

16-3

LIBRARY

OF THE

Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

BR 304 .C42 v.1

Claude, Jean, 1619-1687.

A defense of the Reformation

Journal on the Bible .. "



20, 1900

19

1900

1900

1900

1900

1900

1900

1900

1900

1900

1900



# A DEFENCE OF THE REFORMATION,

IN ANSWER TO A BOOK ENTITLED

*Just Prejudices against the Calvinists :*

WRITTEN IN FRENCH BY THE REVEREND AND LEARNED

**MONSIEUR CLAUDE,**

Minister of the Reformed Church at Charenton;

AND

*Faithfully translated into English,*

By *T. B.—M. A.*



TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

**A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE,**

INCLUDING

*SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE SPIRIT OF POPERY.*

ALSO APPROPRIATE INDEXES.



By **JOHN TOWNSEND.**

---

---

“The Reformation is an event to which the attention of Protestants cannot be too frequently called. It was like the descent of the ark upon Mount Ararat, the moment of deliverance to the family of God. It was the period at which the proper standard of Religion was once more adjusted; and, therefore, to which all subsequent periods in the history of the Church may be referred, and by which our progress or decay may in some measure be estimated.”

---

---

VOL. I.

---

---

LONDON :

*Printed at the Manufactory for the Employment of the Deaf and Dumb,  
Fort Place, Bermondsey. J. POWELL, Superintendent.*

AND SOLD BY HATCHARD, PICCADILLY; SEELEY, FLEET STREET; WILLIAMS,  
STATIONERS' COURT; ARCH, CORNHILL; CONDER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-  
YARD; AND BUTTON, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

---

1815.





TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

**THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.**

---

---

**MEN** of a cynical cast of mind may exclaim now, as some did of old, "The former days were better than these;" but every Briton who has duly appreciated the character of Christianity, and the inestimable benefits which it confers, must esteem it a felicity to live in the present eventful period: for it is indeed a period of unusual liberality, benevolence, and zeal. What age, what country beside our own, has ever witnessed such large and such respectable bodies of professing Christians, of various denominations, voluntarily laying aside their narrow prejudices and party zeal, and cordially uniting in endeavours to ameliorate the miseries of suffering humanity, and to the utmost of their ability promote the substantial and permanent interests of their fellow-men?

Among the numerous and the newest objects of Christian beneficence, which in our days have excited the most lively interest, and laid hold on the very hearts of the Bri-

tish Public, and which have been pursued with an honourable solicitude and no small portion of success, are these two:—the freedom and civilization of the long-oppressed and much-injured children of Africa; and the mental improvement and religious instruction of the unfortunate deaf and dumb. It is nothing but common justice in all who are intimately conversant with the affairs of these two important Institutions to confess, that to the friendly protection—the constant liberality—and the steady, active, and persevering co-operation of your Royal Highness, they are deeply indebted for the great and growing prosperity to which they have so rapidly attained.

Having had the honour and felicity of frequently meeting your Royal Highness in these walks of humanity and mercy, I have not only had a favourable opportunity of forming a correct and gratifying opinion both of your high character and benevolent disposition; but that opinion has gradually ripened into the most unfeigned respect and esteem, of which I am happy to give your Royal Highness the most unequivocal assurance, through the medium of this Dedication.

The moment it was suggested to me by a friend, that I ought to procure a dignified patron for CLAUDE'S DEFENCE OF THE REFOR-

INATION, I not only immediately and naturally turned my eyes towards your Royal Highness, but my mind instantly occupied itself with the pleasing recollection, that the illustrious Family, of which you are an honourable branch, is not only one of the most ancient Protestant Families in Europe, but also that it has for a long succession of years been firmly attached to Protestant principles; and, consequently, has been identified in the closest manner with the interests and prosperity of the Reformation.

When pretenders to the British crown aimed to drive the reigning princes from the throne, that throne to which they had been most deliberately and most solemnly advanced by the cordial consent and united approbation of a free and powerful people:—when the bigoted and infatuated emissaries of France and Rome combined their policy and strength, and, flushed with the hope of success, insulted our shores with hostile and sanguinary legions:—with what affection and loyalty—with what promptitude and zeal—with what united energy—in those seasons of distress and alarm, did Protestants, of all descriptions and of every religious opinion, arm themselves at their own expense, and rally round the British standard. Engaged in such a cause, armed with such a spirit of loyalty, trusting in the God of heaven

for success, and determined to conquer or perish in the attempt, they went forth, and courageously and successfully repelled the daring attack, hurling confusion and destruction upon the authors and abettors of those infamous attempts.

This was no more than might have been expected from loyal Britons, whose hearts were completely imbued with the ardent love of civil and religious liberty, and who consequently esteemed nothing too dear to sacrifice in their defence. They justly estimated the immense stake which they themselves had in these reiterated conflicts, persuaded that the dethronement of the Princes of your Royal Highness's House must inevitably be followed by the immediate and complete overthrow of all those inestimable advantages which they had derived from the Reformation,—the glorious revolution under WILLIAM III.,—and the Protestant succession. These blessings, under the favour of Divine Providence, had been procured through the medium of long-continued sufferings, and strenuous and persevering conflicts with religious intolerance and political despotism; and the recollection of these endeared them to every bosom truly British: and at the present moment, I am satisfied that it will not be forgotten by your Royal High-

ness, or by the other Princes of your Family, that as the Reformation itself, and the zeal of English Protestants in its defence, led ultimately to the Hanoverian succession,—so it is the genuine, the unbending, and the steady principles of our Protestant communities, and their unshaken attachment to the Reformation, which still forms the most natural, the most invulnerable, and the only legitimate rampart round the throne, the constitution, the Bibles, and the altars of our beloved country.

If these sentiments are just, the more clearly English Protestants discern the importance and justice of the Reformation, and the more strongly they are attached to it, so much the better: and if to promote this beneficial object any one book is better calculated than another, unquestionably that book is CLAUDE'S DEFENCE, which having now obtained your Royal Highness's patronage, will, I doubt not, have a more extensive circulation and a more attentive perusal than at any former period.

The frank and cheerful manner in which your Royal Highness granted me the honour of dedicating this new Edition of CLAUDE'S justly-celebrated Defence to your Royal Highness, and also of announcing that privilege to the British Public in my Prospectus, demands, and has, my most grateful acknowledgment.

That your Royal Highness may continue, through a long and happy life, an ornament to your family, and a friend to the cause of humanity and religion by your liberality and zeal, and that a long list of Protestant successors, ardently attached to the doctrines and principles of the glorious Reformation, may successively and worthily sway the British sceptre over a free and loyal people, is the devout and ardent prayer of

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Much obliged

And most obedient humble Servant,

JOHN TOWNSEND.

*Jamaica Row, Bermondsey,  
March, 1815.*

# A SKETCH

OF THE

## LIFE OF THE REV. JOHN CLAUDE,

INCLUDING

*Some Observations on the Spirit of Popery.*

---

THE lives of eminent men, if written with impartiality, afford both amusement and instruction, and are generally sought after and read with avidity by persons of every description. To be really beneficial, the biographer should not only recite the prominent and interesting events in the life which is the subject of record, but, as far as possible, develop the principles and motives out of which the actions sprang, also, ascertain the results which they have produced; and thus furnish the reader with those experimental and practical lessons, which will be of essential use in all the future circumstances of human life.

Men of education and taste, as well as the multitude at large, entertain divers opinions, and have their partialities, with respect to articles of biography. Some are only captivated with accounts of the warrior and the hero, and are never tired with gazing at the ex-

plots, and tracing the triumphant progress, of those who have traversed the martial field: others are gratified by viewing the characters and inspecting the labours of men of science, who by lessons of useful instruction have diffused knowledge—promoted industrious and social habits—extended civilization and domestic happiness—and procured to themselves the honourable title of *the benefactors of mankind*: a third class read with equal admiration the lives of celebrated politicians, the thunder of whose eloquence has astonished and electrified crowded and applauding senates, while the wisdom and energy of their measures have immortalized them as the saviours of their country.

