the people are commissioned to be the sources of the pastoral power, or the arbiters of the sacred ministry. This silence of the holy volume, respecting an object so peculiarly important ;—and which, if it did exist, would be a complete deviation from the general economy of religion ;—is another proof, in the eyes of prudence, that the alleged claim is completely groundless.

Another consideration, too, which, equally with the preceding, serves to evince this, is the following ;—that if indeed the public are the depositaries of the divine will ; and it is their election, that confers the pastoral mission,—then, in this case, the testimonies, and the examples of experience, confirming the sacred trust ; and the attestations of writers, making, at all events some mention of it, ought, certainly, somewhere to be found, in the long series of the annals of the church. In fact, if such an order of things did really exist, it is quite impossible not to suppose, that the evidences, attesting it, should be innumerable. Because a privilege, like that, —the greatest almost, which a human being could enjoy ; and connected immediately with every thing that is most awful in religion, as well as with all the best securities of salvation,—a privilege, too, which, if it had belonged to the public, must constantly, and even daily, have been called into exertion,—such a privilege as that must, of course, have excited always peculiar interest ; must have formed the basis of various laws, and regulations ; must have been the theme of many instructions ;

and the principle of different practices, duties, and obligations. And hence, as I have observed, it is impossible, and even preposterous, not to suppose, that,—had it really been the property of the people,—the annals of religion, the records of history, the writings of the fathers, and the works of the learned, would not, somewhere, or on some occasion, have taken some notice or other of it. The silence of all these, if they be silent, presents the plainest demonstration to a candid, and impartial mind, that the alleged prerogative is an empty fable. Well; and yet, such is the case: the above authorities are, all of them, silent upon the subject. There is not to be traced, in any one of them, during the long course of fifteen hundred years, one single testimony, that can even seem to sanction the pretended claim. Nay; it is true, that, during the whole length of the forestated interval,—amidst all the revolutions, and changes, which occasionally disturbed the church; amidst all the violences, which armed sometimes, the laity against their pastors; amidst all the errors, and heresies, and extravagancies, which have, so often, assailed the wisdom of revelation,—amidst all these scenes of confusion,—it is true, that we seek in vain even for one single instance of such daring amongst the public, as that of pretending to confer the pastoral mission upon their ministers, or of assuming to themselves the right of organising a new priesthood. We never, indeed, during the above space of time, meet with the solitary instance of one single pastor of the church, affecting to perform the sacred functions of the ministry, without ordination; nor yet, claiming to himself the dignity of ordination, which had not been conferred by the hands of a *bishop*.—Such, in relation to the alleged prerogative, which is claimed by the Calvinistic sects, is the expressive, and speaking, silence of all the monuments, and vouchers, of ages past. It proves, that the pretext is *new*, and, therefore, by a just inference,—*null*. It is, like many others, the invention of artifice,—suggested, in the first place, by that spirit of revolt, which animated the early reformers; and adopted, ere long, by their successors, as the best means of accounting for the pretended justice of their schism.

The above arguments, it is true,—although equivalent, in reality, to the most positive demonstration,—may yet, by some supercilious, or partial readers, be considered, only as negative things; and therefore, as insufficient to convey conviction. In this case, let me refer such individuals to those various texts, and testimones, which I have cited so often in the series of this work. In them, I have shown, that our divine Redeemer, when he founded, and organised, his church, imparted the pastoral commission, along with the power of transmitting the sacred charge, not to the laity; not to the great herd of society in general; but only to a chosen few,—to his apostles, and to their successors, solely. “As my Father,” he said, addressing himself to the former,—“as my Father hath sent me, so I send you.” He then adds: “Go, therefore, and teach all nations, &c.; and behold, I am *with you, all days*, to the end of the world;”—words, which manifestly imply, that the sacred trust is confided to the hands of but a small number of individuals. Accordingly, take notice of the conduct of these men.—Without so much as even consulting the public upon the important subject, the apostles, we find, deputed, every where, their own cooperators and successors, precisely as Christ Jesus had deputed them. They ordained them, and transmitted to them, entire, and perfect, as themselves had received it, that same divine diploma, which had been lately intrusted to their care,—the power of governing the faithful, and of performing all the functions of the pastoral ministry. Thus, it was *they*, and not the people, that deputed Linus to the see of Rome;—*they*, not the body of the faithful, that sent Polycarp to the see of Smyrna. Thus, it was St. John, and not the public, that delegated bishops, and pastors, to the cities, and towns, of Asia Minor;—St. Peter, and not the laity that constituted Evodius the bishop of the see of Antioch. It was so, too, in relation to Timothy, and Titus. Saint Paul instructs the former (there is no question of election, &c., by the public), “to commit the things, which he had heard from him, to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others.” The latter he instructs, “to ordain elders in every city; as,” he again adds,—“as I had appointed thee.” From these, and such like facts, the circumstance ought to appear manifest; that it is not in the

hands of the great body of the people in general, that our holy Legislator has invested the right of imparting the pastoral delegation, but in the persons only of a chosen few,—in those, whom he had sent, as his eternal Father had sent him.

The whole series, moreover, of the language of the sacred writers, as I have likewise remarked, is exactly consonant to the above order of conduct, pursued by the apostles. So, St. Paul tells us, for example, that “Christ hath given to his church apostles, and prophets, &c.” He tells us,—speaking of himself,—that he, too, had been called to the apostleship, not by the choice, or authority, of the faithful, but “by Jesus Christ, and the Father.” Whence, he says to the public: “Let men look upon us, as the ministers of Jesus Christ; and the dispensers of the mysteries of God.” From these texts again,—and I might also cite many others, similar to them,—it is obvious, that the apostles considered themselves as holding their sacred office, not at all from the authority of the people, but from the sanctions solely of their immortal Founder. They looked upon themselves as *his* ambassadors, not theirs.

In regard to the positive arguments upon the present question, which are deduced from the writings, and the monuments, of antiquity, I will not cite these. I will merely say,—and this, too, upon the avowal of an immense multitude of the most learned protestants,—that if any where, or upon any subject, the sentiments of the ancient fathers, the testimonies of history, and the documents of ages, are express, clear, and unanimous, it is in relation to the question, which I am now discussing,—namely, that the delegation of real Christian pastors is vested, not in the hands of the laity, but in those, exclusively, of the lawful episcopacy. Insomuch, (I quote again the opinions of those protestant writers, whom I have just alluded to)—insomuch, that even to call the point in question, is to set aside, they contend, both all the authenticity of history, and all the authority of human testimony. And hence it is, that the above writers,—as well, indeed, as the great body of the established church,—have always treated the pretensions, and systems of the dissenting sects, with extreme severity,—not merely as erroneous novelties, but as novelties,

moreover, destructive of all the securities of future happiness. Such is that sentence of Lesley, which I have already cited: "The dissenters," says that learned writer, "have no commission, nor succession, to show. They have thrust themselves upon the road towards heaven, not above a hundred and fifty years ago, in utter contempt, and opposition, to all the guides of God's appointment, from the days of the apostles. Hence, they have no authority to preach the word, or to administer the holy sacraments, which God hath instituted; or to bless in his name."—Thorndyke speaks of them, in the very same kind of language. Speaking of their pretensions to ordain without bishops, he tells them: "This must needs be void, and of no effect, but that of schism. For," he adds, "they could not receive the power of the keys from them, that had it not to give. And, therefore, in celebrating the Eucharist, they do nothing but profane God's ordinance." In short, by the writers in general of the established church, the alleged claims of the dissenters to any pastoral commission are always treated as empty fancies, completely unheard of, until the era of the Reformation.

I might, indeed, show,—and the circumstance is curious,—that, not only are all the above-stated opinions (of the people being the guardians of the pastoral commission)—condemned by the writers of the established church,—I might show, that they are condemned,—this is the singular fact,—even by *one* of the sects of Calvinism itself,—and by that very sect, which, beyond any other, has been the most remarkable for the learning, and abilities of its members,—and a sect, too, which, in its own original formation, was, itself, founded solely upon that very same basis, which it now rejects. I allude to the presbyterians. The presbyterians,—a sect, now, indeed, nearly extinct in England,—were a class of Calvinists, who, when they first detached themselves from the parent church, or when they first framed their own society, contended, like all other Calvinists, that the principle of all pastoral power is vested solely in the hands of the people; that it is their election, and sanction, that confer the apostolical delegation; and that the individuals, thus chosen, and approved, are, alone, the genuine ministers of the Christian church. Such were

the early doctrines of all the first apostles of Calvinism, —of Calvin, Beza, &c.,—who, in their various writings, for a certain length of time, contended ardently for these popular prerogatives. However, it is the property of error, as I have frequently remarked, to be inconstant, and inconsistent. And it is incessantly, too, the case with men, when once they are possessed of power, to condemn that, which, when out of power, they had approved ;—or else, on the contrary, to approve, what, before, they had been wont to censure. Such exactly was the case with the men, whom I am now referring to,—the presbyterians. These men,—that is, the chief leaders of the sect,—having gradually, by the influence of their talents, and the ardor of their preachments, become powerful, and obtained a complete control over the minds of their deluded followers,—now totally changed their language. As if they had quite forgotten their former principles, and the causes, which had given birth to their society,—they now strenuously began to condemn, what, until now they had as strenuously maintained. They now contended, (feeling, that they could now do so with impunity,) that the pastoral delegation is not vested in the will, and election, of the people ; not intrusted to the community at large,—in short, not the prerogative *at all* of the laity, but confided wholly to the hands of the *priesthood*. And they demonstrated this, they now pretended, upon the plainest evidences,—upon the testimonies of the Scriptures, upon the sanctions of universal prescription, and even upon the very maxims of common sense. Thus, as an example of their new mode of reasoning, take the following words of M'Dowal, a learned, and leading member of the sect. “No society of men,” says this writer, “can convey to another a power, which they do not possess. But, a congregation, a society, of laics have not the power ; and, according to the doctrine of Scripture, cannot warrantably exercise the duties of the ministerial office. No ; this belongs exclusively to those, who have been publicly, and solemnly, set apart for the work. How, then, can the people invest with a power and authority, which they do not, themselves, possess ? The idea is absurd. This would be to make the stream rise higher than the fountain, from which it springs.” Such, too, as this, is the general language of

the presbyterian writers;—all, condemning, like M'Dowal, both as antisciptural, and unreasonable, the opinion, that the people are the arbiters of the pastoral commission. Their conduct, as I have just now said, is certainly exceedingly inconsistent. For, it was solely upon the will, and election, of the people, that their own pastoral authority was professed to have been originally founded.—But, so it frequently is:—power changes principles. And men pull down the scaffoldings, when once a house is built.

I have not discussed,—neither will I do it,—the great *improbability*, or rather, as M'Dowal more justly calls it—“the absurdity,” of the pretensions, which I am now discussing. They are, in fact, absurd,—implying an entire inversion of the rational order of things. For, if the pretext were once admitted, it would then follow, that the people, who, in religion, are the inferiors, would be placed above the pastors, who are the superiors; and “the stream,” according to the expression of M'Dowal, “would rise higher than the fountain, from which it springs.” Or, to use another figure, which is often employed by writers upon this subject,—“The feet would thus be placed above the head.” The notion is, certainly, most unwise. Why, (just to form a comparison with an institution of very inferior excellence to that of Christianity) is it not true, that, even under the Mosaic dispensation, whose ministry was only the figure of ours, —“a ministry,” as it is called by St. Paul, “of death,” —is it not true, that, even under that dispensation, the delegation of its pastors was confided, not to the body of the people in general, but exclusively, to one peculiar family? It was, indeed, limited, and very strictly confined, to this. And during the course of fifteen hundred years, it was carefully thus preserved;—being transmitted regularly from hand to hand, in the long series of its descendants. But, if so, how much more reasonable, then, must it be to conceive, that, under the Christian dispensation, whose ministry is a ministry “of life,” the same kind of privilege should be appended, not to the great herd of society in general, but to a particular portion only of its members! For, if this were not the case, then would the figure be more perfect than the reality.

From the few considerations, then, which I have thus rapidly suggested, I think the conclusion plain, that this favourite system of our dissenting sects is but what I have already called it,—a groundless, but flattering, fiction ;—no sanctions from the Scriptures to approve it ; no vouchers from antiquity to confirm it :—whilst, at the same time, it is repugnant to all the general notions of order, and regularity. For these reasons, how much does it behove those, who are unhappily, but confidently, living under its guidance, to study well, at all events, its properties ; and to pause over their awful situation. For, if the efficacy of the sacraments ; if the operations, and effects, of grace ; if the ordinary sources of salvation, be, all of them, dependent,—as they certainly are dependent,—upon the validity of the pastoral delegation,—then should the situation of those individuals appear truly awful, who are not prudently assured, that the pastors, whom they follow, are indeed the real pastors of the Christian fold. This is a point, upon which there ought to exist no doubt. For, however respectable, in all other regards, may be the characters of the men, who assume to themselves the dignity, and style, of pastors, or ministers ;—however pure may be their morals ; splendid their abilities ; eminent their erudition,—still, if they have not been, really sent, and lawfully commissioned, to conduct the faithful,—then is their ministry completely null, and their preaching vain. Their churches are, in such case, not churches, but mere human conventicles. Under such circumstances, or under the apprehension of living in such circumstances, men, surely, ought, if they value their own future happiness, to be excited, as I have just said, *at all events, to inquire.*

I have, thus far, in the series of this work, discussed the grounds of such churches only, as are founded, or supposed to be founded, upon the alleged principle of *an external delegation.* The reader will have made the observation, from what I have stated, that the great difference of opinion between those institutions, and the catholic church, consists, not in the denial of the necessity of a commission, and even of *an outward* commission, in order to authorise men to act as the pastors of the faithful, and to perform the sacred functions (he has observed, that those churches do, all of them, admit this ;

and even strenuously maintain, that they, moreover, possess, each of them, the divine prerogative); the great difference consists, in determining, what is the real source, and basis, of this commission; and where,—in the hands of what society of Christian pastors,—it is now invested. Such have been the subjects of our past investigations.

But, besides the various sects, which I have been either citing, or alluding to, in the foregoing pages,—and which, along with the catholic church, admit the necessity of an *external call*,—besides these, there are others, whose sentiments, upon this question, I have, not yet, noticed; and which differ very widely from every opinion, which I have, hitherto, discussed. It is, therefore, proper, that I should also make at least some few remarks upon these. My remarks upon them shall, however, be few: because to reason with fanaticism is of little or no avail.

Besides the protestant societies, then, described in the foregoing chapters, we have now, in this country, a variety of sects,—composing, too, unhappily, an immense portion of its population,—who, so far from admitting the institution, or necessity, of any *external call*, or outward sanction, to perform the duties of the Christian ministry, contend, on the contrary, that, what *alone* imparts the character, and dignity, of the Christian pastor: what alone renders men the real guardians of the fold, and gives effect to all their spiritual functions, is *the inward call of the Holy Ghost; and the sanction, and the impulses, of this sacred spirit*. Such are the opinions of those hosts of enthusiasts, and fanatics, who now crowd every path, and every corner, of this nation. It is the common sentiment of nearly all these. But it is that, in particular, (and hence, I wish to be understood, as referring principally to them) of those very popular, and powerful, societies, which are distinguished by the name of “methodists.”

The case is, therefore, precisely this:—the ministers of this sect,—deluded, no doubt, sometimes, themselves; and sometimes, deluding others,—aware, that they have no pretensions to any pastoral commission from the parent institute,—the catholic church;—none from the established clergy;—none from the order of pastoral succession;—none even from the election of the faithful;—aware of all this, these men, for these reasons, very ar-

dently contend, that the sacred, and important prerogative is conferred, not at all through the medium of any *external* principle, but through that alone, which I have just expressed,—*the inward call of the Holy Ghost*. “It is not,” they say, explaining their system,—“it is not man, that makes the minister of Jesus Christ. It is not popes, nor bishops: not kings, nor magistrates; not even synods, nor popular assemblies, that can impart this dignity. It is *he alone,—the Holy Ghost,—*who, alone, is the true Bishop, and Shepherd, of our souls, that can do this. It is his call, that creates the pastor; and that gives to him the right, and authority, to conduct the faithful,—to preach, to instruct, to administer the sacred rites, &c. “And, surely,” (they exultingly add) “wheresoever such a call as this takes place, the individual, who is favoured with it, is, in the eyes of piety, and Christian wisdom, far preferable, to him, who pretends to be a minister, or who is looked upon as such, because, forsooth, the hands of a bishop have been spread over him; or because the fancy, or caprice, of the public has thought proper to choose him for their guide. The seal, in the former case, is divine; whereas, in all others, it is only human; or at best, precarious.”

Such is the general system of these men: although, like that of the dissenters, which I have been describing, it, too, is variously modified by its various advocates. In the eyes of credulity, and ignorance, it appears extremely specious: as also, to the feelings of unenlightened piety, it is peculiarly flattering. Hence, therefore, its immense dominion, and its still daily increasing spread. However, if weighed with attention, or considered with the slightest degree of Christian prudence, it will at once appear to be but the dictate of the blindest fanaticism, or of the most artful cunning,—the device of a set of men, deceived, or deceiving, who, unable to trace their genealogy, and authority, to any visible source, affect thus to establish them upon the invisible action, of the Holy Ghost. It is true,—and this is another motive for the adoption of the expedient,—that its defenders have, many of them, felt, and acknowledged, that if, indeed, any visible, and regular appointment of pastors ought to be admitted, this ought to be,—and could be,—admitted, only in the catholic church: since

it is this church alone, that has retained such appointment, during the long course of so many centuries:—a circumstance this,—they hence contend, which, if once allowed, would establish the evidence (frightful thing!) of the divinity of popery. For these reasons, therefore, they reject all the alleged grounds of any church, or institution, as reposing upon the principle of external delegation.

To reason with fanaticism, I have just said, is, generally speaking, a very hopeless task. It is almost like reasoning with madness. For, fanaticism, when once it has taken possession of the mind, neither sees, nor attends to, any thing, save what is agreeable, and congenial, to its own ideas. It has “eyes, that do not see; and ears, that will not hear:” *nec modum habens, neque consilium*. This is, certainly, the ordinary character of the religious enthusiasm of this country,—a real fever of the mind, which it would be almost as difficult to cure, by any process of writing, as, by writing it would be difficult to cure the fever of the body. Hence, therefore, it is, that—deeming any benefit almost hopeless,—I am so little inclined to enter upon the refutation of the system, just delineated. Indeed, if the maxims, which I have laid down in the series of these pages, be correct, and the reader have attended to them,—then is such refutation quite unnecessary. For, those maxims, all, proving the necessity, and existence, of a regular pastoral ministry, prove equally, of course, the emptiness of each visionary pretension, that is repugnant to it.—However, since it may chance, that this treatise may fall into the hands of some pious, and sincere, but deluded, victim of the forestated illusions,—I will, hence, present to him the few following considerations.

It is a principle, as I have often stated,—and which cannot be repeated, too often; a principle, not less consonant to the notions of common sense, than it is agreeable to the doctrines of the Scriptures,—that our divine Legislator, when he established his spiritual empire,—the church,—established it, of course, upon the platform of a regular government,—upon the basis of something, wise, permanent, and orderly. To suppose, that he did not do this would be an impeachment of his prudence. Because an empire, without a regular form of govern-

ment, would be, not an empire, but an anarchy ; not a church, but a mob. Whatsoever includes the notion of society, includes essentially the notion likewise of order, and the notion, therefore again, of a regular government, for the purposes of maintaining order. So that abstracting from every other consideration,—from the wisdom of our great Legislator ; from the peculiar nature of the Christian institute, whose end, and aim, are, not only to maintain order, but even to establish perfection,—abstracting from these, and such like considerations,—the mere fact, that the Christian church is a society, is, alone, sufficient to satisfy the reasonable mind, that it must, consequently, be founded upon the basis of some regular form of government.

But if so, and it be true, that the church is thus constructed, then the next, and immediate consequence, must be, that it has also its regular governors. This, too, is evident. For, the supposition of a regular government, without regular governors is a manifest absurdity. These, indeed, are the very essence of government,—the instruments, which support order, and suppress disorder ; which enforce the observance, and punish the violation, of the laws ; which maintain peace, harmony, and justice, in society. These, therefore, must be, in a particular manner, required in the Christian church :—since, as I just now remarked, the end, and aim, of this divine institution are, not merely to keep up order ; not simply to preserve peace, and harmony, in the walks of life ; but, moreover,—and this is even its grand design,—to raise virtue to holiness, and to exalt holiness to perfection. From these plain, and consistent, premises, there results, at once, this equally plain, and consistent conclusion, that there must, of course, exist in it some regularly organised body of men, appointed, and lawfully commissioned, to command, and conduct, its members.

Accordingly, I have already shown this, too. I have shown that, forming this blessed establishment, its divine Founder was pleased, in his wisdom, to place over it a regular set of pastors,—his apostles,—whom he deputed, and commissioned, exactly as his own eternal Father had deputed, and commissioned him. To these he imparted the authority to conduct its members, and

to perform all the hallowed functions of their sacred ministry;—entailing upon them, moreover, and upon their successors for ever, the same important prerogatives,—assuring them, that “he would be with them” (this, of course, can only refer to the lawful successors of the apostles) “till the end of the world.” It was thus, that was organised the government of the Christian church; and thus, that its pastors were instituted,—a new dynasty, as it were, of spiritual, but yet visible princes, whom the faithful are commanded to listen to, and obey, as they should listen to, and obey, Christ Jesus himself;—and whom, therefore, to disobey, (it is solemnly so declared by this immortal Personage) is an act of insult, offered to the divine authority.

In relation to the opinions, and practice, of the Christian world, upon this subject, I have also shown, what these were, both universally, and unanimously, during the uninterrupted course of fifteen hundred years: and I have shown this, moreover, upon the testimonies of the protestants themselves. I have shown, that these writers honestly acknowledge, that, if there be any thing in the annals of history, that is incontestable,—“any thing,” as Mr. Sykes expresses it, “which no candid scholar can call in question,”—it is the perennial duration of the church of Christ under the government of bishops, the direct heirs, and lineal successors, of the apostles. “It may indeed,” says Dr. Spry, “be confidently affirmed, that there is not any historical fact, capable of more complete authentication than this,—that the apostles appointed a superior order of men, to whom alone, among other peculiar privileges, was committed the power of continuing their own succession, which succession has been continued, therefore, down to the present day.” Such are the facts, and such the doctrines, which I have inculcated, in the course of these pages. If true, they suffice, without the need of any farther considerations, to refute, at once, the pretended claims, not only of the sectarists, whom I am now alluding to, but of all the sectarists of the Reformation.

“But,” say those men,—“it is not any external authorisation, that creates the Christian pastor. It is God alone, and the call of the Holy Ghost, that do this.”—To discover the emptiness of this pretext would require

very little sagacity, provided only that men would reflect, either upon the wisdom of him, who founded the church, or upon the nature of his religion. For, what must evidently be the case,—as, indeed, it most certainly is the case,—if the alleged pretension be once admitted? Why, that the door is thus thrown wide open to every species of confusion, and error. It is thrown open, both to all the delusions of fanaticism; and to all the tricks, and intrigues, of passion. For, if men are really the pastors of the church, because they feel in themselves, as they imagine, the workings of the Holy Ghost;—if they become the ministers of the word, because they experience in themselves an impulse to preach;—and if, upon these accounts, they are to be considered by the public, as their guides, and governors,—if this be so,—as by the alleged pretext, it is,—then how palpable is the consequence! The consequence must then be, that,—composed, as society is; and consisting, as it does, of immense multitudes, who are the dupes of their own imaginations; and of perhaps still greater multitudes, who make it their unhappy interest to deceive,—the consequence must then be, that all the paths of society will be crowded with “false prophets, and with wolves in the clothing of sheep.” There is really nothing,—supposing the above pretension once admitted,—to stay these evils. For thus, feelings are the sole criterion, and the declaration of feelings, the sole proof, of a divine commission. And is it indeed in this manner, that the wisdom of our great Shepherd has provided for the peace, and harmony, of his sacred fold? Is it thus, that he has organised his church; and secured the unity, and integrity, of true belief? It, surely, cannot be. Or, if indeed it be so, then I can say, without any apprehension of being profane,—that he has acted most improvidently.

It is by comparisons, sometimes, that the truth, or the falsehood, of a proposition is rendered particularly plain, and obvious. I will, therefore, make one of these, in relation to the present subject. Let it, then, be supposed, (for, the supposition is just as rational in politics, as it is in religion) let it be supposed, that a system, similar to the preceding, were to be admitted, and pursued, in the regulation of civil society,—that is, let it be supposed, that every man should be a magistrate, or a ruler, in so-

ciety, who either considered himself proper to be such, or who had the confidence to declare himself such. Let this supposition be made, (it is exactly parallel to that, which I am now discussing) what, need I ask, must inevitably be the effect? Why, that society would at once become the scene of anarchy, and disorder. To expect harmony in it, or order, or justice, or decorum, would, in such case, be quite preposterous. But if so; and if such system be incompatible with the security, and happiness, of civil life,—how much more inconsistent ought it not to appear with the order of religion, and how much more repugnant to the divine harmony, and mysterious character, of the Christian church!

Thus, let good sense only contemplate, for a moment, the effects, which the adoption of this visionary pretension has always produced, and produces now, wheresoever it has been admitted. It was this,—this alleged call of the Holy Ghost, that, at the earlier periods of the Reformation, raised up those hosts of fanatics, and enthusiasts, who were, some of them, the disgrace; many of them, the ridicule; all of them, the scourges, of religion. It raised up such men, as the Muncers, the Johns of Leyden, our Foxes, Naylors, &c. These, with a countless multitude of the first heroes of protestantism, were the offspring of this delusion. They were all,—they each solemnly declared,—the envoys of the Holy Ghost; and authorised by his divine sanction to be the guides, and pastors, of the faithful.

In like manner, look next at the men, to whom I am now principally alluding.—those troops of preachers, and bands of pretended pastors, who guide, at present, perhaps, half this nation. These, too, with equal confidence,—and certainly with equal reason,—all lay claim to the same prerogatives. They are, all of them, they loudly tell us,—and it may be, that some amongst them honestly believe so,—sent by the Holy Ghost; having experienced in their hearts the workings of his divine spirit; and heard,—even very distinctly heard,—his sacred voice, inviting them into his ministry, and commanding them to preach his word.—Now, let any individual, who is not the dupe of fanaticism, just cast a glance upon these apostles; and see merely, who they are. I have, indeed, described them, already. They

are, for the most part, and with few exceptions, (there are a few striking exceptions) a set of the lowest, and most obscure, and most illiterate, portions of the community. * Now, merely considering this spectacle; and abstracting from a great variety of other circumstances,—from their opposition to one another; from the contradiction of their respective doctrines; from the multiplicity of their errors; and the confusion, and fanaticism, which they every where generate, —abstracting from all these considerations, and looking merely at the above spectacle,—can prudence, I will again ask, really believe, that it is thus,—in this way,—that the infinite wisdom of the eternal Shepherd has regulated the government of his fold? Is it possible, with any thing like good sense, to suppose, that persons, such as the above, —notwithstanding all their alleged calls, and boasted impulses of the Holy Ghost, are really deputed by this sacred Spirit? Such idea is, surely, most imprudent. Or if it be so; and men are indeed the real pastors of the faithful, because they imagine, that they hear the voice of God, ordaining them to be such,—in this case,

* The following extract, taken from the work of a highly respectable clergyman of the established church, who resides in my own vicinity, presents a fair specimen of the general condition, acquirements, and characters, of these men. Drawing a little circle round his own parish, he thus enumerates, and describes, the apostles, or preaching-heroes, who reign within it. (He gives their names: but these I omit, as very immaterial to the public.)

N.—a shoemaker.

N.—a pedlar.

N.—a laceman.

N.—a labourer.

N.—an itinerant baker.

N.—a ploughboy.

N.—a cobbler.

N.—a tailor.

N.—a day-labourer.

N.—a day-labourer.

N.—Whether suspended or preferred, not known.

N.—Degraded for adulterous intercourse.

N.—Reduced to the benches for petty larceny.

N.—Ditto.

Southey, describing the general character of the methodist preachers, says of them:—"They consist of roving adventurers, in all their intermediate grades between knavery and madness, who take to preaching, as a thriving trade."

"One magistrate," he adds, "in the county of Middlesex, licensed fourteen hundred preachers, in the course of six years. Of six and thirty persons, who obtained licenses, at one sessions, six spelt 'ministers of the gospel,' six different ways, and seven signed with their mark. One fellow, who applied for a license, being asked, if he could read, replied: 'Mother reads, and I spounds, and splains.'"

I can only repeat, what I have said, but a few lines before,—that Christ has, then, organised his church, most strangely; and that truth, or error; order, or confusion; wisdom or folly, must, in his eyes, be but very indifferent things,—ideas these, which, certainly, would be, both criminal, and absurd. Hence, therefore, the emptiness of the alleged pretension.

This conclusion will appear still more obvious, if the reader will give himself the useful trouble to reflect upon the awful importance, and the infinite sanctity, of the Christian ministry; and upon the various ends, and motives, which prompted the divine wisdom to establish it. In the attentive consideration of any one of these interesting subjects, his good sense would trace the most satisfactory reasons, why the pastors of the sacred fold ought to be, not only regularly organised, and lawfully instituted, but why, also, the regularity of their organisation, and the lawfulness of their institution, ought to be, moreover, peculiarly plain, and manifest,—so plain, and manifest, that, provided men would view them with even a moderate degree of care, they could not mistake them. Their evidence ought to be such as to suffice to warn the public against the artifices of impostors, and to guard the virtuous against the illusions of self-deception. The reason of all this is obvious:—it is this,—that the pastors of the church are established by the divine authority to be the guides, and conductors, of the faithful, whom the faithful, of course, are, hence, obliged, and very strictly commanded, to obey. They are the guardians of the mysteries of the Gospel; and the dispensers,—the only authorised dispensers,—of the holy sacraments, from whose hands alone, for this reason again, the faithful can receive these blessings with any benefit. Under these circumstances, therefore, is it not obvious, that the certainty of the delegation of these highly important personages, and the lawfulness of their commission, should be unequivocally plain;—should be established, and ascertained, not by any alleged pretensions of invisible impulses, and secret calls; not by any dubious sign, or uncertain principle,—but, as it is in the case of every other rational form of government, by the attestation of sanctions, that are tangible, and clear; and of motives, that are wise, and prudent? Such, certainly,

ought to be the case. Because, in a business of such awful moment, it is only evidences like these, that can properly insinuate confidence, or reasonably support conviction. Without them,—since all other pretensions are uncertain,—all real security is impossible. They, therefore, are essential;—although it were solely for the purpose of preserving the mind from the uneasinesses of perplexity, or from the illusions of self-deceit.

But, if this be so; and if such be the importance of being associated to the true Christian ministry,—then how necessary ought it not to appear, that the great body of the public,—the simple, the ignorant, the weak, but well-disposed,—should possess some means, even some very easy means, of defence and security against the artifices of impostors;—against the treachery, and snares, “of false prophets,”—those “wolves,” as the Scriptures call them, who, disguising themselves in the clothing of sheep, diffuse ravage through the fold? There ought, no doubt, to exist some check, some remedy, to these disorders: and it behoved the wisdom of the divine Shepherd to provide them.—Alas, looking into the annals of the church, what, do we there discover, has, at almost every period, been the fact? We find, that the multitude of imposters, and false prophets,—excited, some, by the spirit of fanaticism; some, by the love of interest; some, by pride, passion, &c.,—has, upon various occasions, been immense. It is so, too,—and particularly so,—at the present day; and even most particularly, in this country. The number of the “false prophets,” that now crowd this country, is truly awful, and afflicting.

And then mark, once again, the methods, (I have, indeed, already taken notice of these before) by which they ensnare the public weakness. They employ every method,—every trick, and circumstance, which the sagacity of cunning, and the zeal of industry, can suggest;—every thing, which, by working upon the feelings, and exciting the imaginations, of the simple, and the ignorant, is calculated to mislead them. They present themselves before their hearers, clothed in the garb of sanctity,—their looks, the very image of holiness; their language, the voice of the Scriptures; their professions, the pure love of truth; their earnestness, the expression of the most ardent interest for man’s salvation. They are

the messengers, they confidently assure them, of the Almighty, deputed by his mercy to reform a corrupted world, and to lead men back to the paths of truth and virtue.—“The number of fools,” says Solomon, “is infinite.” And hence, to deceive is seldom difficult. But, to deceive, under circumstances like the above,—if men will listen to the deceivers,—is easy. For these reasons,—seeing, that such is the state of things,—deception always easy, and the multitude of deceivers always great,—did it not, hence, behove the wisdom of our Redeemer, when he formed his church, to provide against these evils? Ought he not, in his goodness, to have furnished its members, and the public, under such circumstances, with some established rule to go by,—that is, with some sure criterion, by whose guidance, they might, without any danger of being mistaken, distinguish accurately between the genuine pastor, and the artful fanatic; between the true apostle, and the false prophet? If, indeed, the church be a real society;—and if peace, and truth, and order, be designed to subsist amongst its members, then are such precautions, not only wise, but necessary. Accordingly, hence it was, that, both our divine Redeemer, and his apostles, have so often, and so urgently, admonished the faithful to be constantly upon their guard, and to beware,—studiously to beware,—of the artifices, and seductions, of false teachers. Hence it was, that the good Shepherd, erecting his sacred fold, was pleased to place over it a regular order of pastors,—an episcopacy, and a priesthood, descending directly from his own apostles; and distinguished by marks, and characters, which good sense alone,—if good sense would examine them well,—could not mistake. In short, it is true, that every thing in religion,—the purity of its sacraments, the sanctity of its mysteries, the severity of its obligations, the unity of its faith, &c.,—imperiously, and manifestly, require, that the guardianship of the important trust should be confided, not to a set of men, equivocally sent;—not to every individual, who has the folly to think himself “called,” or the audacity to call himself a pastor;—not to persons, excited by internal impulses, or acting even under strong convictions,—but to men, *certainly deputed*; and not simply this,—but to men, bearing, moreover, in their hands

the plain, and incontestable diploma of their deputation. Without these precautions, confusion, and error, and every varied form of fanaticism, become inevitable. Without them,—to use the expression of the prophet,—“men sow wind,”—that is, falsehoods, and the public, “reap storms.”

Amongst the various sources of self-deception, of error, and public mischief, there is not, perhaps, one, that is so flattering, and so dangerous, but, at the same time, so absurd, as the opinion, that feelings, alleged convictions, and inspirations, are always the dictates of the divine will, and the principles of truth. For, what are the feelings, &c., which our preachers so often urge, as the sanction of their pretended commission—or which the public cite, as the justification of their belief, and conduct? Alas, they are any thing, or every thing, that fanaticism, or folly, or enthusiasm, may suggest. They are all the illusions, and nonsense;—all the visions, and dreams, of which the human heart, and the human understanding, are susceptible. And then, too, (which is still worse,) whoever adopts feelings, and pretended inspirations, as the rules of his faith, and actions,—he, by these, not only justifies, in his own breast, but even sanctifies, every species of error, and superstition;—and indeed, not only this, but, sometimes, every species of crime and abomination. For, there is hardly any kind of crime and abomination, but what has been produced, and defended, under the horrible pretext of feelings and inspiration.

However, passing over these considerations, as well even as all those, which I had before suggested,—behold now one single, and very simple observation, which, alone, suffices to evince the emptiness of the pretensions, which I am here discussing. It is this,—that, if feelings, &c. were really the effects of grace, and the voice of the Holy Ghost,—and if the men, thus excited by them, were indeed deputed by the divine wisdom to be the ministers, and instructors, of the public,—then, since the spirit of God is *one*, and always consistent with itself, the consequence would necessarily be, that the presumed delegates would, all of them, teach the same truths, and inculcate the same doctrines. If sent by the Holy Ghost, they could not preach contradictions,

sow errors, and create confusion. And yet, such, we see it every where, is the fact. They teach,—though all declaring themselves his deputies,—they teach the most contradictory creeds, and the most conflicting, and opposite, tenets. And they do this, too, all, and each of them, with the same share of confidence,—and it may be, with the same share of self-conviction.* Surely, this alone is proof, sufficient to satisfy reason, and enlightened piety, that such men are not the envoys of heaven; but, either the dupes of self-delusion, or else, impostors, making dupes of the public.

It is a fact, which, to those, who have not studied the causes of things, or the principles of human opinions, ought to appear surprising,—that this country, which is for ever boasting of its superior wisdom, and illuminations;—and which, also, no doubt, in a great variety of respects,—in its politics, in its literature, in its improvements in the arts, &c.—is the admiration of surrounding nations,—is still, at the same time, in relation to every thing that concerns religion, perhaps of all other civilised states, the most ridiculous, and contemptible. It is the dupe of more errors; the prey of wilder extravagancies; the scene of more pitiful illusions, than disgrace any other portion of the Christian universe. There are in it a far greater variety of religions,—more sects, and heresies; more creeds, and professions; more fanaticism, and folly; more cant, and bigotry, than there are in all the other states of Europe, put together. Whence, also, as I have been observing, although it may be, in many other regards, the object of very just admiration to surrounding nations,—it is, in this regard, the object of their ridicule, and pity.

There is something, no doubt, in the peculiar features of the national character, and in that love, which the English entertain for liberty, that accounts, more or less,

* “I have frequently,” says Wesley, “written, and spoken much, in my own spirit, when I thought, I was writing, and speaking, entirely by the assistance of the Spirit of God.”—Remarks

“The claim to illumination,” says Dr. Mant, “carries with it a plain proof of its weakness. For it is a claim, which one man may advance as well as another. And if they do so in opposition one to another, where is the criterion to decide? Thus, the two great leaders of methodism, each maintained, that he was under the guidance of the Spirit. And yet, each preached a quite different gospel from his adversary.”

for the above misfortunes. However, without appealing to this, or to any other subordinate cause, to explain the fact, it is easy to do this, by the consideration of those two circumstances, which I have noticed already, so repeatedly. The first is,—that the far larger portion of the nation is completely ignorant of the real nature of the Christian church; of the grounds, upon which it reposes; and of the character of its pastoral ministry. Whence it is, that they become, so easily, the willing dupes of a set of men, who, deceivers partly, and in part deceived, make a sport of their simplicity, and a traffic of their credulity.—The second is, the leading maxim of protestantism,—*the right of private judgment*;—a rule, which (provided men had the courage to apply it) contains in itself, and would generate, as many forms of faith, as there are visions in the human fancy, or varieties in the human character. So that from the operation of these two causes alone, it is easy to account, at once, for all the follies of fanaticism, and for all the errors, and incredulity, which prevail, every where, around us. The former misleads the vulgar, and the uninstructed; the latter misleads the learned.

Thus I have pointed out, how exceedingly weak, and defective, are those various grounds, upon which the different sects of protestantism have raised their respective churches. I will, therefore, conclude, by merely suggesting, once more, to the thoughtful protestant that same piece of advice, which I have already given so often,—namely, that, if he really love the truth, and his own security,—if he wish to build his faith upon a solid basis,—he should, then, investigate the momentous subject of this treatise, with pious, and impartial care. Let him not any longer consider himself secure, because he has hitherto felt secure;—nor convinced, because he entertains no apprehension;—nor right, because he thinks himself sincere. Feelings, however flattering, and consoling, are, still, but relative things,—then only safe, and wise, when they are founded upon the truth;—then only justifiable, when they are, at all events, the fruits of diligent examination. Hence, let him study the question well. For, if to be a member of the true church be the first of Christian obligations,—then, also, to labour to find out the divine establishment must be the first of Christian duties. They are, thus, correlative things.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The commission, by which the apostles, and their successors, became governors of the church, originally proceeded from the head of the church. It, consequently, conveyed an investiture of authority from the holy fountain, from whence all authority in spiritual matters is to be derived. From the circumstance of the original delivery of the apostolic commission being accompanied with a declaration, which plainly imported the continuance of it to the end of the world, the church has reasonably, and *universally*, concluded, (as might be proved from the most unanswerable evidence) that it was the divine intention, that this same commission, for the accomplishment of the same divine object, should accompany the church, through every stage of its progress. Either, then, this commission, thus regularly handed down to us, is still in force, or not. If it be, all authority in the church must continue to be derived from it. If it be determined, then the church, and its ministry, are determined with it.—DR. DAUBENY.

THE foregoing passage, extracted from Dr. D.'s Guide to the Church, is an accurate analysis of almost every thing, that I have been suggesting, in the series of the present work. The principle, the reasoning, the conclusion, are precisely the same with mine. Christ Jesus granted a commission to his apostles; which, also, he ordained, should be perpetual. It is the sole source, and foundation, of all spiritual power. *Therefore*, wheresoever this subsists, *there,—and there only*—subsists the true Christian ministry; and, of course, the true Christian church. Such is the reasoning; and such also the conclusion, of the archdeacon;—as, indeed, such, likewise, is the reasoning, and such the conclusion, of all other enlightened protestants. So that by this easy, and happy process, the discovery of the true church is reduced to the ascertainment of one single,

and simple *fact*,—*where that divine commission now subsists, which was once granted to the first apostles.* The exact verification of this circumstance, without the need of any other examination, is, alone, sufficient to conduct the inquirer to the real sanctuary of salvation.

Having, therefore, in the preceding chapters, investigated the claims of the reformed societies to the divine diploma, it remains for me now, in order to complete my task, to examine those likewise which the catholic church alleges, in her support of this grand prerogative. The consequence will then be, that, if it do appear evident, that it has continued, and continues still, to exist in the possession of the catholic ministry, then, also, it should appear,—and it is,—equally evident, that the catholic ministry is, alone, the true Christian ministry ;—and therefore again, by another undeniable inference,—that the catholic church is, alone, the true church of Jesus Christ.

And has, then, this divine commission, which thus constitutes the grounds of the Christian church,—has it always continued, and does it continue still, in the hands of the catholic ministry? The reply to this question, after all that I have stated in the foregoing chapters, is almost superfluous; and must be little else than the repetition of those observations.—In the first place, I will remark, that the sacred character had, most certainly, continued in the hands of the catholic ministry, through the whole series of ages, from its first institution, down to the era of the Reformation. This is a fact, I have shown, which is conceded by the most learned portions of the protestant churches ;—even by Luther himself, by Calvin, Beza, &c. By the members of the established church it is a point, which is considered, and defended, as one of the most obvious, and incontestable, that the annals of history present. “The catholic pastors,” says Dr. Gray, “were doubtless the ostensible pillars, and visible representatives, of the Christian ministry ; and, as members of the sacred lineage, transferred to their followers the privileges, and functions, of their appointed office.” Dr. Tomline even admits, that the authority of those personages, at the time of the Reformation, was not so much “as vitiated.”

Whence, Mr. Wix observes, stating the general opinion of the established religion: "the church of Rome is acknowledged by the church of England to be a true, and apostolic church." In reality, these concessions are, all of them necessary; unless it be contended, that the church had perished. For, if, at the time of the introduction of protestantism, the sacred institution did not exist in the communion of catholicity, it must, then, have existed no where. Above all, such concessions are necessary from the clergy of the English church, because it is only by this means, that they can pretend to link themselves to the divine chain of the apostolic ministry.

After having, therefore, adduced these acknowledgments of the adversaries of our religion, in favour of the immortal lineage of its pastors, it ought to appear,—and it perhaps, is,—superfluous to bring forward any other evidences to attest it. Such acknowledgments are, alone, sufficient to convince even the most prejudiced, of the reality of the important fact. However, since the circumstance, besides being so very important, is, also, at the same time, curious;—and since, from one cause or other, few protestants give themselves the trouble to reflect upon it,—I will, hence, and for the sake of the latter, (if, by chance, these pages should fall into their hands) present some farther attestations, in order to render the point still more tangible, and satisfactory. For this purpose, I will here exhibit, in the first place, as one of the plainest of these demonstrations, the succession of our sovereign pontiffs.

In the order, and succession, of these illustrious personages, we behold the spectacle of one long, and unbroken pedigree,—a chain, extended, without one link deficient, or one ring divided,—through the whole series of the ages of Christianity even down to the present day. In order to show this, I might at once appeal simply to those tablets of chronology, which have been composed by the protestants themselves; or to the testimonies of profane historians, who have described the events, and order, of revolving ages. There are multitudes of these writers, who record the important fact. However, besides these, there are other vouchers, still, whose testimony, if not more authentic, is, perhaps, more precious

in the eyes of Christian piety. Thus, we have, in the first place, the lists, very accurately made out, both by St. Irenæus, and Tertullian, of all those pontiffs, who, in the see of Rome, had regularly succeeded to St. Peter, during the first two centuries. They have handed down to us the names of all those distinguished characters; the order of their succession, &c.—Next,—and again drawn up with the same care and correctness, as the preceding,—we have the catalogues of the same apostle's successors in the same see, composed, and transmitted to us, by the two eminent saints, and writers,—Optatus, and the great Austin. They bring the order of the succession down to the opening of the fifth century,—that is, down to the pontificate of the first Innocent. So that we have thus the most unquestionable testimonies of the continuation of the apostolical commission in the persons of the Roman pontiffs, during the course of all those periods, when to preserve the sacred trust was the most difficult; and to ascertain the records of its preservation, the most perplexing.