Entertaining and interesting as these several species of biography may be to readers in general, one class still remains to be mentioned, which, in the estimation of an enlightened and zealous Christian, excels them all. He delights to pore over the pages on which are drawn the intellectual and moral portraits of those wise, disinterested, and holy men, who, duly appreciating the value of civil and religious liberty, and although surrounded on every side by darkness, superstition, and intolerance, have discovered an ardent attachment to Protestant principles, openly and successfully pleaded for them; and have also both cheerfully and patiently endured a great fight of affliction on their behalf. These truly honourable men might say to us, "*Other men have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours.*" To those who venerate such characters, and who justly estimate their worth, the Editor of this new edition of Claude's Defence of the Reformation



encourages a hope, that this Sketch of the Life of its Author will yield satisfaction and instruction.

The intolerant spirit and the cruel persecutions of the Romish Church has for many ages filled the world with lamentation and horror; and the history of almost every age and every country is stained and disfigured with the black and hideous catalogue of her infamous crimes: the bigoted and interested advocates of her communion, and the vindictive ministers of her unrighteous vengeance, have impoverished, imprisoned, and murdered thousands upon thousands, even of their own countrymen, to force the remainder to bow down to the idol of their prejudice, and pronounce that unscriptural and barbarous *shibboleth*, which they have impiously set up as the only way to life eternal. Some may think I speak too strongly; let then their own language, and their own actions, decide what kind of spirit the enemies of the Reformation exhibited in the ages which preceded Claude; his own life and experience will shew what it was in his time.\*

\* If the fact were not supported by the strongest proof, would it be credited, that any man, professing the mild and holy religion of the compassionate Jesus, could breathe such a spirit,—or dare, in the presence of God and the magistracy of his country, to utter such language as is contained in the following paragraph:—“This *humble and devout orator for the clergy*, as he styles himself, was pleased to say, ‘This may it please your majesty, is what your clergy of France proposes with all simplicity, obedience, humility, and correction, with regard to the honour and service of God in your kingdom, that all the inhabitants of the kingdom shall be obliged to turn Roman Catholics; that the non-Christians shall not be admitted into the conversation and society of Christian subjects; and that henceforward all heretics shall be prohibited to trade in any merchandise, whether books or other

It is indeed matter of great surprise, as well as of unfeigned gratitude to God, that he should have so overruled the enmity and persecutions of the church's adversaries, as to make them instrumental of bringing into active and beneficial application, the mental capacity, the good sense, the brilliant talents, and the steady and energetic principles, of so many wise and good men, as were found advocating the cause of truth and righteousness in different countries; among whom Claude shone with such steady and increasing lustre, that it might indeed be truly said of him, "He was a burning and a shining light."

The Christian minister, whose mind is imbued with the love of God and the love of his neighbour, will at all times fill his post and discharge the duties of his station with fidelity and firmness, and by his well-timed instructions and powerful example diffuse moral

goods. Our request is just, reasonable, holy, and catholic, and grounded on the express command of God, who enjoins your majesty to grant it to us. Heretics among Christians are reputed as Gentiles; and God says, never contract a friendship with them,—never associate or marry among them,—suffer them not to inhabit the earth,—have not the least compassion for them,—beat them and kill them. The whole is amply and circumstantially discussed in the Memorial of the Clergy, to which we expect an answer." This harangue, so full of bitterness and cruelty, was addressed, in the name of the clergy, to the king and the queen mother, in the presence of the states of Orleans; and justly does Mr. Robinson add, "The humane hearts of laymen revolt at the open avowal of such cruelty." *Robinson's Life of Claude*, p. 5, 6. I could subjoin here a strong proof of the intolerant spirit of the Catholic clergy in France, and of their *great desire of renewing the ancient persecutions against the Protestants* even in the reign of Louis XVI. but it would extend this note too much.

and spiritual blessings all around him: his character, however, is most advantageously developed, and his value best ascertained, when the church is surrounded with dark clouds,—when the pitiless storm rages with fury,—when all is danger, confusion, and distress; then he rises out of obscurity, places himself in the foremost point of difficulty and danger, and by his counsel and energy encourages the hearts, and strengthens the hands, of the true friends of religion; while at the same time he confounds the most artful, and appals the most confident and furious enemies. Such a man was John Claude, the subject of this memoir.

In any period of the church, such a champion must have held an honourable station, and have obtained the unanimous and grateful suffrages of his fellow Christians, for his acceptable and useful labours in behalf of our common Christianity. But it pleased the great Head of the church, that he should exist at such a time, and be placed in such a sphere of action, as should render his character, his talents, his influence, and his zeal, not only more conspicuous, but abundantly more subservient to the great interests of the Protestant cause than they could possibly have been in any other age, in any other place, or under any other circumstances.

The parentage of some eminent men has been so obscure and uncertain that it could not be traced, while that of others has been so disreputable, as to render it desirable to bury it in perpetual oblivion. The parentage of John Claude resembled neither of these, nor did he descend from the rich or the great, but from the wise and the good,—this is the most enviable and the most honourable line of ancestry, for the holy

Scriptures have said, that "the generation of the upright shall be blessed."

The father of our Author was the Rev. Francis Claude, the excellent and highly respected minister of the Reformed Church at Montbazillac, in the Lower Guienne. How honourably and usefully he filled that station, and how ably he discharged his ministerial duties, is fully attested; he knew full well how to estimate the advantages of sound learning and of pure and undefiled religion, being himself an expert scholar, a genuine Christian, and a well-instructed scribe in the things of God.

It might naturally be expected, that such a father would feel an anxious solicitude to communicate these substantial treasures to his son—to such a son as John Claude. So promising were the mental powers and the amiable disposition of the child, and so early and deeply was his mind imbued with the principles and the power of experimental and practical religion, that they afforded solid ground for hope, that the labour and expense bestowed upon his education would be amply compensated, as well by the proficiency which he would make in divine and human knowledge as by the beneficial use to which he would ultimately apply them.

Animated by these encouraging considerations, his father took him under his own tuition, and conducted him through the different branches of classical learning; the tutor not only discharged his duty with ardour and delight, but the pupil also diligently applied himself to his studies; and being fully prepared for the university, he was sent to Montauban, and there went through a regular course of philosophy and divinity.

One of his biographers says, in this situation, "The fire of his imagination, the acuteness of his judgment, the sincere piety of his life, and particularly the modesty and affability of his manners, obtained him as many friends as tutors: in him, from his earliest years, were united the gravity of a divine and the easy politeness of a courtier."\*

The period was now arrived, when the age and proficiency of Claude fully justified his being called to and set apart for the work of the Christian ministry; to this the good old father had directed his fond and sanguine expectation, and as the bias of the son was in exact harmony with that of the father, there was nothing essential to obstruct its accomplishment. It is, however, extremely probable, that if he had been left fully to indulge his own inclination, he would not have entered upon the various and important duties of the Christian ministry until he had visited other universities, with a view to an increase of his knowledge and experience. But he was too good a Christian, and too dutiful a child, to gratify his own desire (although it was just and reasonable) in opposition to the more ardent recommendation of such a father. The latter was now an old man, and hastening fast to the house appointed for all living. It was therefore natural for him to be desirous of seeing his son fixed in some station of honourable labour and usefulness: he was soon gratified; for the Synod of Upper Languedoc examined and approved his son, and appointed the father to ordain him to the church

\* Robinson's Life, page 2.

at La Treyne, soon after which he finished his mortal course in the spirit and hope of good old Simeon, and in the 74th year of his age. If this faithful servant of our Lord did not live to witness the high reputation and the eminent usefulness to which his son attained among the Reformed Churches of France, neither had he the mortification to witness their affliction, their degradation, and their ruin; "he was taken from the evil to come."

With great pleasure we proceed to contemplate Claude as the luminous and impressive preacher of the Gospel, as the faithful and diligent pastor. In all places where he exercised his public ministry, the number, the character, and the devout attention of his auditories, demonstrated that his ministerial services were highly acceptable to every class of society, not excepting even the great of the earth, some of whom had sufficient knowledge and piety to render them competent judges. It was an appropriate and substantial panegyric which was passed upon his ministry by a gentleman, who, after hearing him, was asked how he liked the preacher? he replied, "Every voice will be for him but his own." It was not therefore "*excellency of speech,*" not "*the enticing words of man's wisdom,*" which constituted the ground of attraction, but that his preaching was in "*demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*"

That Claude should have attracted the higher orders of society to hear him is the more remarkable, because, though his ministerial exercises were extremely judicious and pleasing, yet they were also very evangelical,

experimental, and practical, and very generally adapted to plain and serious congregations, to whom this style of preaching will always prove more acceptable and more beneficial than that which is either more eloquent and brilliant, or that which is more learned and critical.