To trace the chain, still onward,—that is, from the epoch, which I have just stated, down to the epoch of the Reformation, is a task, which admits no difficulty. Here,—from the above period,—the line of succession is quite manifest. It is recorded, not only in the annals of the church, but in countless registers of human policy. The case is,—that, from the era, just assigned, the list of the Roman bishops has been always very carefully preserved,—presenting to us the name, the age, the duration of the reign, of each succeeding pontiff. And not only is this the fact,—but it is, moreover, true, that the whole conduct of those personages, both spiritual, and temporal, has, nearly always, during the fore-mentioned interval, been particularly conspicuous;—there having been few events of any considerable moment, in which, by some means or other,—either by their authority, their mediation, or the influence of their counsels,—they did not bear some part. All this is so incontestable, that, although it be both the inclination, and the interest of the protestants, to contest it,—or, at least, to cast some doubts upon it,—yet does hardly one presume to do so. Whence, even Fulke himself, with all his hostility to popery, remarks: “you

can name the notable persons, in all ages, in their government, and ministry. And especially the succession of popes you can rehearse in order upon your fingers."

Before I proceed any farther in this investigation, I will here state one observation, which the fathers, whom I have been citing, and who have preserved for us the succession of the popes until their time,—have been pleased to make upon the interesting circumstance. St. Irenæus, and Tertullian,—although, in their times, the order of the succession had not yet lasted the space of two hundred years,—deduce from it the following conclusion,—that it is the proof, and evidence, of the apostolicity, not merely of the church of Rome, but of the apostolicity, moreover,—and therefore, of the divinity also,—of the whole communion of the catholic religion. They even urge this argument with an air of peculiar exultation;—calling upon the various sects which were then separated from the parent institute, to produce any thing in their own favour, that resembled it. "Let heresy," exclaims Tertullian, "produce any thing like this."

The two other writers, whom I have quoted,—St. Optatus, and St. Austin,—after having stated the order of the succession until their times, deduce from it, in like manner, the very same inferences, as the preceding ones. They contended, that it is the triumphant demonstration of the certainty of the apostolic commission of the catholic ministry; and the demonstration, therefore, at the same time, of the certainty of the divinity of the catholic church. They confidently assert this; and hence, deduce this ulterior consequence, that all those sects, and communions, which had no such pedigree to produce, were, of course, but schismatics, and intruders. Such is the mode of reasoning of those great writers.

Now, if there be any truth, or wisdom, in such process,—if it be well founded, and consistent,—then it should seem needless to observe, that the same order of argumentation, if employed, *now*, by the catholic, ought to appear,—and most certainly is,—more triumphant, and convincing, still. For, if the preservation of the apostolic mission in the hands of the Roman pontiffs, during the short lapses of two, or four hundred years, be the evidence, as it is contended, of the apostolicity, and

truth, not only of the church of Rome, but of the whole catholic church in general;—if it prove, moreover, the emptiness of the pretensions of all subsequent institutions,—if this be correct,—then, how manifest ought it to appear, that the unbroken continuation of the same sacred prerogative in the persons of our popes, during the course of fifteen centuries,—or rather till the present day,—establishes these same conclusions, in a manner, which is far more striking! Such is indeed the case: and the catholic, *now*, with much more reason than Tertulian did in his time, might exultingly call out to the separatists from our church:—“Let heresy,”—let protestantism, “produce any thing like this.” The subject is, no doubt, a subject for just exultation. It establishes, itself, the divinity of the catholic church. It is the fulfilment of that assurance of Christ Jesus to his apostles; “Behold I am with you, *all days.*”

If it be once proved, or conceded, that the commission originally granted by our Redeemer to his apostles, has been constantly preserved, and perpetuated, in the persons of the Roman pontiffs, there cannot, in this case, be any ulterior necessity of pointing out a similar preservation of the divine credential amongst the pastors of the various other churches of catholicity. The evidence of its preservation by the former is the evidence equally of its preservation amongst the latter. Because all these, being united in communion with the church of Rome, form, along with it, but one, and the same, community. They are, all of them, as the Fathers express it, but “branches of the same tree, or streams from the same fountain.” “So that no bishop,” St. Jerome remarks, “was ever allowed to be a lawful bishop, unless he were united in communion with the see of Rome.” For this reason, I might here pass over any farther proofs of the divine genealogy of the catholic ministry.

However, I will just observe to the reader, that, should he choose to investigate the subject more minutely, he will discover, that, besides the evidences, which demonstrate the perennial preservation of the apostolic charter in the see of the Roman pontiffs, there are, moreover, a multitude of other attestations, which, with equal authenticity, point out the subsistence of the holy trust, for nearly the same length of interval, in many other

churches of Christian Europe. Such is the case, in several of those of Italy; of Spain; of Germany; of France, &c. In all those kingdoms, and in several of the dioceses, belonging to them, we have the plainest testimonies, both of ecclesiastical, and profane history, that this great principle of pastoral power has been always religiously retained. Considered by the respective prelates of those churches, as a deposition of all others the most sacred; and its transfer, for this reason, being adjusted, and regulated, by the strictest laws of ecclesiastical discipline, it has, hence, through a long, and unbroken chain of pastors, and illustrious characters, descended, every where, unimpaired, to the pastors of these modern ages. Not the storms of time; not the dangers, and hardships, of persecution, ever broke the hallowed lineage. It has come down, as little altered, and as little interrupted, as has done, during the same length of years, the course of those great rivers, which flowed, and still flow, through each of the above-named kingdoms. It was so, and it is so still, as the reader may easily ascertain,—in Italy, with the sees of Milan, Verona, Naples, Mantua, &c.;—in Spain, with the churches of Toledo, Seville, Cordova;—in Germany, with those of Cologne, Mentz, Saltzburg;—in France, with those of Lyons, Arles, Autun, Paris, Tours, &c. In all, and in each, of these venerable portions of the Christian fold, there has existed constantly, from the earliest ages of distinguished sanctity, down to the present era of corruption, a regular series of apostolic pastors,—men who, in a direct line of succession, and in the canonical order of spiritual discipline, have alternately replaced each other; transmitting carefully to each other that same divine credential, which, erst, the first apostles had received from the eternal Shepherd. There is not even in the long genealogy of those prelates, any more than in that of the Roman pontiffs, one single circumstance,—not so much as a pause,—that can seem, with any real consistency, to deserve the name of an interruption. *Let protestantism, I again repeat it, produce any thing like this.*

I might, too, whilst I am thus stating the apostolicity of the catholic ministry refer to another voucher of this fact, even in the now-proscribed, but once long-established, religion of this country. In this country, the du-

ration of the apostolical delegation in the hands of its catholic pastors,—although we date, not from its first conversion under the Britons, but from its second, under the Saxons,—presents another evidence in favour of the catholic cause. For, counting only from the latter period, we even thus behold, in the churches of this nation, a long line of catholic pastors, reaching the uncontested length of very nearly a thousand years,—from the time of the venerable Augustine, its lawfully authorised apostle, down to that eventful revolution, when the arm of tyranny, introducing a new order of religion, broke indignantly asunder all the bands of Christian unity. During that whole length of interval, there had subsisted, in various sees,—and this, too, without the slenderest interruption,—an unbroken chain of catholic pastors,—men, all, professing the same faith; all adoring the same mysteries; and successively handing down to one another, exactly as they had, each of them, received it, that same divine commission, which had descended to them, inherited from the first apostles. Neither are these facts so much as contested. They are, on the contrary, as I have often said,—very strenuously defended by the clergy of the present establishment, who contended, that not only had the sacred charter, once confided to the apostles, been always, until the era of the Reformation, preserved in the hands of the catholic ministry, but even that it had been preserved by them, unvitiated and unaltered.

Before I proceed to deduce from these premises the very palpable, and direct inference, which they present to the prudent Christian, I will here pause, a moment, to make the following general observation. It is this;—that, considering, in a merely moral point of view, and without any reference to the divine promises,—considering, only thus, the long duration of the catholic ministry, there is, certainly, a great deal in the circumstance, that is calculated to strike, both the wisdom of the understanding, and the sensibility of the heart; a great deal, that insinuates very forcibly the divine character of the catholic church. It is an eloquent testimony, that bespeaks the superintendence of a watchful providence over the holy institution. For, what.—let the reader only reflect,—what, during the same length of interval,

has been, every where, the fate of every thing else beside,—of all other institutions, religions, or creations of human industry? Why, whilst all these have, during it, been altered, or have wholly vanished;—whilst kingdoms, and governments, and dynasties, have successively perished, and changed their characters;—whilst heresies, and sects, have, like clouds, evaporated into air; or like sand beds, formed by one flood, have been rapidly washed away by another;—whilst the religions of protestantism, even within the little space of a few years, and ever since their birth, have been always, and more frequently than the fabled Proteus, putting on new features, and new appearances, fixed in nothing but instability,—whilst in short, during the above interval, the hand of time has been constantly sweeping away every thing that is human,—the monuments of ambition, the inventions of policy, the works of industry, &c.,—whilst all this has been the case,—the catholic church, meanwhile, and her pastoral ministry, have, alone, remained unaltered, and unmoved. They have remained so, too, although every means have been employed to alter, and pull them down;—all the exertions of worldly violence; all the contrivances of earthly policy; and, worse far than these, all the artifices of error, and the storms of heresy. Still, they stood,—fixed, fast as a rock of adamant in the midst of a furious ocean; or steady as the poles of heaven. And is not this, in the eyes of enlightened piety,—I will not say, an absolute proof,—but, a strong expression of probability, that they are the immortal work of an immortal Author; erected by his wisdom upon the basis of eternal truth? Such idea is no doubt, natural: for, the works of men soon perish, or decay. At all events, there is a great deal in the circumstance to awaken admiration;—and which, therefore, ought likewise to awaken investigation.—But, having made this observation, I will now proceed.

I have shown, then, upon the testimonies of the protestants themselves, as well as upon the clearest evidences of facts, that the real grounds of the true church,—the divine pastoral delegation,—continued still, at the opening of the sixteenth century, to subsist exclusively in the hands of the catholic ministry. Wherefore,—this proposition admitted,—it is here, I have said before,—it

is at this important point, that prudence should take its stand. It is here, that piety should begin to reason, and to judge. For, thus, the only question, which it needs to investigate, is simply this,—whether that same church, which, at the era of the Reformation, was confessedly the heiress, and possessor, of the apostolical commission, has, since that period, still continued to enjoy it; or whether, by some possible accident, she has chanced to have lost it. This is all, that, in order to ascertain the claims of catholicity,—or where the true church now subsists,—it is necessary for piety, or prudence, to discuss;—according to that maxim, both of catholic, and of protestant theology, before laid down,—that, *wheresoever resides the divine pastoral commission*,—THERE,—AND ONLY THERE—*resides the true church of Christ*.

And has, therefore, this divine credential,—which, thus, confessedly resided in the hands of the catholic prelacy, at the epoch of the protestant revolution,—has it continued to reside there, *since* that event?—for, if so, the question is, at once, according to the above maxim, decided.—I reply,—that, if there be any thing, that is undeniable;—any fact, that it is peculiarly easy to ascertain;—it is, most certainly, the continued residence of the pastoral commission in the hands of the catholic clergy, since the era of the Reformation. The circumstance is even so obvious; the evidences, which attest it, so palpable; and the events, at the same time, which confirm it, so recent;—that it is impossible, with any thing like reason, to entertain so much as a doubt, concerning it. The mere authority of the political histories of every Christian state are sufficient vouchers of its certainty. The case is, that the sacred charter has, during all that length of interval, being just as piously cherished, as regularly transferred, as canonically, and as publicly inherited, as it ever had been, during any period of the Christian church. Thus, if we appeal only to the testimony of human history, and to the series of public occurrences, we find, that the succession, for example, of our Roman pontiffs has been the same,—just as regular, and uninterrupted, as it had ever been in any preceding centuries.* Such, too, we find equally, has been

* It was a source of considerable amusement to the catholics to behold, a few years past, the exultation, with which the protestant public, and

the constant order of things, not only in all those nations, which have retained their ancient faith, but in all those sees, where the arm of persecution has not driven away their catholic pastors. In short,—for the fact admits no doubts,—the lineage of our prelacy, from the time of the Reformation down to the present day, has continued unbroken, and unimpaired; and they have transmitted carefully to each other that same divine diploma, which their predecessors, before the Reformation, had inherited from the hands of the first apostles.

particularly the protestant clergy, hailed the destruction, as they had fondly imagined, of the papal succession; and with it, of popery itself. The reader will remember, that, when the revolutionary tyrants of France had expelled the venerable Pius VI. from his see, and consigned him to prisons, and distress,—then half the churches of this nation resounded with the glad text—“Rome is fallen.” This, too, was the epitaph, which was every where, triumphantly prepared to be affixed to the mausoleum of the departed pontiff. Induced by this laughable spectacle, an eloquent foreign writer makes the following reflections on it:—

“It has always been one of the maladies of protestantism, to predict the fall of popery, and the subversion of the papal power. Not errors the most absurd; not mistakes the most glaring; not nonsense the most laughable, could ever correct its professors of this folly. They have still constantly returned to the charge. And never were these prophets so bold in predicting this awful revolution, as when, recently, they imagined, it had actually arrived.

“In this career of madness, there are no classes of men, that have distinguished themselves so strikingly, as the English clergy. These men have published a countless multitude of the most useful works,—useful, because they are the disgrace of the human understanding; and must compel men,—if they are not condemned to total blindness,—to enter into themselves. At the sight of the sovereign pontiff, driven, a few years ago, into exile, imprisoned, insulted, and deprived of his territories,—it was easy for these prophets to foretel, that, now, it was all over with his spiritual supremacy, and his temporal power. Plunged in the deepest darkness, and condemned with justice to the two-fold chastisement of seeing in the Scriptures, what is not there; and of not seeing, what they contain most clearly;—they undertook, by the help of these sacred pages, to prove to us, that his supremacy,—which we are divinely, and literally, assured, shall endure for ever,—was on the point of vanishing for ever. Nay; they even found out the very hour, and minute, of its fall. They found out this in the apocalypse,—a book, fatal to protestant writers; and in which they never engage, without losing their common sense. Against sophisms, the most preposterous, the catholic has no other arms to present, but those of reason. But God, when his wisdom requires it, refutes them by wonders. For, behold, whilst these false prophets were yet speaking with all this confidence; and the public, as if drunk with error, were listening eagerly to them,—the Almighty, by a striking attestation of his power, and by an inexplicable reconciliation of states the most discordant, sent back the venerable pontiff to the Vatican;—where his hand, extended only to bless, already called down mercy, and the light of heaven, upon the authors of these pitiful productions.”

The only method, by which, with any thing like reason, or consistency, the protestant can contend, that the catholic church is not now, since the era of the Reformation, any longer, the proprietrix of the sacred privilege, is the pretext, that she has lost it; or forfeited it, either by some new act of apostacy;—by some fresh crime, or error;—by some alteration or other, in the character of her government;—or else, by some act, either of alienation, transfer, or resignation. It is, no doubt, manifest, that, without some such causes as these, or, at least, without some substantial motive,—it is difficult, not to say impossible, to imagine, how the church, which, in the sixteenth century, was the acknowledged heiress of the important dignity, could, either then, or since that time, have lost it. And have, then, (this is a question, which the prudent protestant ought to put to himself)—have any of the aforesaid causes ever occurred to rob this church of her long-enjoyed prerogative? I have replied to this already; and shall, therefore, only, again, here repeat:—*Not one of them.* There neither occurred, at the time of the Reformation, nor since that occasion, one single circumstance,—neither any act of apostacy, nor any fresh crime, or error,—which can reasonably appear to have rendered this church, in any one respect, different from what she had constantly been before. Her faith, her constitution, her order of government, &c., continued still, and continue now, precisely what they were, before protestantism had yet a name. Whilst, in like manner, as for any supposed resignation, or transfer, or alienation, of her pastoral powers, in favour of any one of the reformed churches,—this, so far from having been the case, is a fable too wild, and ridiculous, to be so much as dreamt of. Indeed, so far from doing any thing of this nature, she, on the contrary, with all the force of her authority, excommunicated the bold intruders, who,—having abandoned their wonted fold,—now solemnly declared themselves the pastors of the faithful. It is true, they did, some of them, here and there, take possession of the catholic sees;—which, also, a little string of their successors has continued to occupy, till now. But, surely, it cannot be reasonably contended, that a few acts of intrusion like these,—the effects of violence, and the fruit of civil

influence, and in intrigue,—could really have robbed the universal church of her long-enjoyed prerogatives. It is not thus, that the pastoral commission is either lost, or becomes inherited. So that if the rule be accurate,—that *the residence of the true pastoral commission decides the residence of the true ministry; and, therefore, the residence equally of the true church*,—then, I conclude,—and I think the conclusion evident,—that the possession of this divine charter remains exclusively vested,—since it is essentially *one, and indivisible*,—in the hands of the catholic clergy. It avowedly remained there, at the opening of the sixteenth century. There has occurred nothing, since that period, to deprive them of it. **THEREFORE, it must remain there, still. And the ministry, of course, and the church, which continue to possess it, must be, alone, the true ministry, and the true church of Jesus Christ.**

Thus, by means of a process, the most simple, but yet the most decisive,—by the application of a principle, intelligible to the meanest capacity, and incontestable as any thing in the whole order of religion,—a principle, which, for these reasons, the most enlightened sects of protestantism admit,—I have enabled the reader to decide, with accuracy, that vital question, which, to the victims of schism, and the dupes of heresy, is, beyond every other, the most important. I have enabled him to judge, and decide, where it is, that still exists that sacred, and happy fold, which the eternal Shepherd has erected, both for the present, and the future security of his sheep. I have applied the useful test to almost every thing, that has the presumption to call itself “a church.” I have applied it to the pretensions of the first reformers. And I have shown, that those men neither presented any diploma to establish that *extraordinary* delegation, to which they laid claim so confidently; nor yet, any sanction to confirm an *ordinary* one.—I have applied it to the church of England. And I have shown, that, learned, and justly eminent, as are, and have been, great multitudes of its clergy—still, they do not form any links of that golden chain, which is rivetted to the hands of the first apostles. I have shown, that even its very claims to the sacred order of the priesthood are replete with inexplicable difficulties.—I have applied it to the multifa-

rious classes of dissenting sects. And I have shown, that the titles, which all these respectively allege, in their own defence, are such as were never heard of, in the bright ages of Christian wisdom.—I have applied it to the ministry of the catholic church. And I have shown, that that divine commission, which is the ground of all spiritual power, has, in a direct line of inheritance, come down to its pastors of the present day. Whence, I deduced the conclusion, above stated,—that since this church alone enjoys this sacred charter, so she alone is the true church of Jesus Christ.

And may, then,—I will here again repeat it,—may the prudence of some pious protestant, adopting the same lucid rule, apply it, in the like way, which I have done,—unbiased by partiality, unwarped by prejudice. Applied in this manner, it will, ere long, produce conviction. At least, it has, many a time, done this.—It has, many a time, brought back multitudes to the pastures of that fold, from which, misled by ignorance, they had strayed, too thoughtlessly; or which, seduced by the spirit of schism, they had, too criminally, abandoned.

I have remarked, at the opening of this treatise, that I had selected the consideration of the *grounds* of the Christian church, as a clew, which, adopted, and prudently followed, would conduct the lost wanderer back to the threshold of this blessed sanctuary. However, I made the observation, at the same time, that, besides this guide, there are others, likewise, which I might have adopted; and which, if followed, and attended to, with care, would have answered the same purpose equally,—would have enabled the mind to ascertain with accuracy, which, amongst the various churches, that surround us, is the real sanctuary of truth; which are the conventicles of error. Because, since our Redeemer has, in his wisdom, formed an establishment for the salvation of his creatures; and ordained, that whoever wisely expects this blessing, must necessarily be a member of it,—so, of course, he has taken care,—as both in his mercy, and his justice, he was bound to do,—that the features, which characterise the sacred institution, and the beacons, which point it out, should be, all of them, mani-

fest, and plain ;—should be of such nature, that the lost wanderer, or even the most simple, and ignorant individual, might, by their aid, discover it, with ease. For, to command,—as Christ does command,—that men shall, under the frightful pain of damnation, obey his church,—and yet, not render the holy fabric visible to the eye,—this, surely, would be a piece of severity, completely irreconcilable with every notion, which we entertain, of his divine perfections. Hence, therefore, it is true, that he has indeed surrounded the hallowed fane with a blaze of light. He has attached to it certain marks, which to a candid, and pious mind, point it out, most clearly. There are several of these indications, which the protestants, equally with the catholics, admit, as its distinctive, and exclusive attributes. Thus, they admit those, which are stated, and expressed, in the Nicene creed,—an instrument, says the eighth of the 39 articles, “which is proved by the most certain warrants of holy Scripture.” They admit, that is,—that the true church of Christ is essentially “one, holy, catholic, and apostolical:”—for, such are the features, attributed to it in that document. So that thus, without consulting the principle, which I have been applying in the foregoing pages, men might easily, by the aid of these indications,—or even by the honest consideration of *any one* of them, (for, they belong, each of them, exclusively, but to one single religion) discover, where the true church subsists.—Wherefore, if the clew, which I have been presenting to the hand of the lost wanderer, do not suffice to conduct him to the sacred fold, let me, in this case, exhort him to consult these ; or any one of these. In order, too, to render the task,—easy as it is,—still easier to him, I will, in a few lines, point out to him the method, in which it would be most proper for him to proceed. The method, indeed, which I recommend,—and which is, also, the most obvious, and consistent,—is exactly similar to that, which I have been hitherto pursuing in this treatise,—the alternate application of the above criterions to the sects of protestantism, and to the parent church ; and next, the honest comparison and discussion, to which they appear, most properly, to belong. This process, which is most simple, will render the conclusions manifest.

For example, it is owned, that the true church is necessarily *one*. "There shall be," says Christ, "*one fold, and one shepherd.*" "There is," says St. Paul, "*one God, one faith.*" In reality, as truth is essentially *one*, so the true church must, also, essentially be the same. "Some think," says bishop Horne, "variety of religions, as pleasing to God as variety of flowers. Now, there can be but *one* religion, which is true: and the God of truth cannot be pleased with falsehood for variety sake."

The true church is *one*. And are, then, the protestant churches, any of them, such? Amongst these establishments, speaking of them altogether, there is but one single point, in which they are united,—and this, as Dryden observes, is the common hatred of popery :

They, all, from each, as from damnation fly:
No union they pretend, but in "*No Popery.*"

Except in this single point, their disunion amongst each other is complete.

Neither is there any thing like unity even in each separate church. In each separate church, conformably to the leading maxim of the Reformation, faith is just as various, as is any human opinion. Whence, also, it is the fact, that creeds, and confessions of faith, designed originally, as the bands of union, are, now, every where, either wholly rejected, as instruments, suited only to darker periods ; or else, become little more than a dead and unmeaning letter.* The protestant churches,

* "Habits, and prejudices," says Monsieur Fernex, one of the pastors of Geneva, in a discourse, addressed lately to the consistory of that city,— "habits, and prejudices, will, no doubt, for a certain length of time, supply apologists for confessions of faith. It is, however, impossible, that, ere long, men should not own, that they are essentially repugnant to the spirit of the Reformation. Already has the church, which was the first to admit the Reformation in Swisserland,—that of Zurich,—that church, so eminent for its piety, and its wisdom,—for above half a century past, suffered them to fall into disuse. Already have several other protestant cantons thrown off the yoke. Already has the church of Berne greatly softened down the engagement, which once she required from the candidates to the ministry. Already, in several churches in Germany, the protestants consider confessions of faith, as so many formulas, devoid of any consequence, which they are careless about observing ; and which, if any where retained, are retained merely from a remnant of habit. Already, have they left off presenting them to the pastors, in a great number of the churches in France. It is, therefore, I repeat it, impossible, that men should not, ere long, in all protestant countries, acknowledge the necessity of restoring to eve-

therefore, whether they be considered collectively, or separately, are not *one*. Therefore, neither can they be divine. The true church is *one*. Is the catholic church such? Why, what is the fact? It is this,—that her members, however much they may be dispersed,—and they are dispersed, wheresoever civilization prevails;—however much they may differ in their habits and inclinations; however varied may be their education, and distinct their interests,—are yet, most certainly, in relation to their religion, all, intimately linked together. They, all, every where, profess the same faith, adore the same mysteries, and obey the same spiritual power.

ry Christian individual that liberty of examination, and that freedom of conscience, which belong to all; and the incontestable right of regulating their belief by nothing else, but the word of the holy Scriptures.”

In this country, the clergy still solemnly attest their acceptance of the 39 articles. But, do they really believe in this singular code? It is, certainly, difficult to imagine, how they can believe in it, if it were only for this plain reason, that it is impossible to understand it. “Its doctrines,” says Dr. Balguay, “are those of dark, and ignorant ages.—It contains,” he adds, “ambiguities, and inaccuracies; some things unphilosophical; and some things, which may mislead, and draw men into erroneous opinions.” “Are the 39 articles,” says the author of ‘The Pulpit,’ “preached in the church? There seems much reason to conclude, they are not. It is one thing to subscribe them; but quite another to feel, and preach them.” Sterne used to maintain, that it is absolutely impossible for the same man to believe them all. See Paley ‘Of Subscription,’ &c. Paley also declares, that he is “persuaded,” that the generality of those, who subscribe them, do not believe them.

Speaking of the obligation, which our established clergy are under of swearing to the 39 articles, Count Le Maistre makes the following observations upon the awful circumstance: “The church of England is the only association in the world, that has declared itself null, and ridiculous in the very act, which constitutes it. In this act, it has solemnly declared, that 39 articles, neither more nor less, are necessary for salvation; and that to belong to this church, men must, moreover, swear to them. Now, one of these very articles declares solemnly, that God, in forming his church, left no infallibility on the earth; that all churches have fallen into error, beginning with that of Rome; and that they have been grossly deceived, both in relation to doctrines, and to morals; so that none of them possess the right to prescribe, what men should believe: and that the Scriptures alone are the sole rule of faith. Therefore, the case is, that the church of England declares to its members, that it has a right to command; but, that they, also, have a right not to obey. So that, in the very same moment; with the very same pen; with the same ink; and upon the same paper,—it declares the dogma; and declares, that it has not any right to declare it. I hope, that, in the endless catalogue of human inconsistencies, this will always hold one of the first places.”

Therefore, is the catholic church *one*; and therefore again, divine.

The true church is *holy*. "My spirit," said Christ Jesus to his apostles, "shall remain with you, all days, to the end of the world."—"Christ," says St. Paul, "loved his church; and delivered himself for it, in order to sanctify it." In reality, the sanctification of the church was the end, and aim, of all the labours, sufferings, and institutions, of this benevolent Being.

The true church is *holy*. And are the churches of protestantism such? In these churches, there are, no doubt,—it would be very unjust to deny it,—many holy features,—many principles, practices, and doctrines, which are wise, excellent, and true. This is even the case, more or less, with every protestant communion; because they have, all of them, retained, more or less, certain remnants of the old religion. The torrents of the Reformation did not, in the fury of their devastations, sweep away every thing, that is catholic. Hence, these associations possess, all of them, certain features, which appear to recommend them. However, this is not the point of view, in which they ought here to be considered. The circumstance, which ought here to be considered, is this,—whether, along with those commendable features, they do not possess others, which do not recommend them.—So, for example, they retain many excellent, and useful practices. But, have they not, too, suppressed a great multitude of other practices, which are at least equally excellent, and useful? Thus, have they not suppressed nearly every one of those, which are painful to human self-love,—the necessity of penance, and mortification; the observance of fasts, confession, &c.;—and the cultivation, above all, of those salutary counsels, which Christ Jesus had inculcated to his followers, as the great aids to attain perfection,—that is, the cultivation of that chastity, which always continues virginal; of that poverty, which renounces riches; of that obedience, which resigns the government of the will? They have, indeed, not only exploded these, but even treated, and still treat them, as so many acts of fanaticism, and superstition.—They retain certain holy doctrines. True: but, how many holy doctrines have they not likewise discarded? And not only this,—but, how many others have

they not, moreover, substituted in their room, which are, some of them, absolutely unholy; some of them profane? forming a confused jumble of excellencies and deformities; of truth and errors:

————Atrum

Desinet in piscem mulier formosa superne.

I say nothing of the introduction, and establishment, of the protestant churches; nothing respecting the characters of their founders; or concerning the motives, the means, the plans, to which they owe their triumphs.—This, however, is certain, that, in relation to all these things, there is manifestly nothing, that, in the eye of enlightened piety, can appear to furnish a well-founded claim to the title of distinguished *holiness*. But, if so, —then they are not the real fold of Jesus Christ.

The true church is *holy*. And is the catholic church such? Why, if to profess the same faith, and to adore the same mysteries;—if to cultivate the same worship, and to practise the same observances, which the saints did,—if this form a claim to the title of holiness, then it is indeed certain, that the catholic church may, very justly, arrogate the possession of the distinction to itself. For it is true,—and we defy, either the hostility, or the learning, of any adversary to show the contrary,—that the doctrines, which the catholic church now teaches; and the duties, and obligations, which she enforces,—are the same exactly with those, which she had always taught, and cultivated, during the best periods of her ancient glory. Nay; it is even true, those very doctrines, and observances, which the protestant condemns the most severely,—such as penance, transubstantiation, confession, purgatory, the veneration of saints,—are calculated, all of them, not only to restrain vice, but to inflame devotion; and to promote, and heighten, sanctity. Such, there is no doubt, are the bearings of those doctrines, and observances; and such, also, their invariable effects, wheresoever they are rightly understood, and wisely venerated,—And then, too, what striking, and innumerable testimonials of holiness does not the catholic church exhibit in the conduct of her members! She is the parent, and the nurse, of the saints; even of those very

saints, whose names fill up the calendar of the established church. Yes; and even now, what multitudes are there not, in every department of life, from the cloister, and the throne, to the cottage, who are engaged in working out their salvation, with a spirit of penance, mortification, and industry of which scarce a protestant has so much as the slenderest notion! The catholic church is, therefore, *holy*. *Therefore*, she is divine.

The true church is *catholic*. "Go;" said our Saviour to his apostles, "go; and teach *all nations*: and behold, I am with you, *all days*," &c. From this text, bishop Pearson observes,—and so, also, do other protestant writers with him,—that the *catholicity* of the church implies two things,—first, the dissemination of the sacred institute, through *all nations*; secondly, its duration through *all ages*. "The catholicism of the church," he says, "consisteth in universality, as disseminated through *all nations*, and as comprehending *all ages*."

The true church is *catholic*. Are the protestant churches such, in the sense of the foregoing interpretation of the term?—There are certain degrees of falsehood, I have elsewhere remarked, which equally with the clearest evidences of the truth, impose silence upon doubt, and convey conviction to the mind,—operating in a negative kind of way, as evidence operates positively. Of this nature exactly is the above-stated question. For, when it is pretended, that the protestant churches are the churches "of all nations, and of all ages," the mind shrinks back at once, from the strangeness of the bold assumption; and feels, that it is, not only groundless, but absurd. It immediately recollects, that, with regard to their *duration*, they are, all of them, but the offspring of yesterday—the earliest date of their appearance being but that of the apostacy of their first founder,—Luther. Whilst, in relation to their *diffusion*, this is so very trifling,—(speaking of each church distinctly) that there is not one separate religion of protestantism, that forms the religion,—I do not say, "of all nations,"—but, even of any two nations;—nay, of the greater portion, even of one single nation. Whence, it is also true, that they have not, any of them, so much as attempted to assume to themselves that title of dignity,

and name of the true church,—“*catholic.*”^{*} They, therefore, are not *catholic*:—nor, therefore again, in this case divine.

The true church is *catholic*. And does the church of Rome, with any right, claim to itself this prerogative? I might observe, that the mere circumstance of having inherited the *title* is almost, itself enough to prove it. Saint Austin, indeed, does prove it from this very fact.—However, is the church of Rome *catholic*, according to the import of the definition, just cited, of bishop Pearson?—that is, is she the church “of all nations, and of all ages?”—Yes, she is. She verifies, in relation to the former feature, that prophecy of Malachi,—“I will give to thee nations for thy inheritance; and in every place, there is offered a pure sacrifice to my name.” Nations are indeed hers, where neither the ambition of an Alexander, nor the pride of a Cæsar, ever penetrated.—nations, the most remote, and the most widely separated from each other,—nations, the most uncivilised, as well as the most polished; the most barbarous, as well as the most enlightened;

Et super Garamantas, et Indos.

In all these, she has erected, and still rears, her trophies. Her altars rise; her “pure sacrifice” is offered; her incense ascends, in them all. She knows, in short, no other boundaries to her dominion, save the boundaries of the universe itself.—And is she, too, in like manner, the church “of all ages?” This is a point, which is not so much as called in question. The annals of states, and nations, both ecclesiastical and profane,

* The name, “protestant,” which is given to all the societies of the Reformation, is not a term, that expresses, or implies, any kind of religion, or belief, whatsoever. It is rather, a term of irreligion, and disbelief: for, it implies merely the rejection of the ancient church. It is a vague, endless, indefinite word, signifying any thing, or every thing, *except catholic*. Thus, not only are all the numberless, and contradictory sects of the Reformation, protestant; but, the unbeliever, the Deist; nay, the very atheist himself, are just as much protestants, as are the members themselves of the established church:—whence, also, upon this account, they, equally with the latter, enjoy, in this country, all the benefits, and privileges, of its constitution.

since the dawn of Christianity, are the history of her immortal institute :

Ses bras triomphans
Embrassent les deux bouts de la chaîne du temps.

BERNIS.

How eloquently even do the venerable monuments and the mouldering edifices, which, every where, surround us, bespeak its antiquity, and its duration.* The church of Rome is, therefore, *catholic*.—Therefore, she is divine.

The true church is *apostolical*. “You are built,” says St. Paul to the Ephesians, “upon the foundation of the

* It would be an act of wisdom,—and I recommend it to the attention of the reader,—if, when the protestant is taking his solitary walk amid these remains of the departed greatness of catholicity, he would sometimes pause attentively over the splendid wreck, and listen to the lessons which it will whisper to him. It has a voice. Even its very silence speaks. Those ivy-mantled arches, and broken pillars; those mutilated sepulchres, and mouldering images of saints, tell a tale, which, if hearkened to with candor, would both move the heart, and strike the understanding. They tell, what, during a long, long, course of ages, was the religion of our brave, and good forefathers. They tell of the storm,—the tyrant power,—which destroyed their splendor. They tell, how every thing that is protestant, when compared with them, is *new*.—And how sensible, I conceive, ought to be the feeling,—if the force of prejudice did not come to check it;—how sensible ought to be the feeling of the protestant, when he enters those magnificent temples,—such as are those of York, Westminster, &c,—which, outliving the moral earthquake, still form the chief ornament of the nation’s grandeur. There, he must feel, that every thing around him,—even the very murmurs, which breathe through the aisles, are catholic;—nothing protestant. He must feel, that every thing there is designed for the use, and offering, of catholic mysteries;—every ornament, &c. expressive of the nature of catholic worship.—There, too,—this is another circumstance, that should interest his sensibility,—he treads, perhaps, upon the ashes of his own forefathers,—heroes, who flourished, ages before protestantism had, as yet, received a name. He sees their tombs; and reads, it may be, his own name inscribed upon them. With scenes, like these, every day, before him, he, surely, ought to pause. He should ask himself honestly, what really the causes were of that astonishing revolution, which thus changed the nation’s faith? Even from those silent tombs he would seem to hear a voice, reproaching him with his apostacy,—saying to him: “Child,—fruit of our entrails, why have you deserted us?—Why left a religion, in which we once flourished, and lived so happily?”—Certain, indeed, it is, that our ancient monuments are full of useful, eloquent, and amiable recollections. Whence, Mr. Cole, in one of his letters to Dr. Lort, says: “I hold it a truth, that all true, and genuine antiquaries have a spice, or dash, in favour of the old mother church.”

apostles." "And no other," he adds, speaking to the Corinthians, "no other can lay any other foundation, but that, which is laid."

The true church is *apostolical*. In relation to this characteristic, I have already said enough, in the series of this volume, to enable the reader to form a competent judgment, concerning it. I have shown, that the claims, which are laid to it by the reformed churches, are by no means such, as ought to satisfy the feelings of Christian prudence. The mere fact, indeed, which I have just been stating,—the recentness of their origin,—is, alone, a sufficient evidence, that they cannot be apostolical. Their ministry, I have shown, can produce no well-attested charter; their pastors, no long line of succession, to prove, that their origin is divine. They are like the fabled men of Deucalion,—without parents, and without predecessors. In short, in no one regard, neither in mission, nor in orders, nor in doctrines, nor in communion,—do they present any well-substantiated title to the sacred prerogative of *apostolicity*. But, if so,—then they cannot prudently be considered as the true church of Jesus Christ.

The true church is *apostolical*. In relation, too, to the claims of the catholic church to this criterion, I have, in like manner, shown, that they are such, as not even to be contested by the most learned portion of the reformed establishments. "The church of England," says Mr. Wix, "acknowledges the church of Rome to be a true, and apostolic church." In fact, there is nothing in the records of history more manifest than the regular descent, and inheritance, of the apostolical commission down to the catholic ministry of the present day. It is so, too, with its orders, its government, its worship, and its doctrines. For, "whatsoever," says Grotius, "is universally believed by the western church, united with the church of Rome, that I find unanimously taught, both by the Greek and Latin Fathers."—Therefore, is the church of Rome *apostolical*: and if so, therefore, the true church of Christ.

Thus, as I have observed, it is not solely by the guidance of that principle, which I have adopted as the basis of the present work, that men may discover, in what communion the true church is seated. The wise application of the above,—or of any one of the above criterions, suf-

fices to do this. For, since they, all, and each, belong exclusively but to *one* church,—so, of course, the alternate application of them to the various aggregations, calling themselves “churches,” will demonstrate, *by the fact of their agreement*, which is the true church,—*by the fact of their disagreement*, which is the false church.*

* Besides the above criterions, I could cite a variety of other motives, and attestations, escaped sometimes from the incautious candor of several protestant writers;—in which they not only appear to admit the divinity of the catholic church, but to give it a decided preference to the establishment of the Reformation. For example, (just to present a few extracts from them) Bishop Jeremy Taylor says: “There are many considerations in the catholic church, which may retain persons of much reason, and more piety, in its communion. They know it to have been the religion of their forefathers, which had possession of men’s understandings, before protestantism had a name. First, its *doctrines* had a long continuance, and possession, of the church; which, therefore, cannot easily be supposed in the present possessors to be a design; since they have received it from so many ages.—Its long *prescription*, which is such a prejudice, as cannot with many arguments be retrenched, as relying upon these grounds, that truth is more ancient than falsehood; that God would not, for so many ages, forsake his church, and leave her in error.—Then comes the splendor, and beauty, of that church; its pompous service; the stateliness, and solemnity of its hierarchy; its name, ‘catholic;’ the antiquity of its doctrines; the continual succession of its bishops, and their immediate derivation from the apostles. Add to this the multitude, and variety, of people, which are of its persuasion; the consent of elder ages; the great consent of one part with another, contrasted with the great differences, which are commenced among their adversaries. To this again add its happiness in being the instrument in converting diverse nations; the piety, and austerity, of its religious orders; the single life of its priests, and bishops; the severity of its fasts; the great reputation of its bishops, for faith, and sanctity; the known holiness of some of its religious founders of orders; its miracles; the accidents, and casualties, which have happened to its adversaries; the oblique acts, and indirect proceedings, of some of those, who have departed from it; and, above all, the name of heretick, and schismatick, which the catholic church has fastened on them.—Protestants commit themselves by the conduct of the new reformers,—at first, a few, and of the lowest rank, of the clergy; being made under ecclesiastical censures; assisted against their spiritual superiors by some secular powers, when both they, and these, were subject to that ecclesiastical hierarchy, which they opposed.

The following passage is taken from Sir Edwin Sandy’s Relation of the Western Religion. It is, indeed, spoken in the person of a catholic; but left without any reply. “The catholic church was founded by the apostles, with promise, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. It has continued on now, till the end of 1600 years, with an honourable line of near 240 popes, successors of St. Peter,—both tyrants, traitors, pagans, and hereticks, in vain wresting, raging, and undermining it. All the general councils, that ever were in the world, have approved, and honoured it. God hath miraculously blessed it from above, so that many doctors have enriched it with their writings; ar-

What ideas, or what kind of feelings, the discussion, which I have presented in this treatise, may possibly have excited in the mind of the protestant reader, is a point, which it is not for me to determine. That, of course, must have depended upon various circumstances,—upon the candor, and attention, with which it has been read; and above all, upon the influences, and the power, of grace. I am, indeed, aware that I have not said enough to convince *some* individuals: because there

mies of saints have embellished it with their holiness; martyrs with their blood; virgins with their purity. Even at this day, amid the difficulties of unjust rebellions, and the unnatural revolts of her nearest children, yet she stretcheth out her arms to the utmost corners of the world, newly embracing whole nations into her bosom. In all other opposite churches there are found inward dissensions, and contrariety; change of opinions, uncertainty of resolutions; with robbing of churches; rebelling against governors; and confusion of order. In the catholic church there is undivided unity; resolutions unalterable; the most heavenly order, reaching from the height of all power to the lowest of all subjection; all with admirable harmony, and undefective correspondence, bending the same way, to the effecting of the same work," &c.

The learned, and elegant scholar, the late Lord Fitzwilliam, in his Letters of Atticus, among a variety of similar attestations, writes thus: "How am I struck with admiration, when I come to consider the antiquity of this venerable Roman church; its vast extent; the majesty, the magnificence, the symmetry of its edifice; its immutable stability amid all the persecution which it has undergone; its admirable discipline, which seems traced out by the hand of supernatural wisdom; the impotence of its adversaries, notwithstanding all their sophistry, invectives, and calumnies;—when I contemplate the dignity, the virtue, the talents, of its apologists;—the vices, the dishonesty, of its first assailants; the total extinction of so many sects, which have risen up against it; the little consistency of the present sects; their variations on points of doctrine," &c.

The ministers of the French reformed churches, in a memorial, which they presented to the government, in the year 1750, express themselves upon this subject, in the following manner:—"We do not dissemble, that in the parallel, which we, sometimes, make, between your church and ours, the striking features, notwithstanding some abuses, are on your side. You certainly existed, before we did, since your origin is coeval with that of the apostles. Whilst, as for us, we have not yet existed three centuries: since in 1515, both your ancestors, and ours, communicated at the same mass; celebrated together the feast of Easter; and lived in perfect unanimity of sentiment. Moreover, the chain of tradition, whose first link was attached by Peter, and Paul, to the church of Rome, has been in such manner preserved amongst you, that, if the Irenæuses, the Gregories, the Athanasiuses, the Chrysostoms, were now again to return to the earth, it would be in the church of Rome alone, that they would find that society, of which, once, they had been the members."

are *some*, who will not be convinced,—some, who, dupes to partiality, or prejudice; to self-love or interest; to pride, or passion,—shut their eyes to the plainest truths. However, be this as it may, I think, that I have said enough to engage the thoughtful protestant *to doubt*; and consequently, enough to engage him to *examine*. I have said enough to induce him to *suspect* at least, that the catholic religion *may* be divine; and, therefore, enough, likewise, to induce him to *investigate* it. I have said sufficient to make him *apprehend*, that the religions of protestantism *may* be false; and, therefore, I have also, said sufficient to convict him of imprudence, if he do not discuss them. In short I have said enough to make his present too blind security appear to him insecure, and dangerous.*

* It is a consideration, that ought to strike the prudence, and good sense, of the protestant, that, notwithstanding all the insults, abuse, &c. which have been, and are still, poured out upon the catholic religion,—yet do all her adversaries, both early, and modern, very candidly,—though not perhaps very consistently,—allow, that all the securities of salvation have continued to remain, and remain still; undestroyed in her communion.—Wherefore, behold here the reasoning, which the good sense of the great prince, Henry IV. of France, suggested to him from this concession. When this illustrious hero, previously to his conversion, was induced to study the catholic religion, he proposed, through the medium of Sully, a variety of questions to the protestant ministers. Amongst others, he proposed the following:—“Whether it was lawful for him to become a catholic?” Their reply was:—“That it was lawful for him to become a catholic; seeing, that salvation is attainable in the catholic church.” They added, it is true: “Our religion is the more perfect; but still, the church of Rome is sufficient for all the securities of future happiness.” This answer obtained,—the monarch now consulted the catholic prelates, and theologians, respecting the security of salvation in the protestant church. But, he could not find one single individual amongst these, that would allow such benefit to exist in this society. Whence, he reasoned in this manner with the protestant ministers: “You pretend,” he said to them, “that, by continuing in your communion, my religious state is more perfect, than if I were to become a catholic; whilst, at the same time, you own, that I may be saved in the catholic church. Now, the catholics, on the contrary, all, maintain, that salvation is not attainable in your religion; but, that it is confined to the church of Rome. So that, by uniting myself to the church of Rome, I may be saved, both according to your acknowledgments, and theirs. Therefore, I should be the maddest of men, if, in a business of such importance, I did not take the safest side. Consequently, I decide in favour of the church of Rome; in which, by the acknowledgment of all the world, and even of the men who are the most opposed to each other,—my salvation is secure.” Such, was the reasoning, and such the decision, of Henry. They were, alike, the dictates of good sense, and prudence.