The true ground of Claude's eminence as a minister among the Protestants was this: he discharged the duties of his office in a manner and with a spirit which made it evident he was not a time-serving teacher—not one that sought his own honour or interest, but a genuine pastor, who felt his responsibility to Jesus Christ, and studied those impressive charges given to pastors and teachers in the 3rd and 33rd chapters of Ezekiel's Prophecies, by Jesus Christ to his disciples, Matt. 10, and by the great apostle of the Gentiles to Timothy and Titus; he made "*full proof of his ministry*," he laboured "*in season and out of season*," he discharged most punctually the duties of a watchman on the walls of our Protestant Zion. As a spiritual shepherd he watched well over the flock, nor did he suffer any "ravening wolves," although habited in "sheep's clothing," either to enter the fold or hover round its precincts without giving the alarm. In his hand the trumpet of the Gospel gave a loud and a certain sound: and he might justly have applied to himself that appropriate declaration of the Apostle Paul, in which, characterizing his own ministry, he said, "I am set for the defence of the Gospel." Indeed, in many things Claude resembled that great servant of Jesus Christ, especially in his resolute and persevering opposition to superstition and idolatry, and in the persecutions and reproaches

which he had to endure from bigoted and intolerant priests.\*

At La Treyne, the first place in which Claude exer-

\* I am aware that the Roman Catholics dispute the propriety and the justice of our reproaching their religion with being an idolatrous one; a persuasion that it is so, has, however, always formed one great argument for the separation of Protestants from its communion; and I do think that Roman Catholics are not justified in the denial, while their church continues the invocation of saints, the adoration of the host, the worshipping of images, yea even of relics; the spirit and genius of Paganism is incorporated and imbodyed in all these parts of Popery. The following paragraph, by an anonymous writer, places this in a very strong and convincing light:—

“It may deserve investigation, how far the subtle spirit of ancient idolatry still survives in other forms and institutions; that species of idolatry we mean, which is less gross indeed than the dark rites of Baal or of Osiris, but not less impious; which consists in enthroning the pride of man on the footstool of his Maker, and transforming the temple of the material world into a theatre for the celebration of the pomp and glory of its earthly inhabitant. How far the love of the arts has a tendency to cherish this dangerous propensity, as connected with an enthusiastic admiration of the productions of heathen genius, and an implicit adoption of them as models of imitation, demands a fuller consideration than can here be given to the subject. Certainly, there is nothing in the pleasures of taste necessarily opposed to the dictates of Christianity; but they may be made the medium of transmitting an influence very hostile to its spiritual nature, and to the genius of the Gospel, as a system of humility, by flattering the pride and self-sufficiency of man. This was one of the most powerful operating causes of the Romish corruption of Christianity; by this means so large a portion of Paganism was taken up and absorbed in its institutions; and while the fears of the multitude were quieted by penances and commutations, as delusive as the expiatory rites of heathen temples, and their prayers directed to mediators, equally unreal and powerless as the gods of the Pantheon, their imaginations were dazzled and intralled by the pomp of art and the vision of earthly grandeur.” *Eclectic Review*.



ceased his ministry, he continued but one year; and although his sphere of labour was contracted, yet he was highly esteemed for his work's sake: his services were both acceptable and useful, and the congregation regretted his removal; but as the Synod had appointed him to succeed Mr. Martel in the church of St. Afrique in Rovergue, he acquiesced in their decision. "Here he devoted much of his time to study, (for the church was not large,) and his profiting appeared to all: it was soon observed that he preached with great facility; his genius quickly collected materials, his judgment presently assorted and arranged them; his language was fluent, easy, just, and manly; and his auditors declared, they could not distinguish, in hearing him, what he spoke extempore from what he had written."\* "Eight years," says the same writer, "Mr. Claude served the church of St. Afrique greatly esteemed by his people, known and sought after by other churches, and very much honoured by the Synod of Upper Languedoc, at which he was annually present."

From St. Afrique he removed to Nismes; of this situation the writer I have just cited gives the following account: "The service of this church was very great: preaching every day, visiting a great number of sick people, attending consistories, and church business, required much labour; but Mr. Claude loved this kind of employment, and so discharged his office as to give the highest satisfaction to his flock. He found time, moreover, to give divinity-lectures to a great number of students, who were admitted to make probationary

\* Robinson's Life of Claude, page 2.

sermons; and from this private school proceeded disciples of great merit, who accredited the master from whom they received their instructions.”\*

While he was thus proceeding in his delightful work as a pastor and as a tutor at Nismes, he was chosen moderator of the Synod of the Lower Languedoc: the situation was at that time a very difficult one, and to fill it well required a person of pre-eminent qualifications;—such a man was John Claude. His comprehensive knowledge and experience, his discernment and penetration, his remarkable equanimity of temper, together with the watchfulness and jealousy which he uniformly exercised over the safety and prosperity of the Protestant Churches, admirably fitted him for this honourable and arduous post; while his presence, influence, and counsel, animated the zeal and confidence, and became the bond of union and strength to the pastors and churches of this district, and evidently tended to increase their numbers as well as their prosperity. Their enemies were not idle spectators of what was passing; they saw the wisdom and the energy of the measures pursued, and naturally reasoned with themselves, that if the Protestants were not counteracted either by measures of policy or open force, their cause would gain ground—their principles spread, if they did not finally triumph: with their usual ability, therefore, they plotted against them in the dark, and too successfully in many cases carried their point. The next article in Claude’s Life will illustrate and prove this.

\* Robinson’s Life, page 4.

In the progress of the Reformation, there were some moments when the most determined enemies of Claude and of the Protestants either felt, or at least affected to feel, great concern at the mischiefs which resulted from the divided and hostile state of the two great bodies of professing Christians: while they blamed the Protestants for their tenacious and obstinate adherence to their separation, yet they professed to commiserate with them in the hardships and sufferings in which it involved them; and affecting to rise above the intolerant spirit of their own religion, they intimated a desire that this state of calamitous warfare might be altogether removed, and that harmony and good-will might be restored—that Protestants and Catholics, again becoming one great community, might direct their mutual operations to the welfare of their common country. If those who breathed this gentle spirit, and uttered such soft and alluring sentiments, were indeed the sincere and well-meaning persons they appeared to be, yet they were altogether inattentive to the nature of the question; they either did not, or they would not, see that the evil, and all the complicated mischiefs which it produced, were not to be attributed either to the opinions or to the obstinacy of the Reformed, but to the intolerant spirit and the persecuting measures of the ruling party. The only legitimate and effectual measure which could reach the extremity of the case, was to grant full liberty of conscience in matters of religion; but, unfortunately for the Church and the world, this is a measure to which the whole genius of Popery has ever been opposed, and to which the sovereign pontiff and his coadjutors never will submit while they possess

power to prevent it. That this is the easiest and the most advantageous method of suppressing discord and civil war, and uniting persons of discordant opinions in one great national compact, has been clearly proved in argument, and demonstrated by experience. The governments which act upon this broad and healing principle, adopt the soundest policy, secure a prompt, a universal, and a permanent attachment to themselves, a cordial obedience to magistrates and to the laws, and diffuse peace and satisfaction through the whole country.\*

Instead of recommending and adopting this easy and expeditious mode of adjusting the great question, either in France or any other country, where the spirit of Popery predominated, powerful princes and learned prelates busied and amused themselves with schemes of comprehension and union: they did not perceive that the thing was impracticable, unless the heads of the Romish communion were prepared to give up those unscriptural and odious things which constituted the basis of the separation which the Reformed had already made, and of the propriety and justice of which they were so deeply convinced, that the most alluring promises would not seduce, nor the most

\* The tendency and beneficial influence of this principle was strenuously contended for by the Chancellor L'Hopital, and to a certain degree acted upon in his time. If the opinions of this great man had been listened to, and his conciliatory principles uniformly acted upon and established, the honour and the strength of France had not been so shamefully sported with and diminished by the horrid persecutions which spread confiscation, banishment, and murder, from one extremity of the kingdom to another.

cruel persecutions drive, them from their adherence to it. Their opposers did not understand the true ground of action among Protestants; if it had been humour, or ease and interest, or mere matter of opinion, they might have yielded to a compromise: but they were impelled by what is far beyond all these; they were governed by the power of conscience; the light had broken in upon them; they saw, by the aid of the Scriptures, that they had wandered from “the narrow way which leadeth to life”; they had no alternative—they were obliged to separate; they were unable any longer to endure the superstition, the impurity, and the idolatry, of the Church of Rome; all hope of reform from either Popes or Councils had vanished; and those who searched the Scriptures heard them distinctly say, “Come out of her, my people, that ye partake not of her sins.”\* They believed that the salvation of their

\* One of the strong grounds of the separation of our fathers from the Romish Church was the profaneness of some of its opinions and services; among which they included the ceremony called the “adoration of the Popes,” and concerning which even a Roman Catholic thus writes: “Now in this piece of pageantry, I object not to the word *adoration*; no one who knows the Latin, or reflects upon the sense which it bears on this and on a thousand other occasions, will cavil at it, though he may wish it otherwise applied: nor do I find fault with the throne; he who is at the same time both pontiff and prince, has, from time and custom, perhaps a double title to such a distinction. But why should the altar be made his footstool?—the altar!—the *beauty of holiness*, the throne of the *victim Lamb*, the *mercy-seat* of the temple of Christianity! Why should the altar be converted into the footstool of a mortal?” *Eustace’s Classical Tour through Italy*, vol. ii. p. 663. Notwithstanding the mild and gentle rebuke which this elegant writer gives his superiors in this passage, he should be told,

souls depended on their obedience, and of course that their worldly interest, their social comforts, yea even life itself, ought to be sacrificed rather than renounce their allegiance to God. Against such views and such impressions of mind it was in vain to argue, and it was equally futile to attempt their subversion by artifice, or their subjugation by force.

It is a little remarkable, that one of the most learned and grave divines, and one of the most celebrated writers on the side of the Church of Rome, and who was employed both by the Emperor Ferdinand and the Emperor Maximilian to endeavour to heal and compromise the differences between Rome and the Reformed, has declared it as his opinion, that the fault of the distractions which then raged in the church, lay with "the ecclesiastical government; and that there could be no peace, unless they would set themselves to reform manifest abuses."\* Indeed the more enlightened and moderate part of the Catholic body agreed very generally with the above writer, that some reformation was necessary; and even in France, long before

that in the estimation of the Protestants it is not only a *sin*, but it is one of the *crying sins* of Popery, and a sin of which they thought they were partakers while they continued in the church which allowed it. The whole ceremony (to leave the import of the word out of the question) breathes the spirit of profaneness; it is nothing less than imbodying profaneness itself with the character and office of him who professes to be the vicegerent of the meek and lowly Saviour.

\* Cassander. See Claude's *Epistle Dedicatory*, prefixed to this work. That good man and excellent writer, Bishop Hall, has also put the whole paragraph of Cassander at the head of his treatise, entitled, *No Peace with Rome*.

Claude's time, very specious professions were made as to the desirableness of a re-union, and some offers of reformation of an insignificant kind were made upon high authority.

One of the last of these specious and fruitless efforts was made while M. Claude was minister at Nismes. In the Synod of the Lower Languedoc there was a man whom the court had won over, and he was employed to endeavour to effect a re-union of the Reformed with the Catholics: "In this state of affairs, while coalition was all the cry, the disinterested Claude, as wise a politician as any of them all, was chosen moderator of the Synod of the Lower Languedoc: he was a man eminently qualified to preside in such assemblies; he knew the world, as able physicians know poisons; the insidious artifices of bad men were transparent before the penetrating eye of his judgment, and he knew how to counteract them."\* He not only reckoned the thing impracticable, but he seems to have considered the attempt as a measure of policy, tending to seduce, divide, and weaken the Protestants; by his vigilance and talents he frustrated the design of the enemy, and the ministers and churches of that district remained steady in their attachment to their principles, and zealous for the preservation and prosperity of the Protestant Churches.

Here again the spirit of Popery displayed itself: Claude's enemies determined to revenge the part he had taken in the affair, and succeeded in effecting a masterly stroke against the interest and prosperity of the

\* Robinson's Life of Claude, p. 8.

Reformed Churches in that province, by procuring a decree of council prohibiting M. Claude from exercising his ministry in any part thereof. Like a disciple of Him who "learned obedience by the things which he suffered," he bowed to the will of God, and parting with his beloved flock he hastened to Paris.

For some months he laboured to get the unjust and cruel decree reversed, that he might return to his delightful and useful labours among a people who not only regretted but deeply lamented their loss in his removal: but every effort was in vain; and "he was given to understand, that ministers not agreeable to the governors of the provinces must be removed."\* Thus did the vindictive spirit of Popery excite the enemies of the Reformed Churches to torment and hunt from one station to another their most useful and eminent ministers, no doubt with a view to harass and weary them out: but their steady patience and invincible courage were not to be subdued by afflictions or persecutions; they followed the direction of their Divine Master, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another."

In the New Testament, Christian ministers are compared to stars; and had Claude been permitted to continue in any one station during the whole course of his ministry, such was the luminous state of his mind and the lustre of his character, that he would have shone as a fixed star of the first magnitude, and have diffused a heavenly light in every direction: but it was ordered otherwise by Divine Providence, and he rather

\* Robinson's Life of Claude, p. 9.



resembled one of the planets, which, though they shine by reflection and are in constant motion, are equally useful, and also, as well fulfil the good pleasure of their Creator, and illustrate his glory and power.

His frequent change of situation was not the result of any imprudence or fickleness of temper, either in himself or in the truly respectable congregations in which he laboured; but it evidently arose out of a combination of circumstances, which could not be foreseen or counteracted.

His ardent zeal for the Protestant cause, more than any thing else, contributed to these removals; and although they were extremely painful to himself and the flocks from which he was successively driven, either by the artful and secret intrigues or the open violence of his inveterate enemies, yet they generally subserved the merciful plans of Divine Providence and the interests of the Protestant Churches; inasmuch as they not only made him better known and more highly respected, but also enabled him more effectually to serve the great cause which lay nearest his heart, by successfully thwarting the plans and defeating the persecuting measures of his own enemies, and those of the Protestant faith. Justly, indeed, does the volume of inspiration say of Jehovah, "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty: so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong."

During Monsieur Claude's residence at Paris, he lost no time; but, intent on promoting his Master's glory and the good of the Church, wrote a little piece which laid the foundation of the most spirited controversy

which France ever witnessed between the Catholics and the Protestants. "Several persons of the first quality and of exemplary piety informed him, that Marshal Turenne, who had resolved to quit the reformed religion, pretended to do so on conviction that the doctrine of transubstantiation had always been held by professing Christians, into which persuasion he had been led by a book, written either by Dr. Arnaud or Dr. Nicolle, entitled, *The Perpetuity of the Faith*. Had M. Claude acted upon his own principles, he would have declined all attempts to fix a man of the marshal's character. He knew mankind too well to waste his theological treasure on men susceptible of the stronger impressions of character, fortune, and worldly glory. However, he yielded to the solicitations of his noble friends, and published a complete answer to *The Perpetuity* in 30 anonymous pages. He traced the sophister through all his doublings, maintained the arguments brought by Blondell and Aubertine, and vigorously pursued the fox till he seemed to expire on the spot. The Jansenists were ready to go mad, so were all the Parisian Catholics; for could they have found out the author, their friends the Jesuits would soon have prevailed with *the head of their party*\* to have answered his arguments." The spirit of Popery is as inimical to free discussion in writing as it is to the freedom of public preaching; and those men who hunted Claude from pulpit to pulpit, would have tied

\* Alluding to a conversation which Louis the Fourteenth had with the Duke of Orleans, in which he acknowledged himself to be at the head of a party. *Robinson's Life of Claude*, p. 10

up his hand from writing if it had been practicable; it was not the want of will, but of power: almost every thing was done anonymously and by stealth; with the full conviction that some species of persecution would follow detection.