Therefore, I will piously hope, that, prompted by these, or by such like considerations, there will be found, at least here and there, some thoughtful individual, who, pausing over the awfulness of his situation, and looking down the precipice, upon which he is seated, will be engaged to study the great question with serious care. It is the misfortune of nearly all our protestant brethren,—a misfortune, peculiarly injurious to themselves ; and a source of great injustice to us,—that they know nothing whatsoever, concerning the real doctrines, or the genuine grounds, of the catholic church. They imagine, it is true, that they do understand these subjects. They believe so, forsooth, because they hear our religion for ever insulted from their pulpits, derided by their press, and vilified in society. Whereas, the truth is, (and when better instructed, they will own it)—the truth is, that what they hear, and learn, upon those occasions, is little else than a mere tissue of falsehoods, or a series of misrepresentation,—ignorance, engaged in instructing ignorance ; and prejudice, in teaching prejudice.

Wherefore, let me here, once again, give this advice to the often pious, but deluded enemies, of the religion of their forefathers,—to *distrust* at least their present opinions of it ; and instead of listening solely to the voice of declamation against it, to study sometimes its genuine character in the works of its own professors,—*who, alone, describe it accurately*. I do not pretend to say, what effect this counsel, if followed, might produce eventually. But, it would, at all events, produce this :—it would, by enlightening ignorance, remove a great deal of prejudice ; it would soften down the angry feelings of bigotry ; and induce multitudes to respect, what, now, they consider it an act of piety to revile.

The declaration of the protestant university of Helmstadt, in the case of the protestant princess of Wolfenbuttle, who was destined to be married to the archduke of Austria, is similar to the preceding one of the French reformed ministers, and presents the same kind of inference. The members of the above university, in the year 1707, were consulted, “ whether, in consideration of the proposed marriage, the princess might, in conscience, embrace the catholic religion ? ” The answer, delivered in the form of a declaration, was to the following effect :—“ First, that the difference between the protestant, and the catholic religions, is not fundamental. Secondly, that it is therefore lawful to pass from the protestant to the catholic church.”

Let us, indeed, hope, that the time is not far distant, when this epoch of justice will begin;—when the storms, which now buffet us so unrelentingly, will subside;—when prejudice, better informed, will be converted into liberality; and ill-will, melted down to kindness. Meanwhile, (let me, also, give this piece of advice to my own injured, and insulted brethren)—meanwhile, let it be our care, by our piety, and patience; by our prudence, charity, and benevolence,—in short, by the general wisdom of our whole conduct, to conciliate the esteem, and to acquire the good will, of our protestant countrymen. The surest method of reconciling men to our religion, is to reconcile them to its professors.

With these observations, it was my design to have closed this work. I have already protracted it far beyond the length which I had proposed, when I first began it; and very far beyond the length, which is consistent with the present state of my health. However, I have been induced to add to it, still farther, a few reflections upon the benefits, which would result to society from the *re-union of the catholic, and protestant churches*. This, therefore, shall form the subject of my concluding chapter:—although, indeed, I conceive, that such a blessing is, perhaps, of all others, the most improbable.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE RE-UNION OF THE PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC CHURCHES.

“What public duty of greater magnitude can present itself to us, than the restoration of peace, and union, to the church, by the reconciliation of two so large portions of it, as the churches of England, and Rome? What undertaking of more importance, and higher interest, can employ the piety, and learning of the ministers of Christ, than the endeavour to accomplish this truly Christian work?”—**DR. BARRINGTON, THE LATE BISHOP OF DURHAM.**

THERE are few subjects of real importance, which, since the era of the Reformation, have more seriously engaged the attention, or more feelingly awakened the zeal, of a multitude of writers, than the circumstance of again uniting the Christian world in the bands of religious concord. It is a subject, which, ever since that unhappy schism, has, alike, on a variety of occasions, excited the solicitude, not only of the catholic, and the protestant theologian; but, of the statesman, and the politician; of the philosopher, and the philanthropist. To it, some of the brightest geniuses, that adorn the annals of human literature,—such men as Leibnitz, Grotius, Bacon, Erasmus,—have devoted all their talents. Whilst, in relation to the ecclesiastical writers, who have done this,—employing upon it all the resources of their ingenuity, and the best exertions of their eloquence,—the number of these is countless; and contains the names of some of the most distinguished characters, that cast a lustre on their respective churches,—a Bossuet, a Fenelon, a Camus; a Molanus, a Forbes, a

Wake, &c. Even in our own days, the object has continued to excite, and excites still, the pious care of a multitude of writers. Above all, this is the case in Germany, and France, where plans for a re-union have been composed, and are presented frequently to the public consideration.

It is, no doubt, the fact, that, in whatsoever point of view the momentous question is regarded,—whether as religious, or political; whether as connected with the prospects of future bliss, or with the order of social comfort,—it is peculiarly, and beyond any other, deserving the public care. It is so even, if regarded only politically. Because, since harmony is the best source of public happiness, and of national strength;—and since harmony is more forcibly cemented by religious unanimity, than by any other motive,—so, of course, the circumstance of re-establishing this, is a subject, in the highest degree, important. Unanimity in religion is a tie, which joins men closely together; which links them in mutual friendship, and even renders them all, one family;—animating them all with the same impulses; directing them all to the same end; impressing the same seal upon every duty, and the same stamp upon every action. So that it is thus, in reality, the strongest bulwark, that the sagacity of human wisdom can erect for the security, and peace, of kingdoms;—and the best artifice, therefore, which the kindness of philanthropy can suggest for the insurance of general comfort. There is, too, this farther advantage in religious union, that it simplifies the order of justice, and facilitates the administration of the laws. It is therefore, upon these accounts, that the illustrious characters, whom I have been alluding to, have written so much, and laboured so assiduously, to re-establish the happy compact.

But another,—and this, too, perhaps the principal motive, which induced some of those individuals to do this,—was the following:—they were particularly impressed with a strong sense of the evils, and calamities, which have arisen, and arise, too naturally, from religious *discord*. Looking into the histories of the different states, and kingdoms, which, since the era of the Reformation, have received its new doctrines, they observed, that the chief part of their disasters,—the wars, the bloodshed,

the horrors, the persecutions, which have afflicted and disgraced them; as well as the animosities, the rancours, the bigotry, &c., which have banished domestic harmony, and destroyed all social peace,—they observed, that the chief part of all these evils had their origin in the disunion of religious faith. And it was for this reason, therefore, still more perhaps, than for the preceding, that they, many of them, exerted so much industry, and employed so much eloquence, once more to re-establish union.

However, it is unhappily too true, that, benevolent as were the designs, and arduous the endeavours, of these men to effect the useful project, yet did they always fail of success. The attempt to bring back the protestant public into the pale of their parent institute,—so strong are the prejudices, so inveterate the hostility, which they are taught to entertain against it,—has always been found illusive. The only attempt of this nature, which, for a time, held out some feeble prospect of a successful issue, was that, which was conducted by the gentle, and learned Molanus, and the great Bossuet. But this, owing chiefly to the influence of political intrigues, was, ere long, abandoned, and given up, as hopeless.

Aware of the extreme difficulty, if not impossibility, of again creating a general religious union with the catholic church, the protestant writers have directed their efforts, and devised a variety of plans, to establish such harmony, at least amongst themselves,—that is, between the various sects of the reformed communions. However, even those projects, too, have, all, failed of success. They failed, for various reasons. They failed, because the systems of conciliation, which their framers adopted, were wild, and impracticable;—because they were political, and human, much more than religious, and divine; and inadequate, for these reasons, to the grand design of recalling Christian union. But, the chief reason why they failed,—and which will, forever, render all attempts to establish union, amongst protestants, unavailing,—was this, that, in protestantism, there is nothing,—no principle, or rule,—upon which it is possible to found a religious union. A real religious union must essentially repose upon unity of belief. And this is a circumstance, which

is completely repugnant to the very first, and leading maxim of protestantism,—which, allowing all its members to judge, and decide, as their own private reason bids them, must of course, allow them, likewise, to judge, and decide, differently. Accordingly, soon sensible of this; and finding, how ineffectual, from this cause, were their efforts to bring back lost harmony,—the pretended artists of the measure have always ended by giving up the cause in despair, and owning its impracticability. Their efforts, although well-intended, have even produced very pernicious consequences. They have served to pave the way to a state of absolute indifferentism.

The great expedient, by which a multitude of protestant writers have proposed, and still propose, to unite the reformed societies together, and even to the parent church, is this:—that men should believe, and profess, not, by any means, *all*, but only *certain*, leading, articles of revelation, those which, announced clearly, as they pretend, in the sacred Scriptures, form the grand, and real basis of Christianity; and which, upon this account, they have been pleased, very artfully, to denominate “*fundamentals*.” This is, indeed, now, the general, and the favourite system of protestantism, every where. By it, the members of this great community,—all its multifarious sects, and societies,—link themselves intimately, they assert, together; avoid the imputation of the guilt of schism, and are the real portions of the *one*, and visible church of Jesus Christ. “It is thus,” says Mosheim, “that this immense community includes in its pale the Arminians, the Calvinists, the Supralapsarians, the Sublapsarians, the Universalists; thus, that she unites her members, and abridges those controversies, which once divided them—This moderation, it is true, has met with some censors. But, as the moderate party is incontestably far superior, both in number, and credit, so it treats with the greatest indifference the attacks of these orthodox rigorists. Hence, paying attention to all this, it must now be admitted, that neither the Lutherans, nor the Arminians, have any longer cause for dispute with the Calvinistic sect, taken by itself, but only with a few individuals of this community. For, this church, considered in this general point of view, concedes to all its members as uncontrolled a liberty of thinking, as they

may judge proper, respecting all those points, which formerly excluded from its communion the Lutherans, and the Arminians; and it believes, that the essence of Christianity, and its fundamental dogmas, by no means depend upon these points, whatever may be the manner in which the different parties think proper to explain them. It is, moreover, true, that, amongst the Lutherans, those, who are still zealous for the TRUTH, complain that these men have widened too much the paths of salvation, laying open their communion, not only to the Lutherans, but to every sect of Christianity."

Similar to these general sentiments of the reformed communions, thus cited by Mosheim, are *now* the opinions likewise, I might easily show,—and the favourite opinions, too,—not only of the great majority of sectarists in this country, but even of multitudes of the established clergy. So, for example, Dr. Tomline, explaining the 18th article,—which declares him "accursed," who maintains, that salvation is attainable in all religions,—says: "It is not to be understood, that this article confines salvation to one sect of Christianity. It has no relation whatsoever to the unhappy divisions, which have always subsisted, and do still subsist, among Christians." Hence, he subsequently adds: "The adherence to the *fundamental* principles of the gospel is sufficient to constitute a visible church; although every doctrine it maintains, may not be founded on truth."

It is, consequently, by virtue of a set of articles, denominated "fundamental," that the Christian world,—men of every sect, and persuasion,—are now linked together, it is pretended, in the blessed bands of religious union. Alas, it is an easy thing to form systems! and unfortunately, too, it is an easy thing to engage the credulity of the weak, and the self-love of the indolent, to adopt them. For, in relation to the above pretext, is there, in the first place,—let it be only asked,—is there, in the sacred Scriptures, any authority, or any text, to establish it? Is there any authority, or any text, which can wisely appear to say, that certain doctrines of revelation are fundamental; others, that are not fundamental?—a few articles, which men are bound to believe, under the pain of reprobation; others, which without any insecurity, they may conscientiously reject? But, if so,—

where is this important sanction? and what, or where, is the rule, by which it may be ascertained? These, no doubt, are questions, which, ere men admit so dangerous, and so strange an opinion, they ought seriously to have put to themselves. Because, if there really do exist such kind of distinction, and there are two kinds of revealed doctrines, then there ought certainly to exist, also, either some text to show them, or some plain criterion to point out the difference. But, alas, so it is: they are questions, which, I fear, very few put to themselves; and to which, it is certain, no categorical reply has, hitherto, yet been given.—It is, indeed, true, that the wisdom of God has, in the sacred Scriptures, communicated to us a variety of awful truths. But, there is not, in the series of the holy volumes, one single text, that would seem to insinuate, that some of them are fundamental; some not fundamental;—or that there are any parts of the divine revelation, which men may, with impunity, disbelieve, or reject. Such notion is even repugnant to every enlightened notion, both of the wisdom of our Redeemer, and of the character of his divine economy. Because, whatsoever he has revealed,—besides being essentially true,—he has revealed, for the express purpose, that it should be believed. “I will send you,” he said to his apostles, “the spirit of truth: he shall teach you all truth.” And, hence speaking of his church, to which he had imparted this divine deposit, he said: “He, that will not hear the church,”—he speaks, not of a few, but of his sacred doctrines in general,—“let him be, as the heathen, and the publican.” Hence, too, St. Paul, alluding, in like manner, to *all* the articles of revelation, declares,—that, “he, who believes not, shall be condemned.” In fact, is it not an inconsistency to imagine, that God, in his mercy, should have thought proper to have revealed a creed to his creatures,—a creed, in which each article is, alike, stamped with the seal of his infinite authority,—and that men should still, without any danger, or insecurity, be entitled to reject certain portions of it? Every article has been revealed, in order to be believed; and, therefore, every article *must* be believed.

But, what, according to the defenders of the system, are the articles, which, alone, need properly to be believed, as *fundamental*? and in virtue of which, men

may be considered, they assert, as all, forming but one great church? Why; not even here do they agree amongst themselves. They neither agree amongst themselves, respecting the nature, the number, or the distinction, of these articles. In reality, such agreement, under a system, in which there is no preponderant authority to determine them;—under a system, which allows each individual to judge, and decide, as his own reason prompts him;—under a system like this, such agreement is quite impossible. Under it, *that alone* becomes fundamental, which each individual may chance to deem fundamental;—*that alone*, an object of belief, which the person judging may think proper to conceive such. So that thus, exactly as judgments vary, so also must the qualities, and the number, of the supposed fundamental articles; and what is even a fundamental truth with one individual, or with one sect, may be regarded, as a fundamental error, with another. It was so accordingly, with the Lutherans, and the Calvinists: for whilst the former considered the real presence, as beyond any other, a fundamental truth,—the latter looked upon it, as beyond any other, a fundamental falsehood. It is so, too, even in relation to the greatest of the Christian mysteries,—the divinity of Christ, and the blessed Trinity. For, whilst the generality of the Christian world reverse these, as objects of essential credence, the Socinians, and the Unitarians,—two large, and learned portions of society,—reject them as essential errors. But, in short, never, with all their talents, and all their ingenuity, have the defenders of this unhappy system been, as yet, able to fix, or to agree amongst themselves, what one single fundamental article is. All is here confusion, absurdity, and contradiction. And hence, I infer, that the idea of founding a Christian union upon such supposed articles, and of regarding them as the centre of concord, is a project, not only unholy, and profane, but illusive, and chimerical.

However, we have lately witnessed an event, which, founded principally upon this project, has taken place in Germany. A very solemn union of the protestant sects has recently been formed in this cradle of the Reformation. To this spectacle the whole of enlightened Europe was attentive. It excited peculiar interest in this

country; whilst in Germany, it was, every where, celebrated, as a glad, and triumphant occurrence, ushering in a bright, and glorious era. And, accordingly, feasts, and ceremonies, and songs, and sermons, and glowing speeches,—in short, all the pomp, and circumstance, of unbounded exultation, were employed, on the delightful occasion.

The reader, if but tolerably instructed, must know, that the creeds of the German protestants; and particularly the creeds of its two leading sects,—the Lutherans, and the Calvinists,—are extremely,—or rather, directly,—in a variety of their respective doctrines, opposite to each other. But, above all, this case, in relation to their belief, and tenets, concerning the holy eucharist. For, whilst the Lutherans tenaciously believe in the real presence, the Calvinists, just as sternly, believe in the real absence. It was upon this account, and for the sake of this difference in their respective opinions, that the ancestors of these men had, for the space of nearly three hundred years, not only mutually excommunicated, and almost,—if not quite,—hated each other,—but, they had often fought, and bled, and sacrificed their lives. Germany had been, frequently, on account of this unhappy distinction, a scene of the most afflicting warfare, and confusion,—However, (for, experience, and sufferings, often render men wise at last) sensible of all these evils; and feeling, if not their inconsistency, at least the inconvenience, which resulted from them,—these hitherto hostile societies resolved *now* to put an end to them for ever; and instead of any longer considering each other as enemies, to become at once sincere, and loving friends. The business,—although apparently so difficult, and certainly extremely delicate,—appears to have been very easily settled; and to have cost neither much time, nor much perplexity. It was mutually agreed to set aside entirely, and reciprocally to surrender, what had, hitherto, been regarded by each of the contracting parties, as the most vital, and essential portions of their respective creeds. They sacrificed, each, their distinctive dogmas; going even so far, in the instructions, addressed to the public, as to denominate these, “ insignificant things; the simple shades of opinion; and the distinctions, and subtilities, of the schools.”

—Accordingly, convened in awful council, the ministers, and leaders, of these great communities decreed, as follows: “This assembly is unanimously of opinion, that there is not any sufficient motive for letting subsist, any longer, a separation of the two protestant churches.”—The only circumstance, which, on the important occasion, seems to have created a certain degree of difficulty, was the business, first, of regulating the order of the exterior worship; and next, of securing their respective revenues. However, all this was, ere long, adjusted, likewise. So that now,—after having, also, first, given themselves a new appellation,—calling themselves, “the evangelical Christian church,”—they form, they pretend, *one body*: they are, now, all, brothers: they pray together in the same temple; they offer up the eucharist upon the same altar, and they receive the communion from the hands of the same minister;—although they believe, meanwhile, some of them, that the institution is but a mere figure; some, that it is a divine reality. Such is the character of the union, which we have recently seen effected in protestant Germany.

When men have once lost their faith; or when mysteries are looked upon, only as the “subtilties of the schools,”—unions are very easy, and simple things. In such cases, there is little or nothing to be consulted, but mere appearances. Creeds are, thus, but unmeaning formulas; confessions, but cobwebs, which bind no one; and even Christianity itself, little more than an empty name. Accordingly, it was precisely upon these principles,—prompted chiefly by the intrigues, and artifices, of courtly policy,—that the above union was brought about. Its real foundation,—and this is even admitted, and lamented, by many serious protestants,—its real foundation is incredulity, and indifferentism. *—How-

* “It cannot be denied,” says Mr. Jacob, in his *Tour*, “that many of the clergy, of both sects, had given up, not only the peculiar doctrines of their respective churches, but even the Christian faith itself; and that to such a degree, that even our avowed Socinians would, by them, be considered, as equally credulous with the orthodox clergy. The mysterious doctrines, which have long, and very justly, been denominated the doctrines of the Reformation, were continued in their catechisms, and other books, for the instruction of the young; and in the psalms, and hymns, used in the public service; but had almost ceased to be alluded to in the prayers, and sermons, of the clergy. The ir-

ever, be this as it may,—or admitting even, that it were not the case,—what kind of union, I will still ask, is that, which implies, in each of the contracting parties, the surrender of their dearest, and most vital, because distinctive doctrines;—or which, at least, jumbles together, in one strange amalgam, doctrines the most heterogeneous, and opinions the most repugnant to each other? For, such are the respective doctrines, and opinions, of the Lutheran, and Calvinistic sects. What kind of union is that, which formed upon the pretext of establishing concord, still permits men to retain, if they please, each, the peculiar tenets of their respective communions?—or, if they prefer this—no revealed tenets whatsoever? Surely, it is not thus, that religious unions ought to be effected. Neither can it reasonably be ima-

religion of Frederick, of Voltaire, and of Lessing, had made much progress, before the commencement of the French revolution: That event farthered its increase. And the general subjugation to the imperial ruler (Napoleon) made religion, if not a matter of contempt, at least of *indifference*.”

“The natural effect,” he then adds, “of this infidelity among the clergy, was to produce indifference among their hearers: and the churches, which, especially in cities, bore no proportion to the population, became almost deserted by all, except the old, and the lower classes. And the latter, in imitation of their superiors, were gradually declining in their attendance. Among many men of pious feelings, and of much learning, this aberation of the protestant ministers, which they carefully marked, and regretted, had the effect of withdrawing them from their communions, and reconciling them to the catholic church. And the church of Rome has, in consequence, received into her bosom several members from the protestant religion, who are distinguished for their virtue, their talents, and their learning.”