Our Author finding it impossible to succeed in the object of his visit to Paris, left it, and went to Montauban.\* This being the place in which he finished his education for the work of the Christian ministry, possessed charms which few other places could furnish. Having preached in the church with great acceptance, and being invited by its members to labour among them, he consented, and continued to discharge the pastoral duties for four years with great satisfaction to himself, and evident usefulness to his spiritual charge; being also greatly respected and beloved by his colleagues. There is every reason to think, that the hope and expectation of Claude was, that he had at last found a resting-place, and that on the same spot where the sun of his ministerial talent first dawned and opened its pristine rays, there it would go down and set with spiritual glory. This, however, was not the sphere in which Claude was to finish his honourable course of pastoral labour: he was to be removed to,

\* The Protestant College at Montauban has within these few years been revived; we sincerely hope that it will even rival all the glory of the ancient institution, which gave a Claude to the Reformed Church of France. May the persecuting spirit of Popery never be permitted to prevail against it, but may it send forth many wise, holy, and laborious ministers faithfully to preach the Gospel of Christ. At the installation of the professors, Nov. 10, 1810, M De Doyen called the service of that day "the triumph of justice over prejudice, and of liberty of conscience over the slavery of the mind;" it was, he said, "raising a second temple to science and religion."

and permanently fixed in, a station where the lustre of his character and talents was to be more fully reflected, and where the purity of his principles and the strength of his zeal for the glorious cause were to be more fully tried and more extensively exemplified; for to him the post of greatest responsibility and danger was truly the post of honour. Before we attend the disinterested champion of truth to a new situation, we will examine the ground of his removal from the old one; and here again we shall see the evil genius of Popery exhibiting one of its most uniform and worst features.

“ Marshal Turenne pretended at first to be satisfied with M. Claude's *Answer to The Perpetuity*; but about three years after, his doubts were all revived, yea strengthened, by reading an answer to it, published by one of his old friends, the author of *The Perpetuity*. Claude was not so silly as to imagine that such men as the marshal troubled themselves with comparing quotations from Greek and Latin fathers: the price of the next blue ribbon was a question of more consequence to them. However, as the Papists filled all France with shouts of victory obtained by this book, and as the Protestant interest was affected by this popular clamour, M. Claude set about answering this paltry piece. The episcopal party understood, that some reformed minister was preparing an answer; they endeavoured to find out whence this news came, and who he was that durst tarnish the glory of those who were in vogue for the most learned and polite writers of France. At length it was supposed the hardy animal lived at Montauban, and the old setter, the bishop, was employed to find him out. This prelate affected great

esteem for M. Claude, and endeavoured by familiar interviews to diminish the distance that seemed to be between the episcopal crozier and the pastoral staff. He wanted to know, whether M. Claude intended to answer Dr. Arnaud, and he wished to be indulged with a sight of the copy, if, as report said, there was such a thing. M. Claude, superior to concealment, shewed him a part of the copy; and although he despised the man for imagining he could impose on him, yet he informed him, that the other part of the copy was printing at Paris." The issue was such as might naturally be expected; the bishop lost no time in transmitting the success of his disgraceful mission to Paris, which not only brought back an order of council to prohibit M. Claude from any longer exercising his ministry at Montauban, but also the temporary suppression of his work. There being no alternative, this excellent man once more obeyed the mandate of the civil powers, and after resigning his charge, repaired to Paris to try his interest to get the prohibition taken off.\*

How disingenuous is *the spirit of Popery*: it induced the prelate just mentioned to lend himself to be the tool of Claude's enemies, and to degrade himself by stooping to the use of artifice and deception, for the accomplishing of a mischievous plot against a man of unblemished reputation and increasing usefulness, whose great crime was, that he professed the principles of the Protestant Church, was inviolably attached to them, and displayed great acuteness and energy in defending them. The conduct of that individual who betrayed him into the hands of his enemies, reminds one

\* Robinson's Life of Claude, p. 2.

of a passage of sacred history—"And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand."

The enemies of Claude, who had resorted to such unworthy measures to suppress his work, and remove him from his useful and much-loved situation at Montauban, though they succeeded partially in their design, had no just ground of triumph, for in spite of all their opposition, he got his new work through the press. This was principally owing to the quarrels which subsisted between the Jesuits\* and the Jansenists; the former of whom, with a view to mortify the latter,

\* The spirit of Popery in its darkest shades was for ages exhibited to the world through the medium of the Jesuits and the frauds they practised; and the treasons, the assassinations, the plots, the massacres, and other innumerable mischiefs which they planned and promoted, would, if detailed, fill many volumes; and yet the whole Protestant world witnesses the revival of this order with the greatest indifference. The reason is obvious; Protestants think Popery is changed—that it has become mild and tolerant—that there is no reason to apprehend any evil from it. I think differently, and I am not alone. "What can we promise ourselves from our present criminal apathy and indifference on this subject; or rather, what evils may we not anticipate for ourselves and others, if we determine tacitly to look on, while the sworn foes of Protestantism and England are acquiring strength from our neglect, and courage from our supineness. It is possible, that this may be thought strong language, especially by those who have not followed the reasonings which have conducted me to these conclusions; but strong as it may seem, I cannot consent to dilute it, when I consider the interests which are at stake. Either Popery is a different thing from what it once was, or it is the same. If, as its best friends assert, it is *unchanged and unchangeable*, then let England look to herself." *Brief Account of the Jesuits*, p. 41.

assisted in procuring an *imprimatur* for Claude's book; on which Mr. Robinson makes this just remark, "How happy for good men that bad ones sometimes fall out."\* Mr. Bayle also observes, "So necessary is it for some books to appear at certain seasons, and to be wrote against certain persons, rather than at other junctures." "The answer, which was made to M. Claude's book by Mr. Arnaud, constrained him to engage in a very laborious study, in order to examine the tenets of the Greek Church and those of the Eastern schismatics; and he shewed great learning and abilities in the answer he made to him."†

Unable to effect his return to Montauban, Claude abandoned the idea altogether, and received an invitation first to Bourdeaux, and then to Charenton; the latter he accepted, although it was manifestly the most hazardous to himself, as it was near the head-quarters of those inveterate foes, who were incessantly plotting his ruin, and that of the churches for which he was the most strenuous and able advocate.

"Mr. Claude," says Robinson, "as pastor of the church at Charenton, was placed on the pinnacle of the Reformed Church of France. Superiority in these churches was not obtained by patents and titles, and habits and hard words; but it was always allowed to sterling merit. Such Mr. Claude possessed, and that, added to his situation, attracted the eyes of all France to him. Paris was the source of all the ecclesiastical mischiefs that afflicted the provincial churches, and Charen-

\* Claude's Life, p. 12.

† Middleton's Biog. Evan. vol. iii. p. 507.

ton was the place to which they repaired for advice. Our sagacious pastor studied the advantages and disadvantages of his situation. He stood on an eminence, where he had the finest opportunity of reconnoitring the artful enemy, but this elevated station exposed himself at the same time to universal inspection. It required peculiar sagacity to distinguish his object of investigation from a thousand others which surrounded it. It called for a singular dexterity and delicacy of action to avail himself of events as they turned up, and to improve them to the defeating of episcopal manœuvres, and to the confirmation of the Reformed Churches. Indefatigable attention, unremitting exertion, a frank deportment, and an impenetrable depth of thought, a clay coldness toward secular things, a heart inflamed with holy zeal, a courage that nothing could daunt, and a countenance alternately supple and severe, were all necessary at this critical juncture to the pastor of Charenton—and Mr. Claude possessed them all.\*

In this new and important situation Claude preached often, and with great acceptance and considerable success. We here see the wisdom and power of that overruling Providence, which takes under its protection the interests and prosperity of the Church. The very things which its persecutors did to undermine its prosperity, turned out contrary to their expectations, and finally strengthened and extended the cause which they were intended to destroy. It was so in the first age of the Christian Church: "I would that ye should understand, brethren," says the Apostle Paul, "that the things

\* Robinson's Life of Claude, p. 13, 14.