Speaking of the union of the two communions, he again remarks: “The union of the two communions is said to have spread still wider a spirit of indifference upon sacred subjects. The distinguishing tenet of the Lutherans, and that, which is contained in their symbolical books, to which the clergy profess adherence, is the doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. This tenet, though it has been ever the profession of the Lutheran church, has been long abandoned by almost the whole of its ministers. The Calvinistic ministers had, like their brethren of the Lutheran party, little to give up. Their distinguishing tenets of predestination, election, perseverance, and impelling grace, were passed by in their public services, as obsolete dogmas, never to be introduced; and it was generally understood, that, for a century past, they have been scarcely entertained by any considerable number of the clergy. The union, that has been effected is not imagined to have had any other practical effect, but that of making the common people think religion, under any form, a matter of indifference, as this union was so easily effected.”

gined, that they can possibly be pleasing to the God of truth. Or if, indeed, this be the case, then also it must equally be the fact, that truth, and error; sincerity, and equivocation, are alike indifferent to him. For these reasons, therefore, sensible of the gross impropriety of such conventions, a multitude of enlightened protestants, as I have just remarked, have severely condemned the late German compact.—It is true; the thing may, for a time, serve the purposes of human policy, by suppressing the rancour, &c. of sectarian discord. But, such effect will only be momentary. To the cause of protestantism, it will, ere long,—as, indeed, it has done already,—prove peculiarly injurious. It will increase in the minds of multitudes,—seeing, that the distinctions of faith are trifles,—the spirit of incredulity. In the minds of others,—of the prudent, and the thoughtful, to whom such distinctions are still dear,—it will increase the spread of catholicity:—as it has, indeed, already, done this—having brought back into the ancient pale a considerable number of individuals, distinguished, according to the testimony of Mr. Jacob, cited in the preceding note, *for their virtue, their talents, and their learning.**

It was, therefore, after having contemplated some of the unions, similar to the preceding, which had taken

* It is not in Germany alone, that unions, similar to the above,—only without the farce of so solemn a ratification—may be found now subsisting amongst the various sects of protestantism. They are become very general in every protestant state;—where men of every reformed profession meet together in the same church, or conventicle, not only to pray together, and “to hear,” as they call it, “the Gospel,” but even to communicate at the same table. The reader, if he please to inquire, may find, that this is, not unfrequently, the case in this country. It is indeed noticed, and sometimes severely censured, by the writers of the established church. “The world,” says Mr. McCrie, in his Sermons, “has, for some time, beheld, annually, the spectacle of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Methodists, and Seceders, sitting down together at the Lord’s table; and then going away, and maintaining communion, through the remainder of the year, on their own separate, and contradictory professions. Nay, it has become, of late, the practice to keep, in the same church, an *open* communion table for Christians of different denominations, on one part of the day; and a *close* one for those of a particular sect, on the other part of the day; while the same minister officiates; and many individuals communicate, on both these occasions. And all this is cried up, as a proof of liberality, and of a mind, that is freed from the trammels of party.”

“A morbid desire of union,” say the writers of the British Critic, reproaching the above circumstances, “a morbid desire of union upon

place, at the earlier periods of the Reformation, that several of the most illustrious protestant writers of those eras were compelled, as I have said already, to acknowledge, that a real union amongst the sects of protestantism is a downright impossibility. This is the declaration of such men as Melancton, Leibnitz, Grotius, &c. "I once, indeed," says the latter, "had imagined, that Christian unity might be restored to the world again, by uniting the protestant churches amongst themselves. But now I see, that the thing is impossible. The protestants have, all, renounced the principles of unity. And hence, they can never form one body. Their divisions must go on increasing. Wherefore, not I alone, but many others along with me, think, that the sole method of procuring any union amongst the protestants is to re-unite them again to the church of Rome. Without this, no common government in the church can be so much as hoped for." I could cite, also, the opinions of several more recent, and very eminent, protestant theologians, acknowledging the same truths. There are some of these, who even, in the effusions of their candor, go so far as to assert, that not only is a real, and permanent union of the protestant churches completely unattainable; but that even, to save protestantism itself from sinking into the abyss of deism, the sole remedy is a re-union with the parent institute. "The protestant churches," says Starke, "must return to the pale of the catholic church, if they wish not to perish entirely, or

unsubstantial,—nay, let us not understate the fact,—upon unscriptural, and forbidden, principles, is the besetting sin of the times. All the schisms, and contentions, which have disturbed Christianity, from the beginning, have not so deeply injured its cause, so dangerously corrupted its purity, as the wretched expedients, which this desire has rendered popular." They even augur from it the downfall of religion. "Men," they add, "may be brought to coalesce; and their religious animosities may be calmed. But, with them, will perish their religion also. They will unite, because, bewildered, and fatigued, by their mutual contentions, they have taught each other to despise the very object of their dispute, or to give up the pursuit in despair. From such a downfall there is no recovery. It may, we fear, be regarded as the forerunner of that final state of apostacy, when faith will scarcely be found upon the earth."—The whole is, in fact, neither more nor less than the obvious and necessary result of the principles of protestantism; and the fulfilment of those predictions, made long since, both by catholic, and by some protestant writers. The principles of protestantism lead necessarily to unbelief, and indifferentism.

that deism should not take place of Christianity. For, it is not only difficult, but quite impossible, that protestantism should ever be able to raise itself from that deep decline, into which it has fallen; and form, anew, a steady, and regular society. For, without a supreme head to maintain union; and without an authentic interpreter of the laws, no human society, nor much less, a Christian church, can possibly subsist." The opinions of these men,—although derived more or less from the observation of the *effects* resulting from the protestant unions,—are yet, founded principally upon the *nature* of the leading principle of protestantism,—*liberty of belief*. This principle, active, fiery, restless, is the very principle of disorganisation; and its workings, if the protestant public had, all, the consistency to apply it, would prove, not only the source of general confusion, but, as Starke observes, the destruction of protestantism itself.

Seeing, then, both from the experiments, already made by the protestant churches; and above all, from the character of their maxims, that any real, and permanent union amongst themselves is unattainable,—it hence follows, that, if ever, or by any means, this happy event is to be brought about, it can only be,—according to the acknowledgments just cited,—by the reunion, once more, of these sects within the pale of the ancient fold; or, if you please, by engrafting once again these scions upon that venerable stock, from which, but a few years past, they were unfortunately severed. This is, indeed, the only possible expedient, by which even the hope of the renewal of Christian union can reasonably be indulged. Because it is only in the catholic church, that there exists a centre of union, and a source of religious concord. It is only here, that there exists that kind of authority, which is competent to fix the belief, and to stay the aberrations, of the human mind. Take this principle away; and then reason, abandoned to itself, must essentially go astray. It is then, like the ship, tossed to and fro, on a furious ocean,—no chart, or compass, to direct it; no coast to afford it shelter; no bottom even to supply an anchorage.

But, alas! although I have thus stated, what the expedient is, which, alone, could restore lost harmony to religion, yet am I far, very far, from conceiving, that it

is likely to be employed. Neither do I think,—that,—if even it were, by accident, attempted,—it would succeed. In the present state of society, and particularly in the present temper of the protestant public, I believe, that no possible event is hardly less possible, than is the reunion of the reformed churches with their parent institute. Wise, holy, and even necessary, as the attempt should appear to effect it,—yet would it, I am convinced, prove abortive.

The obstacles, which oppose the happy event,—for I will briefly state a few of them,—are various, and formidable. For example, it is a fact, which the whole history of the evagations of the human mind evinces, that, when men have been once engaged in error;—and above all, if they have been long engaged in error,—have been long the members of any peculiar sect,—it is extremely difficult to reform them; and where interest is blended with their belief, next to impossible to reform them. Born in this unfortunate state; tutored to it by education; familiarised to it by habit; accustomed to defend, and to hear it defended,—they are, hence, unwilling to abandon it, or even to discuss the causes, which first chanced to involve them in it. “It is easy,” says Hooker, “to err; but hard to wrest from any man’s mouth the acknowledgment of error. What has once been defended, the same is commonly persisted in.” On such occasions, self-love, if combated, is made uneasy; and pride is wounded. In short, it is here with the understanding, as it generally is with the heart:—Exactly as the heart, if once deeply corrupted, is with difficulty cured, just so the understanding, if once rendered the dupe of error, is seldom brought back to the paths of truth.

In like manner, looking at the character of *schism*, as it may be ascertained in the general conduct of mankind, when once they have separated themselves from the church,—we find, that it is almost, if not quite, an irremediable disorder. It is a malady,—a cancer, whose poison is so inveterate; and which diffuses itself so powerfully through the whole mass of the body, which it infects,—that no sagacity of human wisdom, no invention of art, are competent to cure it.—Or, to use another comparison, which is now frequently employed by the writers

of the establishment;—"Schism is a fragment," they say, "detached from the summit of a rock, which never stops till it reaches the bottom; AND THAT BOTTOM IS INFIDELITY."

But, besides these general motives, which, alone, must seem to render the return of the protestant churches to the pale of catholicity hopeless, there are still other causes, likewise, founded, as I have said, upon the present disposition of society, which come greatly to augment the difficulty. The first, and perhaps worst, of these,—since it is the chief source of every other,—is the ignorance,—that dark gross ignorance, which pervades the protestant public, in relation to every thing that is catholic;—an ignorance, too, which prevails, not only amongst the vulgar, and the illiterate, but almost equally, amongst the best educated members of the community. I have already evinced this, when I referred to the character of the works, which these men,—even the very clergy,—compose, when they pretend to describe, or to refute, our doctrines. These productions are always replete with errors. They are generally, as I have called them, after Dryden,—“mere daubs,” in which, “nor line, nor look, nor attitude, is true.”

Founded upon this ignorance, come, next, as its natural offspring,—those prejudices; all that rancour, and hostility, which the public entertain against the religion of their catholic ancestors. Their prejudices, indeed, upon this subject are most inveterate. They are such,—so deeply burnt into the public mind,—that our writers have, many of them, remarked, that they form, perhaps, the most prominent feature in the English character.—They are such, that, whereas every office, and dignity, of the state are open to the various classes of believers, and unbelievers,—to the deist, and even to the atheist himself,—yet are they sternly denied to the catholic,—be his virtues, his talents, his loyalty, and his honour, what they may.—They are such, that the wisdom of our government compels (absurd, and horrible obligation!) even its own protestant subjects, ere they can act in the capacity, either of legislators, or of magistrates,—to *swear*, that the religion of the catholic is a damnable idolatry.—They are such, that they form the *only* point of contact, and belief, in which the protest-

ant public,—men of every sect, and every creed,—are found to agree together. Here,—upon this subject,—they, all, and each of them, say to one another, in the words of the poet,—

“Tout ennemi de Rome est un ami pour moi.”

In short, they are such, that I have sometimes wondered, that in the great excess of its piety,—or its folly,—the nation never adopted, as the motto of its banners, those same orthodox words, which, almost every where, bedaub,—or rather, adorn, and sanctify, our walls,—“No Popery.” Such are the general feelings of this country, in relation to catholicity;—and such, above all,—although with many splendid exceptions,—are the general feelings of its clergy.*

* We beheld, for example, last year, on the occasion of the discussion of the catholic question, a striking attestation of the general temper of these men, in relation to our religion. It was such, as to surprise the more “inert” bigotry, as Mr Canning called it, of the bigoted themselves. We saw, upon that occasion, an immense body of these illiberals, beating, every where, “the drum ecclesiastic;” stunning the ears of the public with its noise; and endeavouring, by all the efforts of their industry, to awaken in the minds of the ignorant, and the vulgar, all the bad feelings of rancour, and hostility. For this purpose, their churches re-echoed, each Sunday, with abuse; the press groaned with insults; and the very taverns, and pothouses, resounded, not unfrequently, with invectives against popery. Above all, they loaded the tables of each house of parliament with such a ponderous weight of petitions, as did, well nigh, break them down. They were instruments, composed, almost wholly, by the clergy,—instruments, which, like their sermons, were replete with calumnies, and injurious language,—the compounds of ignorance, and ill-will; some of which would have figured, even in those good old times, when to persecute popery was an act of exalted piety;—or when to believe, that the papists were preparing to blow up the Thames, or a single Jesuit going to cut the throats of every protestant in London, were considered as the proofs of orthodoxy. They were instruments, such as, I am sure, the reformed clergy of every other nation are incapable of imitating; and which, I even think, the present successors of the present men will reflect upon, ere long, with pity, and contempt. Such was the general character of those monuments of bigotry. Whilst, moreover, in order to procure signatures to them, their sagacious authors descended, in most instances, to tricks, and contrivances, the most insidious and disgraceful; insomuch, that they became familiarly denominated,—*mere hole and corner petitions*. However, they did certainly earn a victory, —for which we wish them joy:—a victory, which they, indeed, celebrated with many an “Io Pæan,” and pious orgies.

It would amuse the catholic, and edify certain protestant readers, if I were to present to them a few passages, extracted from the speech-

The above causes are, alone, sufficient to prevent any general reconciliation with the parent church. However, they are not, after all, in my ideas, so much calculated to stay the happy event, as is the reason following. The reason, which, I conceive, above all others, calculated to do this, and to render the compact hopeless, will be found in those sentiments, and notions, which, grounded upon the leading rule of the Reformation, are now become so prevalent amongst all the communities of protestantism. The opinions, which now prevail in these communities, and particularly amongst their most learned members, are those of Socinianism, and a wide, unsettled, latitudinarianism, or indifferentism, which reduce Christianity almost to a mere code of human philosophy. So that,

es, and instructions, in which these men have described to the public the character of our religion. But, as the note is too long already, I cannot do this. I will, however, just cite the few following lines, as a fair specimen of the general nature of all such effusions of pious oratory. They are taken from a speech, delivered, but a few days past, in my own immediate vicinity,—before a large, and admiring assembly, of the inhabitants of Northampton, a considerable portion of clergymen, and several of the neighbouring gentry. The orator was a Mr. Jones, a writer of some celebrity; a kind of an oracle, I am told, amongst the wise; and what is still better, a kind of saint amongst the good. (That he is, indeed, charitable, meek, and gentle;—that he is orthodox, eloquent, and polished;—these are facts, which the little extract will evince most clearly.) “The object,”—says the holy man, “of this society is to destroy antichrist, which has different branches. One pillar of it is heathenism idolatry. And what can destroy this, but the gospel? For, as the sun swallows up the night, so will the gospel dispel the darkness of heathenism. Mahomedanism is another branch. But the main pillar of antichrist is *popery*, which is the grand master policy of *Satan*. It is the darkness of *heathenism*, blended with an ostensible show of Christianity. It is the decoying *harlot*, vested in silken attire. It is a golden chalice, brimmed, with a poisoned draught,” &c.—Such as this is the very frequent language of these ministers “of the God of Peace.” It is the kind of language, which is used in innumerable pulpits; and used,—I know it well,—almost incessantly, in the pulpits of my own vicinity. And would, then, the men, who think, and speak thus of the parent church,—would they be induced to be reconciled to it again? Much sooner would I believe, that,—if they had the power so to do—they would again persecute it. Indeed, if, unhappily, they had the power to execute, what their zeal, and their notions of orthodoxy, might suggest, I should, in such case, be alarmed for my own security. “There are persons,” says the eloquent Moore, “who still sigh for the good old penal times; who consider liberality, and justice, to catholics, as degeneracy from their ancestors; and who try to infuse into every remaining fragment of that polypus of persecution the same pestilent life, which pervaded the whole.” If there be any grounds for this odious charge, we know well, to whom the public themselves would at once apply it.

conducted by these ideas, the generality of the professors of protestantism,—very different from some of their predecessors,—consider, *now*, the circumstance of unity of faith, or of uniformity of worship, as by no means the necessary obligations of the Christian scheme. They, *now*, nearly all, look upon all religions, and religious communions,—provided only that men be sincere in the profession of them,—as, alike, secure, and conducting to future happiness. Hence, it is, that, fraternising more or less together, they, all condemn, as a piece of unpardonable intolerance, that opinion of the catholics, that the profession of *but one* code of faith is the essential law of Christianity, and the necessary duty of the Christian. Such as these are now the notions, which prevail, most commonly, throughout the whole extent of protestant Europe. They are notions, too, which, every where and every day, are gaining new advocates, and fresh proselytes. They are a system, which is silently, but effectually, preparing the destruction of the present still existing protestant establishments,—undermining all their buttresses, and removing all their fences.—For these reasons, alarmed at the awful prospect, several distinguished writers in this country, and above all, several members of the established church, have exerted, and are still exerting, all their industry to check its progress. Alas! vain, fruitless, efforts! The tide is set in far too strongly for them to stop it. But, to pretend to stop it,—as some of them flatter themselves they shall do,—by the help of Bibles, and the aid of Tracts,—this is a piece of wisdom, very little inferior to that of expecting to stop the ocean with a bulrush.*

* I regret, that, in the series of these pages, I have omitted to take notice of the character of the tracts, which are now circulated so prodigally, upon the subject of popery. It is not here the place to make any observations upon these pitiful effusions of ignorance and bigotry. I will, however, just insert a brief extract from one of our best-written reviews, which presents to us a description of the general character of these instruments of mischief: “These good people, our tract-mongers, inundate the country with a vast quantity of the most execrable trash that ever disgraced the press of any enlightened land. Whether it be, that the conceit of the directors of these institutions commonly leads them to suppose, that it is their duty to *write*, as well as to distribute, we know not. But it is certain, that the works, which they do distribute, are the most abominable outrages upon good taste, and good sense,—and, in not a few instances, also, upon sound religion,—which

From the consideration, therefore, of these few obstacles alone, the conclusion is, I think, quite manifest,—that, however much the reunion of the protestant churches with the parent institute is to be desired,—however beneficial it would prove both to piety, and to religion;—both to the harmony of states, and to the happiness of social life,—yet, it is a blessing, which, of all others, is, in the common order of things, the most unlikely to take place. In regard of the idea, which is sometimes suggested, that it might be brought about by the interest, and interference, of governments, and by the arts, and resources, of human policy,—this, if it be a flattering, is still a very illusive notion. The reason is plain. A real reunion of churches must be necessarily founded upon real *unity* of faith. And since all the arts, and influences, of human power are incompetent to establish this,—so, consequently, are they incompetent, likewise, to re-establish a real reconciliation. They may, indeed, for a time, by the help of artifice, and intrigue, and interest, produce effects upon the *exterior* man: but, as for his belief, his opinions, and his feelings,—these are things beyond the control of courts, or of courtly influences. For this reason it is,—and experience has always been found to prove it,—that all the unions, concerted, and formed, amongst the various sects of protestantism, have always been of very short duration. So that, if ever the great event of a reunion of the protestant sects with the mother church do take place, it can only be effected,—as it may, no doubt, be thus easily effected,—by the influences of the divine power. It must be the work of *grace*, and even of a very extraordinary grace. For, the operation of renewing lost religion is, perhaps, a

have ever happened to come under our inspection. Vulgar, drivelling, absurd, histories of the imaginary conversions of unreal milkmaids, boatswains, drummers, pedlers, and pickpockets;—drawling, nauseous, narratives of the gossipings, and whinnings, of religious midwives, and nurses; and of children, two or three years old, already '*under concern*;' sickening hymns, composed by men, in whom poetry, and piety, have been twin-births;—horrible, and blasphemous stories of sudden judgments upon card-players, and beer-drinkers, &c. &c. &c.,—not one word of which is true. Such are the greater part of the mystic leaves, which those dotting sibyls, the Tract Societies, are perpetually dispersing over the surface of a *justly thankless land*."—Blackwood's Mag.

more arduous task, than was originally the work of its first establishment.

Designing, then, as I do, to point out the necessity of once more uniting the church in one,—it may appear to the reader singular, that I should still describe the obstacles, which oppose the blessed compact, as insuperable. However, in doing this, I have not lessened the evidence of the necessity of such a compact. I have, on the contrary, rather increased it. For, I have shown, that the very obstacles which render it so difficult, if not hopeless, are founded, every one of them, upon some unreasonable, and unbecoming cause or other,—upon ignorance, and error; or else, upon prejudice, and injustice. So that the pious, and prudent individual, who weighs them seriously, will, even from them, be induced to feel more sensibly the obligation of seeking a reconciliation with his long abandoned, and neglected parent. Accordingly, it is for the sake of persons of this description,—of such as err, only because they have been misled by misrepresentation, or because they have been born in error,—it is solely for the sake of these, and not from any idea of the chance of any *general* reconciliation, that I now suggest these observations. The return of a certain number of individuals to the sacred fold is an effect, which may be produced without the operation, perhaps, of any extraordinary grace, or the interposition of any remarkable cause. To produce this, little else is required but a mind open to conviction, and the honest application of the general criterions of religious truth;—united, of course, with a spirit of piety: for the light of faith does not easily beam upon a heart that is corrupted. I will, therefore,—notwithstanding the conviction, that no general benefit can result from any observations of mine,—proceed to state a few of the many benefits, which would result from the supposed reconciliation.

In the first place, such renewal would produce this important effect,—an effect which should seem dear to every lover of security,—that it would do away, and remove from the protestant churches, that awful imputation of *schism*, which has been so forcibly urged against them by the catholics. It would destroy those iron bars, and pull down that wall of brass, which, erected by the hands of the first reformers, still stand, a frightful, and

formidable barrier before the threshold of the Christian fold. Such would be its first advantage.

That the Reformation was indeed an act of schism, is a point, which I have established sufficiently, in the series of the preceding chapters. It was an act, I have shown, which its very authors themselves lamented; and which Luther,—as himself tells us,—contemplated even with trepidation. “We separated,” says Jewel, “it is true; but we did so, with all the reluctance imaginable.” It was only, in reality, says the orthodox gentlemen, who write the *British Critic*, it was only “stern, and unavoidable necessity,” that forms their apology. “And we have reason to believe,” add these theologians, still farther,—“that nothing was farther from their minds, than the wish to perpetuate the *schism*.”—Thus, the act itself of schism is admitted.—In relation to the “stern, and unavoidable necessity,” which is urged in its justification,—this, too, I have equally shown, was not of such a nature—was not founded upon such disorders, and corruptions, as to have destroyed, the divine character of the church, or to have annulled the sacred commission of its pastors. *Therefore*, neither did it furnish a sufficient motive for the abandonment of its society.

It was “stern, and unavoidable necessity,”—it is admitted,—that, alone, formed an apology for the schism of the first reformers. Well, the consequence, then, is,—that, *if now*, this “stern, and unavoidable necessity” exist no longer,—*therefore*, should the schism cease; and the compact of union, even according to the concessions of the very men who destroyed it,—be, once again renewed. The evil ought to terminate with the alleged causes which gave it birth. Now, such precisely is the case, *at present*. That “stern, and unavoidable necessity,”—or, as the same Reviewers call it,—“those overruling circumstances,”—the alleged corruptions, and abuses, of ages past,—are now no more. They have, long since, vanished. For, exerting all the influences of her wisdom and authority, the church has laboured earnestly; and omitted no effort, to correct, and exterminate them. So that, except the vices, and disorders, and superstitions, of individuals,—which are but that “chaff, and cockle,” which, our Saviour had foretold us, should always subsist in this world, mixed, and uni-

ted, "with the good grain,—except these, there is nothing *now* in the catholic church, that, in the eyes of enlightened piety, can appear a just cause for schism, or even a sufficient motive to excite the feelings of any well-founded scandal. Remarking upon these circumstances, Mr. Nightingale puts the following questions to his fellow-protestants: "Why," he asks, "seeing, that the catholic church has reformed her abuses, why do not the protestants *now* return to her bosom? This," he replies, "is a question, which I profess myself not fully competent to answer. It must be left, as in other cases, to protestant episcopalians of the established church: and to those, who retain the damnatory clauses. To all such, this question should, I conceive, prove rather knotty, and provoking."—It is, indeed, true, that the whole history of the *schism* of the Reformation is, to the protestant, replete with perplexing difficulties. These, therefore, in the first place, the act of reconciliation would remove.

The next advantage, that would result from such renewal, is this,—that, since there exists in the catholic church,—and only in the catholic church,—a principle of restraint, and a centre of unity,—so, of course, the sacred compact would have the effect of preventing many of those errors, of correcting many of those illusions, and of checking that spirit of sectarism, which are now, every where, so prevalent, above all, in this nation.

It is, no doubt, a fact, which it is impossible, with any thing like reason, to call in question,—that the leading maxim of protestantism, which constitutes every individual the judge, and arbiter, of his own belief, has been the cause of innumerable errors, and has sown in the public mind the seeds of almost every kind of illusion. It is, indeed, that prolific source,—that *κράτηρ κακῶν*,—which contains in itself, both every possible form of heresy, and every imaginable shape of deception. Conducted by it,—wherever men have the courage to apply it,—they believe, and disbelieve, whatsoever their fancy prompts;—they prove every falsehood; and refute every truth. The process of the operation is most simple; and, what is the most unfortunate,—the conclusion, resulting from it, however preposterous, or profane, this may chance to be, is, (if the wisdom of the above maxim be once admitted,) not only consistent, but justifiable.

So, for example, (just by the way of showing this,) it is thus, that the protestant, —if he be consistent,—reasons : —“The Bible,” he says, “is my religion ; and my own reason is its interpreter. Now, it is in the Bible, that, I discover such and such peculiar doctrines. Therefore, be these what they may, it is right in me, and even my duty, to believe them. It is in the Bible, that I trace the falsehood of such and such, generally admitted, dogmas. Therefore again, although these may be true, and divine, yet is it right in me, and my duty, to reject them.”—Shocking as are these conclusions, yet they are such as no consistent protestant can, either reprobate, or refute. Whence, that saying, before quoted, of the learned Selden,—after he had contemplated the errors, and confusion, which had resulted from the great charter of the Reformation :—“These two words, *Scrutamini Scripturas*, have undone the world.” Surely, then, to the pious mind, it ought to appear desirable to arrest, if possible, the progress of these disorders. And the only way to do this, is once again to renew the alliance with the parent church ;—since it is only in her communion, that there exists that kind of authority, which, by being respected as infallible, and divine, is, hence, competent to guide the human mind, and to stay its evagations.*

* Dudith, in one of his letters to his friend Beza, makes the following observations on the absurdity of admitting the Bible as the sole rule of belief ; and of pretending, at the same time, to control belief. “You contend,” he says to his friend, “that the Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith. But, you are, all of you, divided about the sense of them. Neither have you, as yet, settled, who shall be the judge. You say one thing. Strancarus says another. You quote the Bible. He quotes the Bible. You reason. He reasons. You require of me to believe you. I do, no doubt, respect you. But why should I trust you rather than Strancarus ? You say, he is a heretic. But, the catholics say, you are, both of you, heretics. Whom, then, shall I believe ? They quote historians, and Fathers. So do you. To whom, then, do you, all of you, address yourselves ? Where is the judge ? You have thrown off the yoke. Allow me to throw off mine. You say, I am no prophet. I say, you are none. Who is the judge ? Having freed yourselves, as you call it, from tyranny, why do you turn tyrants, yourselves ? and even more cruel tyrants than were those, against whom you declaim so violently ? Does not all the world know, that you are a set of demagogues ? You talk of your Ausburg Confession, &c., of your unanimity, and fundamental articles. I keep thinking of the commandment ;—‘Thou shalt not kill.’”

And not only would such renewal have the effect of putting an end to a considerable share of those errors, which now disgrace religion, but it would contribute also,—and this would be a still greater benefit,—to prevent, and check, a great deal of that impiety, and incredulity, which now, likewise, profane it; and which are busily employed, not only in the destruction of Christian faith, but in the subversion of social order. The diminution, indeed, of sectarianism, thus produced by the act of reconciliation, would, alone, contribute greatly to these advantages,—because incredulity, and irreligion, are but the natural offspring of the *confusion* of creeds:—which, by rendering faith doubtful, soon renders it, also, an object, either of indifference, or contempt. However, what principally would accelerate, and insure, these blessings, would be the resumption of the exploded principles of catholicity.

Whosoever has studied the histories of modern infidelity, and anti-socialism, must have remarked, that the advocates of both these destructive systems have, always,—just like the authors, and defenders, of sectarianism,—adopted, as the leading rule of their theories, and opinions, “the immortal charter,” of the Reformation. It is upon this, that they found their reasonings; and from it, that they deduce their conclusions. It is the helm, and the compass, by which they, each of them, in all their devious wanderings, steer their unhappy course. Conducted by it, the Socinian rejects revelation, because he conceives it needless:—the deist rejects Christianity, because he considers it absurd:—the atheist denies the very existence of a God, because to his reason it appears impossible.—It is so, too, with that other portion of the same school,—our modern political, and antisocial, reformists. These men, again, like the former, armed with the same maxim, and applying it in a similar kind of way, have composed a code of anarchy, and a creed of licentiousness, in relation to laws, to liberty, to equality, to morals, &c., which, were it not for the care, and vigilance, of governments, would, ere long, effect the ruin, both of social order, and of domestic happiness.—In short, to the unprejudiced mind, which reasons only philosophically, there can be no room for wonder, that, so long as the leading maxim of protestantism is admit-

ted; and *applied as the rule* of men's judgments, and opinions,—there can be no room for wonder, that systems of heresy, and error; of irreligion, and disorganisation, should every where prevail;—no wonder, that the pillars of the Christian sanctuary should be shaken, and the buttresses of society, tremble. It is hence, indeed, that the spirit of licentiousness is now become so general; and that clouds hang so heavily over the horizon of so many nations.*

The great remedy, then, to arrest the progress of these evils; and to prevent their future mischiefs, would be to

* The reader, if he be conversant with the works of the modern school of impiety, must have often remarked the eulogiums, which its writers uniformly bestow upon the first reformers,—acknowledging these as their predecessors; and attributing to them the great merit of having, by their principles, laid the foundation of that bright philosophy, and of those splendid theories, which now illumine Europe. They are lavish, too, in their general praises of protestantism,—although they blame, and sometimes laugh at, the timidity of its professors, who have not the consistency, and courage, to apply their own leading principles. However, they still own them, as allies, fighting,—but fighting cowardly,—under the same banner with themselves.—We beheld a striking instance of the kindness, and partiality, resulting from this alliance, on the occasion of the French Revolution. For, whilst the dreadful heroes of that storm were busily engaged in destroying every thing, that was holy; and in persecuting every thing, that was catholic,—to the professors of protestantism, and to every thing protestant, they displayed the greatest tenderness, and forbearance. Whence, Count Le Maistre makes the following observations: “Every attack, which is made upon catholicity, implies necessarily an attack also upon Christianity. And our modern philosophists have, in reality, done nothing more than seize upon the arms, which protestantism had already prepared for them. They did this, turning them against the church; and laughing at their good ally, who was not, in their eyes, worth the trouble of an assault. Look only at the publications of the eighteenth century. They are, all, aimed at the church of Rome: just as if their authors believed, that, out of the church of Rome, there existed, no where, such men as real Christians. Nothing is, in fact, more infallible than the instinct of impiety. What impiety, alone hates; what irritates its feelings; what always awakens its fury, and excites its industry,—is *truth*. Thus, in the national Convention, when its members celebrated the abolition of religious worship, they did not call for the books, the habits, the sacred vessels, of the protestants. They did not call to their bar; they did not seek to seduce, or to intimidate, the protestant minister, in order to wrest from *him* the oath of apostacy. They did not even dream of such an artifice: because there was nothing in protestantism, or in the protestant, that either incommoded, or irritated, them,—nothing, that gave them the slightest umbrage. As each party was hostile to Rome,—so they could not, consequently be hostile to each other. All enemies of Rome are friends with one another.”

call back, once more, the discarded maxims of catholicity, by again uniting the Christian world to the parent institute, as the sole asylum of concord; and the only centre of unanimity. Neither, in saying this, do I state merely my own opinion, or that of the catholic writers;—I state the opinion of a multitude of enlightened protestants;—of a set of men, distinguished for their learning, wisdom and penetration,—of such men, as Leibnitz, Grotius, Puffendorf, &c. These, all of them, allow, that, since the principles of the Reformation had every where produced confusion,—so the return to catholicity could, alone, again produce concord.* Nay, such was even the acknowledged opinion of some of the first reformers themselves,—the very men, whose violences, and writings, had prepared the awful tragedy. Thus, Melancton, as I have before stated, when he contemplated the frightful scenes, which the Reformation had produced, feelingly exclaimed: “Not the Elbe itself would supply me with tears enough to bewail the miseries of our Reformation:—at war with itself;—its professors under no subjection;—its partisans intent solely upon dominion;—licentiousness reigning every where;—doubt prevailing in religion, &c.” And what, therefore, does he suggest as the only remedy for all these evils? Why, it is,—and he says it with reluctance,—it is to re-establish once more the centre of unity; and to re-erect,” as he calls it, “the *monarchy* of the pope. It is this,”—he adds,—“that would help to preserve nations; and the consent of Christian doctrines.”—Yes; and even Calvin himself,—inconsistent as was the strange declaration from him,—writes thus: “God has fixed the throne of his religion in the centre of the world: and he has placed it in the person of a single pontiff, towards whom all ought to turn their eyes, in order the more strongly to maintain themselves in unity.” It was in consequence of these, and such like considerations,

* “The suppression,” says Puffendorf, “of the authority of the pope has scattered in the world infinite seeds of discord. Because as there is now, no longer, any sovereign power to put an end to the disputes, which have, every where, arisen amongst us, we behold the protestants all divided amongst themselves; and even with their own hands tearing out each other’s entrails *Furere protestantes in sua ipsarum viscera ceperunt.*” De Mon. Pont. Rom.

D'Israeli asserts, that it was the wish of the government in this country, during the reigns of Elizabeth, James, and the two Charleses, to renew again the compact with the church of Rome.

I could, in like manner, cite the sentiments, and wishes, of several modern protestant writers, who,—owning, that the errors, and the incredulity, which are now so general, are the effects of the maxims of the Reformation,—have, hence, acknowledged, likewise, that the best of all remedies to correct these evils, or to check their progress, would be the reunion of the protestant churches to their parent institute. As a specimen of the feelings of these writers, I will transcribe the few following lines from an address, directed lately by a protestant minister to our sovereign pontiff. I extract it from the eloquent works of Count Le Maistre. “It was,” says the candid minister, “it was, I am compelled to own it the hands of Luther, and of Calvin, the first profaned the censer; when under the names of protestantism, and reformation, they produced a schism in the church. Yes; it was the reformers, who, sounding the tocsin against the pope, and Rome, first shook that ancient, and respectable Colossus of the Roman hierarchy; and who, by turning the minds of men to the discussion of the doctrines of religion, prepared them to discuss, likewise, ere long, the principles of sovereignty,—undermining thus, with the same hands, both the altar, and the throne.” Wherefore, he exhorts the pontiff to undertake the great work of reconciliation. “The time,” he adds, “is now come to labour to rebuild that magnificent palace, which has been pulled down with so much fury. The moment is, perhaps, at hand, to bring back into the pale of the church the Greeks, the Lutherans, the Anglicans, and the Calvinists. And it is yours, pontiff of Rome, to show yourself the father of the faithful, by restoring to religion its ancient splendor, and to the church its former unity. It is yours, as the successor to St. Peter, to reestablish in unbelieving Europe, faith, piety, morality,” &c.

I will cite only one other advantage, that would result from the proposed union. It is one, which, if not so important, because not so general, as the benefits, which I have thus far stated,—is yet, of such nature as should make it appear peculiarly dear to the feelings of each pri-

vate, and pious, individual. It is this,—that the blessed alliance would effectually remove from the mind of the protestant all those doubts, and that incertitude ; all those misgivings, and uneasinesses, which,—*provided he have formed his creed according to the dictates of his own leading rule*,—he cannot, if he have any self-diffidence, or modesty, well help experiencing.

The case is,—as I have said already too often,—that what alone constitutes the real foundation of the faith of every *consistent* protestant is the sanction of his own private judgment. The consistent protestant believes *in himself*, exactly as the consistent catholic believes *in the church*. It is this very distinction, that makes the chief, and most essential, difference between the two. For, whilst the latter is induced to believe, because he reveres his church, as *infallible*,—the former, meanwhile,—that is, the protestant,—considering such claim to be groundless ; and looking upon all human authority, as *fallible* ; and therefore, as incompetent to form the foundation of Christian faith,—builds, for these reasons, his belief upon the dictates of his own private reason. He is even no real protestant, if he do not do this. Accordingly, the consequences, resulting from the two opposite sources of belief, are these,—that, precisely as the faith of the catholic, because it is thus ensured,—is always steady, and unchangeable,—the faith of the protestant, on the contrary, because it is not thus ensured,—because it has no other basis but that weak, wavering thing, called, “reason,”—is always, upon this account, unfixed ; and forever varying. At all events, I conceive the circumstance quite impossible, that the protestant, who considers seriously, and weighs with candor, the real foundation of his own faith,—I conceive it quite impossible, that he should not sometimes, *doubt* ;—that he should not, now and then at least, experience feelings of diffidence, and distrust. If he do not, then I can only say,—he is a courageous man indeed. For these reasons, therefore, it should, methinks, seem well, that he should pause ;—that he should study prudently the awfulness of his situation ; and the peculiar bearings of a system, which involves in itself such serious, and perplexing, consequences. If once he could be induced to do this, then would he also be induced to feel the bene-

fit of the remedy, which I am now proposing,—the happiness of being united to a church, in which faith is devoid of doubt ; and conviction is unalloyed with apprehension.*

And not only, indeed, would such renewal have the effect of removing from the minds of our separated brethren all doubts, in relation to the truth of their *faith*,—but it would, also, produce that other just equally important benefit of allaying those suspicions, and of doing away those perplexities, which,—if they have ever discussed the subject candidly,—they cannot possibly help entertaining, concerning *the validity* of the commissions of their respective pastors. For, this, too, I have shown, is a question, which, however considered, or however applied, is, to all the various sects of the Reformation, beset with appalling difficulties.

It is so, I have shown, in relation to the claims, and presumed prerogatives, of the established clergy. “Their pretensions,” says Towgood, “are calculated, if well examined, to minister great doubt, and uneasiness of mind.” Nightingale,—and, indeed, the whole body of the dissenters do it equally,—Nightingale makes exactly the same observation. “If,” he says, —“if visibility, and episcopal ordination, are essential to the character of the church, then it would seem to follow, that a regular, and uninterrupted, succession of Christian prelates from the apostles is a matter of vital

* “The faith of the consistent protestant reposes solely upon the dictates of his own private judgment. But, if so, how can he possibly be assured, that it is really divine? The faith of the catholic reposes upon a divine authority. And for this reason, he begins his creed, by saying: ‘I believe in God.’ But, the protestant, who,—if he act consistently,—admits no visible authority, ought necessarily to begin his creed by saying, ‘I believe in myself.’ It is true, he admits, he says, the authority of Jesus Christ, and of his sacred word. But, all this is only a flattering illusion. Because, how does he know, with any real certitude, that the Scriptures do indeed contain the word of Jesus Christ? Nay; how does he even know, with certitude, the very existence itself of Jesus Christ? Is not he, *himself*, the sole judge of these questions, as he is of every other? No doubt, he is. Therefore, the consequence must be,—that, before he can say, with absolute confidence, ‘I believe in Jesus Christ,’—he must first have said, ‘I believe in myself.’ Thus, then, his faith, in order to possess a real degree of *certitude*, must necessarily presuppose a real personal *infallibility*,—that is, it must presuppose the most palpable of all absurdities.” Abbé La Mennai.

importance. As a dissenter, I have no uneasiness upon the point. But, as a churchman, I should tremble for the validity of my sacred office."* Hence, therefore, to those members of the established church, who love security, how desirable should that compact seem, which, besides silencing their doubts in regard of *faith*, would, at the same time, cancel all their apprehensions, in relation to the pastoral office. For, no fact is more manifest, and certain, than the continued preservation of the apostolic charter in the hands of the catholic ministry.

The same motives, too, which, in regard of this sacred object, ought to engage the members of the established church to embrace the proposed expedient, ought equally to induce all the various classes of the dissenters, or reformed societies, to do the same. Indeed, the motives, which should impel these associations to do so, are, if possible, even more urgent than the preceding. For, in relation to *their* pastoral ministry, every thing is entirely *new*. *Theirs* is an order of things, unknown to every age of pious, and learned, antiquity;—unheard of even, until the epoch of the Reformation,—a ministry of mere laymen, self-sent, or deputed only by the authority of the people. Whence, speaking of this description of religionists, Fénelon says of them: "It is really a circumstance, which ought to excite astonishment, that amidst so many, and all, the examples of antiquity, which are cited by the advocates of the Reformation, there is not a single one, which is favourable to their cause;—not a single one, that is, which, even in the most extreme cases, attributes to the laity any other functions beyond those, which we ourselves attribute to them, every day.

* "In order," says again the author, whom I have cited in the foregoing note,— "in order to prove, that the religion of the church of England is false, there needs neither reasoning, nor research. Mere intuition is enough. It is as plainly false, as the sun is bright. Only look at it. Its hierarchy is an isolated thing in Christianity. It stands alone: and consequently, it must be null. To this, no sensible answer can be given. Its episcopacy is, alike, rejected by the catholic, and by the great majority of the protestant body. If, then, it be neither catholic, nor protestant, what is it, I ask, in reality? It is a mere civil, and *local* establishment; diametrically opposed to the character of *universality*,—which is the exclusive sign, and attribute of the true church. Either, then, this religion must be false; or else, Christ Jesus must have been incarnate, only for the sake of the church of England. Between these two propositions there, certainly, exists no medium."

Neither is there one single instance, from which it would appear, that, anciently, the Christian world did, ever, or in any place, consider that individual, as a real pastor, who had not been ordained by the imposition of the hands of the episcopacy. Wherefore," adds the benevolent writer, "what is the consequence? Why; let me say it, in the spirit of charity, and peace;—let me say it, with humility, and grief of heart,—although still, with all that liberty, which the love of truth inspires:—their pastors are not true pastors; neither have they entered through the gate of the fold. The flocks, which they conduct, are not their flocks. And even their preaching, since they are not true pastors, is vain, and without authority. Nay; although even they should chance to say the truth,—the word, in their mouths, is not the word of God: for, God has not sent them to speak in his name. It is, at all events the word of God, purloined by a set of men to whom he had never confided the divine deposit. Their ordinations are devoid of virtue; their Eucharist is not the Eucharist; nor the sacrament of Jesus Christ. In short, their churches are no churches. For, the edifice cannot be more solid than the foundation; nor the body more healthy than the head." Surely, then, in a situation, so awful as this, men ought seriously to reflect. They should seek, and with eagerness embrace, every possible measure, that might extricate them from it,—an effect, which would be, at once, produced by the return,—and only by the return,—to the pastures of the ancient fold.

I will not attempt to describe the effects, (although these, too, would form another very beautiful feature in the proposed reunion,) which the blessed compact would produce in the order, both of social, and domestic, life;—both upon the happiness of states, and the security of governments. Its benefits, in all these regards, would be infinite. For, it would not only banish from the walks of society, and from the breasts of individuals, all that rancour, and hostility; that bigotry, and those prejudices, which are now so general;—it would not only prevent any future recurrence of those horrors,—the bloodshed, and persecutions; the injustices, and disasters,—which have so often, to the disgrace of Christianity, and to the ruin of nations, arisen out of religious dis-

unity ;—it would not only render unnecessary a variety of those laws, and precautions, which the wisdom of legislators, and the prudence of princes are now compelled to employ for the security of their states,—but, diffusing, every where around, a spirit of concord ;—linking men together in one faith, and inspiring them with one sentiment,—it would have the delightful effect of engaging them to look upon each other, as the members of one great family, and the children of one common parent. In short, its consequence would be the re-establishment of *harmony*—that blessing which is the real source, both of public, and private, happiness ; the best principle of national prosperity ; and the strongest bulwark of thrones, and empires.

Accordingly, moved by considerations such as these ; and feeling sensibly the vast importance of the holy project, there have been always, I have before remarked, a considerable number of distinguished protestants, who, at every period since the Reformation, have ardently expressed their wishes to see it brought about. We have observed this, even amongst certain members of the established church, who,—because aware, perhaps, of the awkwardness of their situation, and of the precariousness of their claims to any thing like apostolical succession,—have, hence, sometimes heaved a sigh over the painful circumstance ; or else, ventured to whisper out a wish, concerning it. The late venerable bishop of Durham, so long one of the severest of our adversaries, allows, in the words, with which I have ushered in this chapter, that “ there is no undertaking of more importance, and of higher interest, that can employ the piety, and learning, of the ministers of Christ, than the endeavour to reconcile again the churches of England and Rome.” We have recently, too, seen a respectable clergyman of the establishment,—Mr. Wix,—who, besides stating the general advantages of such a measure, states, also, certain plans, by which, he imagines, it might possibly be effected. “ No solid objection,” he says, “ prevails, against the church of England attempting an union with the church of Rome ; since the church of Rome is acknowledged by the church of England to be a true, and apostolic church. She denies no article of faith, which the church of England maintains to be requisite for sal-

vation; though she maintains, in addition, opinions, which the church of England considers unnecessary, or erroneous; many of which the Romish church, on kind consultation, might be disposed to renounce, or to modify; or to some of which the church of England might manifest a charitable forbearance. And so an union, than which nothing can be more desirable to the Christian world, nor more agreeable to the peaceable spirit of the Gospel, might be effected. — It is grievous to consider, that so very ancient a branch of the true visible church of Christ as the church of Rome indeed is, should be in disunion with the apostolic church of England. Incalculable are the benefits, which might be derived to the Christian cause from all unnecessary jealousies being abandoned; and from the establishment of concord between these two great branches of the Christian church. Every sectarian now affects to justify his schism, from the conduct of the church of England. Thus sects are multiplied: and instead of appearing to be of one faith, and one baptism, there are as many faiths, as there are discordant opinions. This want of union in matters of religion has been long lamented by the writer of these reflections. And after much consideration, and humble prayer to Almighty God, it appears to him, that no means are more likely to conduce to this very desirable end, than that the great reformed church of England should, by dispassionate consultation with the church of Rome, and by reference to earliest opinions, and practices, establish some sound form of words, which might, under God, and the Scriptures, concentrate their belief; and that, united, as one fold, under one Shepherd, they might become, together, the rallying point of sound faith, and the focus of religious education to the world." Such are the sensible notions of this respectable theologian upon this vital question. And such, too,—I will only add,—and perhaps, more sensible still, would be the notions of other protestants, could they only be induced to weigh the great cause with candor, and calm attention.