which happened to me have fallen out rather for the furtherance of the Gospel." The light of the mid-day is not more offensive and intolerable to the owl than the luminous and powerful preaching of the pure Gospel was to the ignorant and vicious part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy at Paris. Of course the nearer such a man as Claude approached to them, their enmity to the Reformation proportionably increased; their resentment became the more inflamed and ungovernable, and they became the more impatient of delaying their grand effort for the extirpation of this supposed heresy. The slow and uncertain process of reasoning it down by fair argument, through the medium of the pulpit and the press, they were fully satisfied would be an unavailing attempt; it had been tried with every advantage on their side, and had not succeeded: they therefore determined to adopt measures more expeditious in their progress and far more efficacious in their result, and which naturally harmonize more with the spirit of Popery and the well-known intolerance of the Court of Rome. Nor is it too much to say, that these are the only measures by which Popery will ever triumph over the sound and scriptural arguments by which Protestantism is upheld and extended. Allow the population of Catholic countries the privilege of reasonable creatures—let them think and examine for themselves—let them search the Scriptures, as Christ commanded, and the effect will be similar to that which was produced upon the minds of the Bereans, who are commended for not giving credit even to the apostle's testimony, till they had searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so. The effect would be

what it has been in England, Scotland, and other countries, where the darkness and superstitions of Popery once reigned as triumphant as in most other Catholic countries.\*

Claude's natural temper of mind, his early habits and education, the connexions in which he had moved from the time of his entering into the Christian ministry, the active part he had already taken in the controversies of the times, and the high reputation which he had attained among the Reformed Churches, made it evident that he was in their estimation a tower of strength amidst their growing afflictions and danger. On the contrary, the enemies of the Reformed Churches con-

\* The spirit of Popery is determinately *anti-scriptural*: the Church of Rome has placed the Pope and the Councils above the Scriptures, and is adverse to the free circulation and use of them among the people. The objections made to our translation are a very specious, but not the real, ground of the Catholic priests taking away from the poor of their communion the Bibles and Testaments which the various Bible Societies and Bible Associations have given them. But why?—if they are not afraid of the light of divine revelation, why do they not circulate a cheap edition of their own? although, in some of these, “they served the Lord” is changed for “they said mass in the Lord,” “repentance” for “penance,” &c. in Philemon, v. 22. what we read “through your prayers,” is in theirs “through the merit of your prayers;” yet they shed light enough to unveil some of the innovations and errors with which the Church of Rome so much abounds. But the spirit of the body is, I think, distinctly exhibited in the following passage, taken from the advice or charge given by a popish bishop to his clergy: “In conclusion, my dear and beloved brethren, I am confident you will not encourage the distribution of Bibles and Testaments among the very illiterate persons of your respective congregations, as proper initiatory books of instruction for them.” See *Christian Observer*, February 1814, p. 95.

ceived, that if by any means they could undermine the reputation and influence of Claude, they should accomplish a great victory, and in that proportion weaken and injure them; and, in consequence, a plan was devised to draw Claude into a personal controversy with Bossuet, who in these days was the Goliath of the Catholic Church. Of M. Claude's opponent a very interesting and flattering portrait has been lately given by a warm advocate of the Catholic Church.\* I should have formed a favourable opinion of this celebrated champion of Popery, if I had not previously read the strong and severe delineation of his character and conduct given in the following quotation; it may peradventure be as much too severe as the other is too flattering:

“James Benigne Bossuet, first Bishop of Condom, and last Bishop of Meaux, was one of the most formidable enemies of his time. He was a man of fine natural abilities. His address was insinuating, though his pretended eloquence was vile bombast; he had the *souplesse* of a courtier, along with as much learning and reading as usually fall to the share of a popish prelate. He was in the highest reputation and power—privy counsellor, bishop of a diocese, tutor to the dauphin, and almoner to the queen. He was master of all sorts of dissimulation, duplicity, and treachery; he had a heart cased with inhumanity, and a front covered with brass. Archbishop Wake in England, Claude in France, and numbers more, detected and exposed his falsehoods: but nothing stopped his career; he rolled

\* Mr. Butler's Life of Bossuet.

on a mighty torrent of mischief, driving all before him; away went the respectable Fenelon with the contemptible Claude. This finished instrument of wickedness disputed with Claude at the Countess De Roye's, in the presence of several of the nobility. He had before published his famous *Exposition of the Catholic Faith*, in which he had so endeavoured to explain the doctrines of Popery, as to prove them perfectly agreeable to those of the Reformed Churches; even moderate papists blushed for that shameful sacrifice of truth, which this audacious disputant made for the sake of gaining proselytes.\*

The same writer from whom I have just quoted the spirited description of the champion with whom Claude had to contend, has, with equal freedom and confidence, developed the art and deception which originated and run through the whole of this transaction. "One day Mademoiselle De Duras, a member of the Church of Charenton, paying a visit to M. Claude, informed him that she was under some scruples on account of her religion; and taking a paper out of her pocket, in which were contained some extracts from St. Augustine concerning the eucharist, begged her pastor's assistance. M. Claude met this lady the next day at the Countess De Roye's, and was then informed, that she wished for a conference between her pastor and some divine of the Church of Rome. Great pains were taken by M. Claude, and by several persons of quality and piety, to dissuade Mademoiselle De Duras from desiring such a conference. Nothing could di-

\* Robinson's Life of Claude, p. 30.

vert her from it. She was sorry to say, that she was deserted in her distress—this was what she had often been upbraided with; the Catholics had frequently told her, the Reformed ministers dare not shew their heads before the Roman doctors. Her dear sister the countess knew, as did the Marquis of Miremont and Marshal De Lorge, the distress of her mind. She had no doubt of the ability of her pastor, and she had always found him a gentleman of finished complaisance, and affectionate sympathy with the sorrows of his people. Did he know what good a conference would do her, he would not deny her this great act of charity. Thus the young enchantress pleaded, shedding all the while abundance of tears. M. Claude, who knew her conversion was predetermined, and that the whole was intended only to give an air of plausibility to her return to Popery, was case-hardened against all her compliments and all her tears. However, the tears of a young lady were irresistible to the rest of the company, as they are to almost all mankind; our pastor, therefore, was obliged to grant that to their joint opinions, which he had refused to the discourse of Miss Duras, and to agree to a conference.”\*

Another biographer of Claude gives the following account of this transaction: “He was ever incapable of that indirect way of seeking honour by suing for conferences; these are only fictions to stain his credit. As for that he had with the Bishop of Condom, now prelate of Meaux, it is well known he was against it for a long time; and that Madam Duras was resolved to

\* Robinson's *Life of Claude*, p. 17, 18.

change her religion before she sent for him, but was willing to make a noise to render it more plausible, by pretending it was because she could not be satisfied."\*

It is however proper that we should hear and candidly examine what is advanced on this subject by the modern advocates of the popish religion: one of them has not only pronounced a decided judgment against Claude, and confidently placed the wreath of victory on the head of Bossuet, but has also attached to it an importance, and deduced from it a conclusion, which could not be justified even though we were to grant to Bossuet all the superiority for which he contends. It is indeed a little remarkable, that at this distance of time two of the most sensible and liberal-minded writers of the Catholic body should discover such a strong solicitude to prove the supposed superiority of Bossuet over Claude: I own, I think they have no solid foundation for their opinion; this, however, is a question on which every reader of the history of those times, and of the accounts which the parties have themselves given, must decide for himself. In these cases we cannot positively determine, without we read carefully and compare faithfully, with minds free from prejudice and partiality.