It has been predicted, indeed, by several foreign writers, that it is from England, that the first grand impulse is to come, which, forming a delightful epoch in the annals of the church, is to give back to the Christian his

ancient faith, and to society its ancient harmony. Their prediction (to which, for my own part, I attach not even the slightest credit) is founded upon a variety of motives; and upon motives, which, to those, who have not studied the temper of the times and the nature of things, ought not to appear, either unplausible or improbable. It is founded, for example, in part, upon the favourable notions, which men, in general, entertain of the exalted character of the English nation,—of its great good sense; of its spirit of deep reflection; of its interest, and zeal, for religion, &c. It is founded,—and this is the chief basis of the prophecy,—upon that closer approximation of the church of England to the church of Rome, than is to be found in any other church, or sect of the Reformation. This approximation does, no doubt, in a great variety of objects, present so many points of mutual contact, that, to those, who have not considered all the counteracting influences, the reunion may easily appear attainable. The royal framers of our national religion, conducted by a less, and gentler spirit of innovation, than that which marked the conduct of the reformers in other countries, — and who indeed, if their passions, and their interests had not guided them, would willingly have continued catholics,—have retained, both in its creed, and its discipline, a multitude of the features of the parent church:—insomuch, say the other sectarists, when they undertake to describe it, that it is little else than “a mere patchwork piece of popery.” Its resemblance to catholicity is, certainly, in many regards, striking. It is,

Nice in its choice of ill, though not the best;
The least *deform'd*, because *reform'd* the least.

DRYDEN.

It was therefore, for reasons, such as these, that the writers, whom I am now alluding to, were induced to hazard the flattering prognostication. Hazard, alas, I am sure, it is. For, in making their calculations respecting the good-sense, &c., of the English nation, they have not calculated at the same time, that this very same sensible nation is in relation to the subject of religion, of all other nations, the most absurd; and in relation to every thing almost, that is catholic, the most venomous, *now*, the most prejudiced, and the most ignorant. Such,

notwithstanding all the resemblance of the church of England to the church of Rome,—such are now the general feelings of the English public. Had our prophets been rightly informed respecting these facts, they would not have presumed to have prophesied as they have done.

However, the happy event is possible; and it may take place. The power of the Almighty can effect,—and this, too, with ease,—what, to all human appearances, may be deemed impracticable. It is even the case, sometimes, that the order of grace, and mercy, then precisely begins, when every thing looks most desperate. Hence let us hope,—let us indulge the delightful expectation,—that the consoling prediction may, after all, and notwithstanding every opposing obstacle,—be still accomplished. Let us hope, that the time is not far distant, when the houses of Israel, and Juda, forgetting all their past dissensions, will, once again, be united in one people; and return together to the land of peace. That is, let us hope, that the protestant, and the catholic, laying aside, each of them, every prejudice; and joined together in the same bands of faith, and mutual charity, will form, once more, one happy family;—will, again, under the guidance of the same pastors, be gathered together in the same fold;—will adore together in the same temple; and present their homages at the same altar. And O! may that day,—that bright, and blessed day,—which is to witness these consoling scenes, (far distant as *now* even its dawn seems from us) may it soon beam upon the world!—But if, unhappily, such is not to be the case;—if, by the severe, and inscrutable decrees of the divine justice, the schism is destined to continue,—then let us, at all events, do this:—let us, all, and each, both catholics, and protestants, respect, and cherish, one another. Let our whole conduct, in all the external duties, and relations, of social life, be marked by mutual charity and benevolence. Let all rancour, and jealousies, and ill-will, and prejudices, die away. It is by means like these, that the great work of our religious union,—if ever it do take place,—will be best prepared; and best, and most easily, accomplished.

It is not for me, an unexperienced, and unauthorised individual, to pretend to point out, either by what means the much-wished for confederation might be brought

about, or upon what terms, exactly, it ought to be established. These are questions, which, requiring all the prudence of the most consummate wisdom, as well as all the sagacity of the most enlightened erudition,—it would, consequently, be presumptuous in me to undertake to define. Hence, I do not pretend to do this. However, I will just observe,—that, whenever the holy enterprise comes to be attempted, there is one point, which is manifest; and to which all the plans, adopted for its execution, must be directed, and referred. It is the following,—*that the sacred alliance must essentially be founded upon UNITY OF FAITH.* It must be founded upon unity of faith, because unity is not only the necessary attribute of revealed truths, but of all truths. It must, therefore, be an alliance, not like that, which we have recently witnessed in the states of Germany, founded upon an heterogeneous jumble of all kinds of dogmas,—of truths, and falsehoods,—promiscuously mixed together; or else, upon a general indifference to all dogmas:—it must be an alliance, reposing upon the unity of truth, and *the uniformity* of its belief;—an alliance, embracing the adoption of each article of the Christian creed; and the rejection of every article of unchristian error. It is to an alliance such as this, that all the attention of its framers must be directed, and that every sacrifice is to be made. It is, in reality, the only kind of alliance, that true wisdom, and enlightened piety, can approve;—however much it may be reprobated by the latitudinarianism of modern liberality. It is the only *Christian* alliance; and the only one, consequently, which is desirable. All other alliances, or unions, as they are called, are vain, and empty,—mere pieces of hypocrisy, which, serving, it may be, for a time, the purposes of human policy, or the interests of the men who form them, are, in the end, ruinous to truth, and fatal to religion. They become, ere long, the sources of incredulity and indifference. So that when the time comes,—if happily it ever do come,—which is to link mankind once more together in the bands of concord, it is to the restoration of this unity of faith, that all the labours of piety, and all the schemes of learning, must, in the first instance, be directed. This is the point, to which every aim must tend.

In relation to the catholic, as far as this great object, —*unity of faith*,—is concerned, there is little or no difficulty. The catholic has, here, no perplexities to annoy him; no sacrifices to make. In the catholic church, this unity subsists, already. It has subsisted, always; and it must continue to subsist, for ever. The reason is obvious:—the catholic not only professes to believe, no article of faith, but what each revolving age has believed before;—but, he believes, solely upon the sanction of a tribunal, which he considers, and venerates, as infallible, and divine. So that, with these principles, neither disunity, nor change of faith, are possible things with him.

In relation to the protestant, the case is different: and it is to him, that the present consideration is peculiarly important. It is he, who has, here, some sacrifices to make;—because, in regard to unity of faith, not only is it true, that, in the protestant churches, there is *none*,—it is even true, that, with their maxims, the thing is completely unattainable.—However, although I thus assert, that the protestant has here some sacrifices to make, yet they are sacrifices, I also conceive, which ought not to appear to him, either very painful, or very arduous. Without needing to appeal to a variety of other causes,—the two following reasons should, alone, seem sufficient to evince this.—In the first place, it is the case, as Tillotson observes, that those articles of faith, which constitute, properly speaking, the creeds of the protestant churches, are “not positive, but only negative things.”

In the next place, (and this is an argument, which should come home to the feelings of every prudent man) it is certain, that the protestant does not possess,—neither by the nature, and import, of the leading rule of his belief, can he possibly possess,—any absolute assurance, that the doctrines, which he professes, are really divine and true. The reason of this is obvious. It is, because he has no other foundation for his assurance,—provided only, that he be a consistent protestant,—save the dictates of his own private judgment. Rejecting all external authority, and the authority of all churches, as fallible, and human, he is, *himself*, the sole arbiter of his own faith; and his own reason is its only basis. Under such circumstances, (considering the weakness of the human

mind) all wise, and absolute assurance is impossible. For this reason, I conceive, that, on the side of the protestant, in the surrender of his present opinions, or in the renewal of his alliance with the catholic church, there should not appear to be much difficulty. In doing this, he would but adopt a measure, which his own principles,—and most certainly, his own prudence,—should seem to sanction. For, he would thus exchange the most trifling, for the greatest authority;—that is, his own *private* judgment, for the judgment of the *universal* church. He would thus, by the happy permutation, exchange incertitude for certitude; instability for steadiness; and doubt for wise conviction. His faith, instead of resting upon a reed, would repose securely upon a rock.

I have appeared, perhaps, to insinuate, that in the event of the proposed reconciliation, the catholic church would have no sacrifices to make. However, this is not correct. The catholic church would have sacrifices, and even various sacrifices, to make, upon the important occasion. She must give up,—and she would do this most cheerfully for the public good,—whatsoever her principles would permit her to surrender. Therefore, she would give up,—as she has repeatedly offered to give up,—a variety of points of *discipline*. She would suppress, or alter, certain practices, ceremonies, and customs, which are offensive to the prejudices of the protestant; and concede certain privileges, and regulations, which are agreeable to his partialities. A great multitude of the forms, and regulations, of the catholic church,—although extremely useful, if properly understood, and properly applied,—are, yet, changeable things; and even designed to vary with the variety, and change, of circumstances. So that the church, so far from being disposed to refuse the alteration of these, is, on the contrary, rather eager to make it, provided only that it can be made, with benefit to her children. She is willing, either to modify them, or to set them aside, whenever the general good requires it. On all these points, her charity, and her wisdom, would assent to every kind of sacrifice. And thus, by means of this simple arrangement, conducted in the spirit of mutual good-will,—each party surrendering, what, by their respective principles, they are empowered to dispose of,—the long-enduring evils of

schism might be done away; the unity of Christian faith be again re-established; piety, once more, re-flourish; and the harmony of social life be reanimated anew.

Wherefore, I now conclude. And I will do so, by repeating, for the last time, that same counsel, which I have given so often, in the series of these pages.—Let men labour to ensure their own security, by the assiduous endeavour to find out the real Christian sanctuary:—

—— antiquam exquirite matrem.

For this purpose, having carefully ascertained, what it is that forms the grounds of the divine establishment,—or what are the characters, which point it out,—let them but apply these alternately to the churches of the Reformation, and to the church of Rome. Such application, if made with impartiality, will present to most minds that same conclusion, which it so clearly presents to mine.

It is time, indeed,—so dark are the clouds of error and incredulity, which hang, every where, around them, it is time, that men should pause. It is time, that, pulling down that magic wall, which the hands of policy and passion have erected, they should lay aside their prejudices, and shut their ears to the voice of insult, and misrepresentation.—It is time,—dispersed, as they have long been, amidst rocks, and precipices, and deserts; the victims of illusion, and the dupes of false conductors,—it is time, that they should begin to seek in earnest for the pastures of real security. “They have wandered in the wilderness amidst places which had no water: and they have found no path to the habitable city.” (Ps.) Such as this is the general state of the protestant public. It is, therefore, time, that they should begin to seek diligently for that “path,” which conducts to “the habitable city.” It is not, indeed, difficult, I have shown, to find out this. It is marked by means of light. Let them but turn their eyes, and fix them attentively upon the parent church. This is “the habitable city.” This is the asylum of security and repose. It was the abode, once, of the saints; and the dwelling-place of sages, of heroes, and illustrious characters. It is a scene dear to piety, and pleasing to sensibility,—full of holy and amiable recollections,—the scene, where our own generous

and brave forefathers spun out their days in tranquillity and peace,—their faith, devoid of doubt; their confidence, unalloyed with fear. This alone is “the habitable city.” And exactly as, once, the dove, escaping from the ark, could find no spot to rest on, till it came back to its wonted shelter,—so neither will the wanderer from this happy “city” find any secure repose, until, measuring back his steps, he returns, once more, to its peaceful sanctuaries.

“Let us, therefore, pray,” (these are the words, with which the benevolent Fénelon concludes his *Treatise upon the Pastoral Ministry*,) “let us, therefore, pray with fervor for those flocks, dispersed, as they are, and wandering over all the mountains. Let us pray, that, at length, they may listen to the voice of their true pastors, and return once more to the guidance of their hands. Let us pray, too, for those, who, calling themselves pastors, are not such,—that, returning, with humility, to the state of simple sheep, they may enjoy, for succeeding ages, the glory,—although it be at the expense of their worldly interest,—of having re-established the ties of Christian unity,—an object, which ought to be not less dear to them, than it is to us.

“Do thou, therefore, O divine Shepherd, who hast laid down thy life for thy sheep,—do thou run after them; and bring them back upon thy shoulders: and may heaven, united with the earth, rejoice in the blessed event. May we all, henceforth, form,—as once we used to do,—but one great flock;—all animated by the same spirit; all actuated by one will. Far away, O Lord, from thy church,—far away, that spirit of proud, and furious Reformation, which has burst asunder the bands of Christian unity:—and let, on the contrary, the Reformation, which we ask for, be founded upon a real reunion. Let, too, thy children, all, labour, with united industry, in the spirit of calm tranquillity, and in the humble confidence of thy mercies, to reform themselves; in order that thy church may, once again, re-flourish, and that we may see it, ere long, exulting in the beauty of its ancient days.”

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
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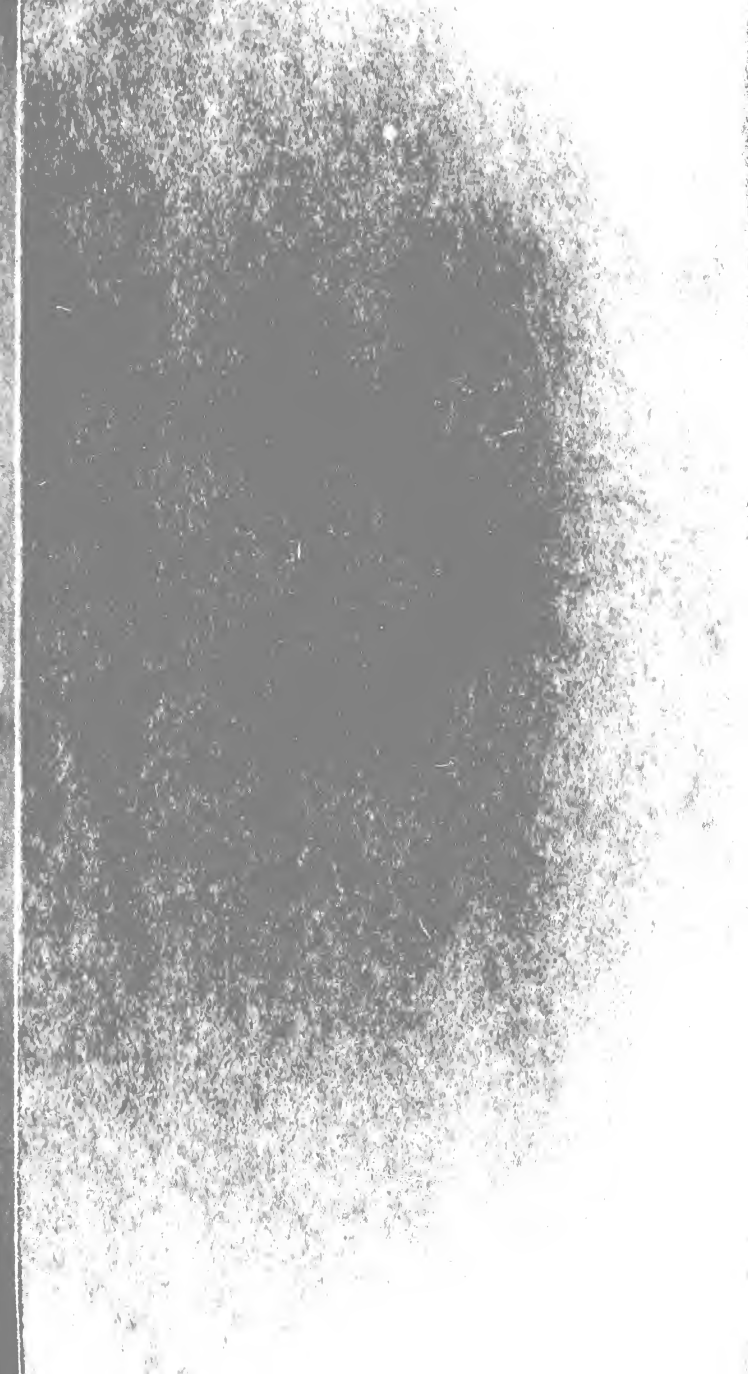
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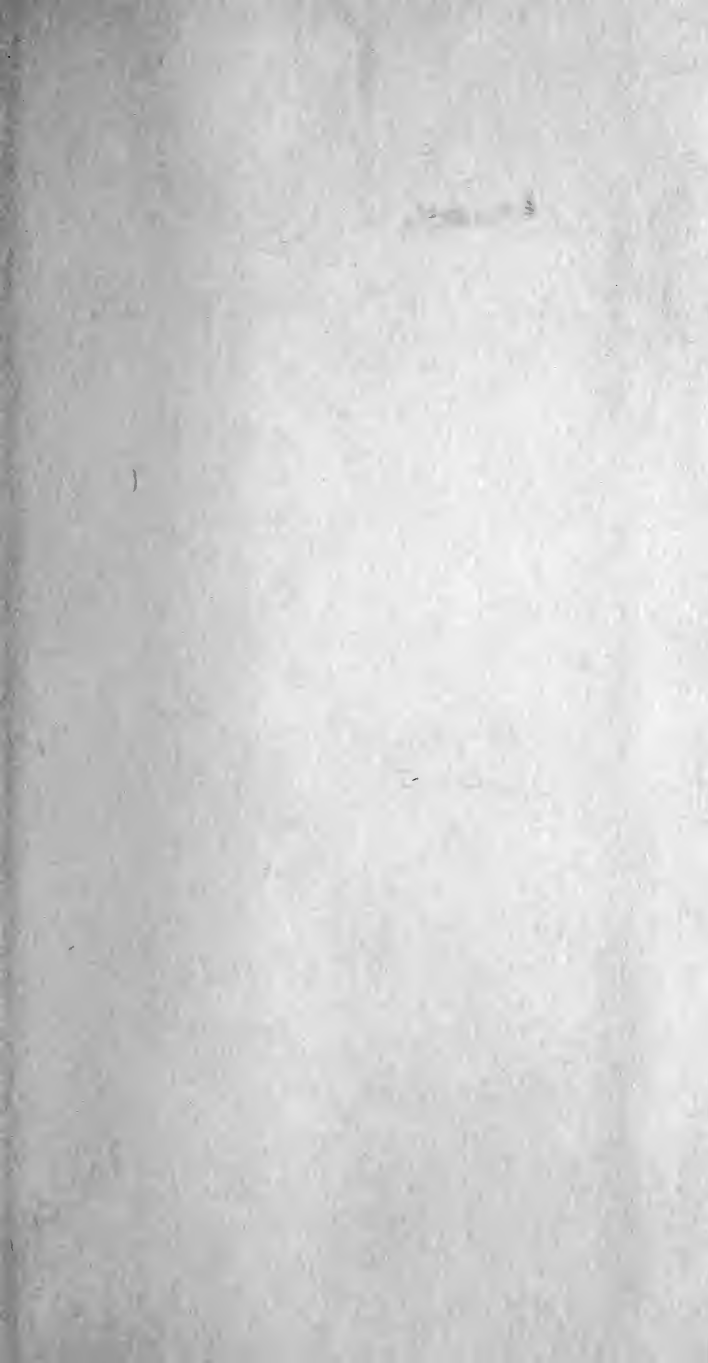
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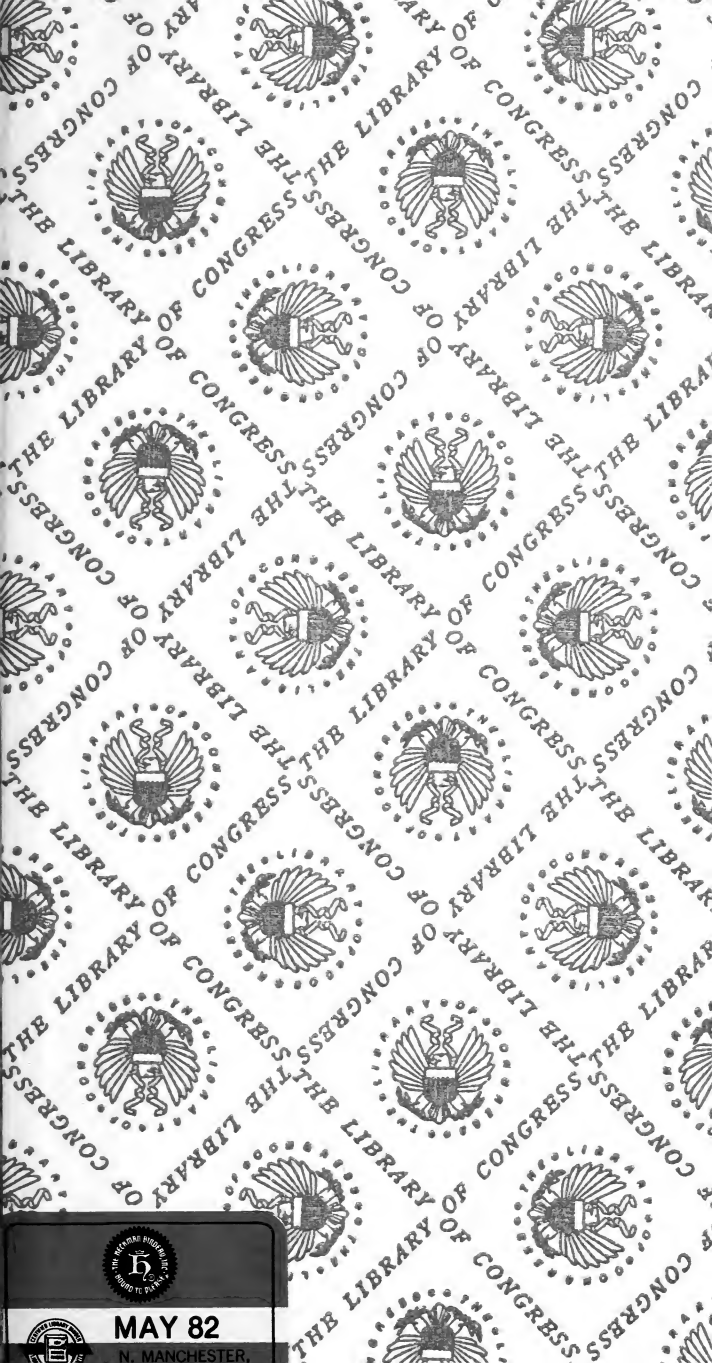




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