Mr. Butler's account of this famous dispute is thus stated: "Bossuet speaks of his (Claude's) learning, polite manners, and mildness, in high terms of praise. He mentions, that throughout the conference M. Claude listened with patience, expressed himself with clearness

\* Moreri's Dictionary, 1694.

and force, pressed his own objections with precision, and never eluded an objection made to him which admitted of an answer.\* It is plain from this passage, that Mr. Butler is inclined to give the palm of victory to the Catholic champion, and to admit the strong insinuation of M. Claude's inferiority. But let us hear another advocate for the Catholic cause—a writer whose talents and liberality give great weight to his opinion—a literary giant whom I am almost afraid to approach :

“During more than a century, war and controversy raged with equal fury; and whatever the opinion of the reader may be upon the subject in debate, he will probably agree with me, that Calvinism, defeated alike in the field of battle and in the nobler contest of argument, was compelled to resign the double palm of victory to the genius of her adversary. In the course of the debate, and particularly towards its close, great talents appeared, and much ingenuity and learning were displayed on both sides, till the respective parties seemed to unite all their powers in the persons of two champions, *Claude* and *Bossuet*. Though nature had been liberal in intellectual endowments to both the disputants, and though all the means of art had been employed to improve the gifts of nature, yet the contest was by no means equal between them; and after having been worsted in every onset, the *elder* at length sunk under the superiority of the *prelate*. But if the victim can derive any credit from the hand that fells it, *Claude* and Calvinism may boast that the illustrious *Bossuet*

\* Butler's Life of Bossuet.

was alone capable, and alone worthy, to give the fatal blow that put an end at once to the glory and almost to the existence of the party in France.”\*

The first part of the above passage respects the subjugation of the Protestants in the field of battle; they were certainly sometimes unfortunate, but never from the want either of zeal or courage. Their defeats were, in many cases, the result of intrigue and treachery on the part of either the faithless ones among themselves, or those arts of dissimulation which their enemies had the power of applying, and did so most successfully in some cases. There are always some in such a cause who are vulnerable, and who may be bought off if a price sufficiently high can be offered: an appeal, sometimes to the covetous and mercenary, and at other times to the proud and ambitious feelings of man, have wrought greater advantages than either the bravery, the skill, or the numbers of the best disciplined troops. The prodigies of valour manifested at Rochelle and many other places, afford ample testimony to the zeal and courage which the French Protestants displayed in defence of their civil and religious liberties; and if they had not been in many instances abandoned and betrayed by their professed friends, their armies would have succeeded as well in the martial field, as their writers did in that of polemic warfare.†

\* Eustace's Classical Tour in Italy, p. 508.

† The Hollanders and the English both acted shamefully towards the French Protestants. Burnett says, “The infamous part was, that Richlieu got the King of France to make his queen write an obliging letter to the Duke of Buckingham, assuring him that, if he would let Rochelle fall without assisting it, he should have leave to come over,



What reasonable man, unacquainted with the history of the Protestant ministers and churches in France, would not be induced to conclude from this wily statement, from this exulting language, that the Catholic and Protestant ministers had been allowed an open and unrestrained discussion of the great questions in dispute between them, and that the former had vanquished the latter in the fair field of argument; that they had given up the contest, retired in disgrace, and that, as a natural consequence, the general cause of the Reformed had been deeply wounded, and gradually sunk into decay and oblivion, from which the talents and zeal of their ministers were utterly incapable of recovering it.

Instead of this being the case, Claude and the phalanx of enlightened and honest men who shared the labours and the dangers of this eventful period, re-

and should settle the whole matter of the religion according to their edicts. This was a strange proceeding; but Cardinal Richlieu could turn that weak king as he pleased. Upon this, the duke made that shameful campaign of the Isle of Rhe." *Burnett's History of his own Times*, vol. i. p. 48. The British soldiers and sailors discovered more honourable sentiments and feelings in a moment of extreme difficulty and trial, as appears by the following passage :

"In the beginning of his reign, when the French Protestants were struggling to maintain their liberties and religion against a most perfidious and cruel oppression, King Charles lent the French monarch a squadron of eight ships to help to crush and overwhelm them. But the British soldiers and sailors, when they came upon the coast of France, and knew how they were to be employed, were filled with deep indignation, *flew into a fury*, (says Echard,) *got up their anchors, and set sail for England, declaring they had rather be hanged at home than be slaves to the French and fight against the Protestant religion.*" *M. Towgood's Character and Reign of Charles the First*, p. 7

mained on the field of battle not only unsubdued but undismayed, and were fully prepared to renew the conflict with invigorated courage and ardour, and with the fairest prospect of success, if their enemies had not resorted, in the most dishonourable manner, to agents and means which always have been, and ever will be, a disgrace to the cause in which they are employed. Claude and his companions were subdued;—subdued did I say? No! they were not: they never would have been subdued in the field of controversial warfare, if their enemies had continued to use lawful weapons, and allowed them common justice; but the free use of the press was denied them: I might therefore rather say, that their hands were first tied by their oppressors, and they were then driven in the most forcible manner from the field of battle by the strong and irresistible arm of intolerance and despotism.

While the Protestant ministers were allowed to write and preach freely, while their colleges were kept open, and their churches possessed the entire freedom of religious worship, their whole body was full of courage and zeal, they prospered, and would have done so more and more; but, “Behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power:” the king, the nobles, the whole hierarchy, were against them, and never ceased to oppress and injure them by every possible means—murdering some, banishing others, and either imprisoning the remainder or compelling them to abjure their religion, do violence to their consciences, and act hypocritically before God and men.

Before the partizans of Rome applied the destructive

engine of political power to the Protestant Churches, the clergy resorted to an artful measure, a professed attempt at the conversion of the Protestants. Bossuet opened one of the sessions of the convocation of the clergy with a sermon from Numbers 24. 5. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" Robinson describes this sermon thus: "The man runs metaphor-mad, and inflames all the convocation with a specious but fiery zeal for extirpating heresy." He adds, "At the end of the session they published instructions for the conversion of their dearly beloved brethren, the straying sheep of Christ, the pretended reformed. They dispersed circular letters through all the kingdom, and therein they insulted the miseries of a people already harassed to death by their cruelty;" and in characterizing these letters, he attributes to them "crocodile cries and cant phrases, compliments and curses, the name of Christ and the spirit of anti-christ."\*

"It was a bold attempt to expose the iniquity of these letters; however, Mr. Claude did so most effectually, by printing a small piece, entitled, *Considerations on the Circular Letters of the Assembly of the Clergy of France for the Year 1682*. This anonymous book was known to be his, and it did him great honour. Several of the prelates were men of birth, family, and fortune; and viewing them in this point of light, the Author paid them several compliments,

\* *Claude's Life*, p. 35. Of all the persecutors in France, the clergy seemed the most zealous and the most persevering, and to them primarily must be attributed the sufferings and ruin of the Protestants.

and professed as much respect for them as was their due: but all of them were the unprincipled tools of a gloomy tyrant, and were carrying on infernal schemes of a bloody polity under the name of Jesus Christ. In this light he detested the men, assumed an air of true dignity, upbraided them with their affected mildness, exposed their tyranny over conscience, declared that he did not own them for his masters, and that he took his pen only to state the true principles of the Protestants in a fair light, and to vindicate that liberty of conscience which God had given to all mankind.\*

It is plain, that the most eloquent sermons which Bossuet and his associates preached, and the most argumentative and impressive epistles with which they assaulted the Reformed, failed of their desired effect; they had learned to despise the former as mere empty declamation, and the latter they answered in temperate, dignified, and powerful appeals to the good sense and liberality of their countrymen. In regard to the letters just mentioned, finding that they were not well received, and made little or no impression, the clergy procured an order for the notification of them to all the Protestants in the kingdom: the intendant of each province had orders to convene the Protestant consistories, to take with him the bishop's vicar and some other attendants, and to go in person and read the circular letter to each consistory. All the Reformed Churches fixed their eyes on Charenton, and determined to act in this new and difficult case as Mr. Claude should set them an example. Happily, Cha-

\* Robinson's *Life of Claude*, p. 35, 36.

renton was the first consistory summoned, and Mr. Claude was chosen to answer. The consistory met; Claude was in the chair. Monsieur the Intendant entered with his train, and read the letter. Mr. Claude replied in a few words, well chosen and full of sense. He owned the august character with which Monsieur the Intendant was vested: he declared that he and his church had a profound respect for civil magistracy; that, as a proof of their submission to it, they had assembled to hear him read a letter, which contained nothing but affliction for all the Reformed: that my lords the prelates challenged their respect on account of the rank which his majesty had thought proper to give them; but that, if they pretended in these letters to speak to them as from an ecclesiastical tribunal, he was bound in conscience to declare, that neither he nor his church acknowledged his authority. This judicious answer was instantly printed, and it served for a model to all the other consistories through the kingdom.\* It ought to be recollected, that this event took place a considerable time after Bossuet's famous dispute with Claude, whose *imaginary victory* over him and the cause he espoused, is considered as extinguishing the glory and annihilating the energy of the Protestant Churches. Here is Claude, surrounded by a few faithful men, receiving and listening to the intendant of the province, the bishop's vicar, &c.; and when they have executed their commission, rising up with the dignified calmness of an honest man and a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, he declares the ready

\* Robinson's *Life of Claude*, p. 36, 37.

submission of the Protestants to the civil magistrate in all things excepting their religion and their consciences; in regard to those things, they seem to say, "We ought to obey God rather than men." If the ministers and consistories in other parts of France displayed the same coolness, prudence, and firmness, (and there is every reason to conclude this,) then one may ask, with some degree of exultation, Where are the symptoms of defeat or of decay, much less of approaching annihilation? On the contrary, so great was the number of their ministers and churches, so great was their union and their energy, that even then, greatly as they had been persecuted, they would soon have multiplied in the land, and there is no doubt that they would have added to its glory and its strength.

We must pass on one step further in the Life of Claude, which will bring us near to that gloomy day on which the death-blow was given to the Protestant Church of France, not by the mental talents of Catholic writers, or by the swords of Catholic soldiers, but by an intolerant act of a despotic government, goaded on to the desperate measure by a bigoted and superstitious priesthood, who were as deaf to all the loud premonitions of a rational and enlightened policy, as to the gentle and merciful whispers of humanity and religion.

The clouds which indicated the approaching storm grew darker and hung lower, and Claude and his worthy associates were fully aware of the impending danger; and although they feared that they could devise no measures which would either diminish or avert it, yet their resolution and courage were firm and decided. Much as they feared that the Protestant Church of

France, like a vessel driven by a tempest, was about to be totally wrecked, and its fragments scattered in a thousand directions, yet they would not abandon her whilst there was the most distant hope of her preservation.

Had Claude been either a time-serving or a cowardly pilot in the Protestant vessel, he had ample time, he had favourable opportunities, not only of providing for his own safety, but of advancing himself to the same ease and prosperity which others had obtained; if that can be deemed a situation of ease and prosperity, which is attained at the expense of truth and conscience. Let the experience, let the end, of Judas, who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, determine this question.

It is to the immortal credit of Claude, that as he could not be seduced by *dishonourable means*, so he could not be tempted to abandon his post by offers of the most inviting and honourable line of service, remote from the companions of his trouble. He knew that the eyes of all Protestant Frenchmen were directed to him; and that if he betrayed or deserted them in this sad hour of foreboding and danger, it must deeply wound and injure the cause which lay near to his heart.

The propriety of this reflection arises out of an occurrence in the life of Claude, which took place about this time. He received an invitation to a professorship of divinity in the university of Groningen. The invitation was not only made in the most respectful manner, but it was accompanied with inducements both of an agreeable and imposing kind. This was, of all

others, the kind of situation adapted to M. Claude's professional talents as well as to his inclination, and promised him a useful and permanent retreat from the vexatious and distressing occurrences which were every day afflicting his generous and placid mind. It is most probable that his strong inclination to quietness and religious liberty said—*Go*, but duty and conscience said—*Stay*: he obeyed the latter, and determined to continue with his flock while there was any opportunity of counteracting the plots of their enemies, or administering comfort to their afflicted minds.

“The calamities of the Protestants increased every day, and the established clergy seemed to single out Claude, in all their publications, as the ring-leader of the heresy. He, all placid and serene in his conscience, answered what wanted answering, and despised the rest: aware of the worth of every moment, he became more indefatigable than ever; he preached very often and very frankly; he advised and assisted other churches; he opened his hand liberally to all his brethren's necessities, and pressed home practical religion in private more than ever. His church was now a noble sight; the countenances and the tears of his crowded auditories produced tenderness and zeal in occasional preachers, and excited the idea of a shipwrecked people climbing up a rock of hope. Sleep, and whispering, and complaints, and all the disgraces of Christian worship, were banished these assemblies, while all acts of piety and benevolence supplied their place.”\*

The enemies of Claude and the Reformed Churches

\* Robinson's Life of Claude, p. 36.



knew that the prosperity and strength of the latter lay principally in the talents, the zeal, and the unity, of the pastors, and the able manner in which they superintended their flocks, and instructed and fortified them by their writings and sermons.\* The conclusion was obvious, that they could succeed against them only in that proportion as they either silenced, expelled, or imprisoned the one, and entirely suppressed the other. To make therefore short and effectual work, it was determined to proceed to the utmost extremity: "The French court sat close in consultation about giving the last blow at the roots of the Reformed Religion in that kingdom, and how and in what manner to repeal the Edict of Nantz. Very much time was spent in drawing up the matter and form of this new edict. Some in the council would have the king detain all the ministers, and compel them, as he had done the laity, to change their religion, or, in case of stubbornness and refusal, he should condemn them to perpetual imprisonment. The reasons alleged for this were, that in case he did it not, they would be so many dangerous enemies against him in foreign nations, and trumpets

\* Some of Claude's contemporaries at Charenton were as much a match for Bossuet and the other Roman Catholic writers as Claude himself, especially the Rev. Peter Allix, D. D. who, with Messrs. Maynard and Bertau the Elder, two pastors of Charenton, came and settled in England. This able and laborious minister "applied himself to repel the artful attacks of the Bishop of *Meaux*, who was then labouring to overturn the Protestant religion by seeming concessions to its professors. His sermons upon this occasion were afterwards printed in *Holland*, and met with deserved commendations from *Mr. Bayle*, and from every body else capable of judging in such matters." *Middleton's Biog. Evan.* vol. iv. p. 222.

Nero, that of Louis the Fourteenth, in his latter days, abounded most in the monotony of human misery.”\*

Although the promptitude and acuteness of Claude had most unquestionably wounded and mortified the most forward and able champions of the Romish Church, and very much imbittered their dislike to him, yet as they had now completely overwhelmed him by the strong arm of an arbitrary and despotic government, and he was about to quit his connexions and his country for ever, one might reasonably have expected, that if they did not sympathize with him, nor do any thing to sooth his afflicted mind or mitigate the severity of the measure, yet that surely they would do nothing to aggravate or increase his distress. Too justly is it said, that “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” They even made that which was truly distressing more distressing still: the edict allowed the Reformed Ministers fifteen days to leave the kingdom: little time enough, most humane men would think, but even this was too great a favour for such an arch-heretic as Claude. His talents had refuted the best defences of Catholic errors and superstitions, his zeal and influence had preserved the Reformed Churches, and counteracted the artful and despotic measures of the enemy, and consequently he must be marked and punished as the greatest criminal: at ten o’clock, therefore, on the morning of December 22, † he received an order to quit the kingdom within *(twenty-four hours)*. “He obeyed with a profound respect, and went away with

\* Appendix to Monthly Review Enlarged, vol. lxxiv. p. 466.

† The very day on which the edict was registered, and of course before the 15 days had began to be counted.

one of the king's footmen who was to conduct him to the frontiers of France, and who, performing his commission faithfully, was nevertheless very civil to Mr. Claude. So true is it, that great merit works upon those very persons who do not love our religion. He took coach at Paris for *Brussels*: his name, that went before him, procured him many civilities in his journey. He went through *Cambray*, where he lay: he was presented with some refreshments from the Jesuits there. The father rector honoured him with a visit: he returned that civility, and the difference of religions did not interrupt those compliments and those marks of a reciprocal esteem.\* When he arrived at the Hague, he was most cordially welcomed. He was afterwards presented to the Prince and Princess of Orange, and to the chief persons in the state. He had also a comfortable provision made for his support.

Who that did not know the man and his communications, and had not heard the cause for which he had been thus driven from the capital of his country, would not have suspected, that he must have been a man of bad principles, of infamous character, and of notorious conduct? Far from it, he was a true disciple of Jesus, he was a devout and a holy man, he was a loyal and obedient subject. If Louis the Fourteenth would have admitted him into his presence when surrounded with his courtiers and prelates, among whom were Claude's bitterest enemies, he could have addressed him in the energetic appeal which Jeremiah made to Zedekiah, King of Judah: "What have I offended against thee,

\* Bayle's Dictionary, under the article *Claude*.

or against thy servants, or against this people?" Claude was not buffeted for his faults: he was the victim of a superstitious and intolerant government and priesthood. In being thus driven from his country, he sacrificed every thing dear to him as a man, as a Christian, and as the pastor of a large, an affectionate, and a highly respectable church: but then it is his honour and his happiness, that those great sacrifices were not made to humour, to party purposes, or to worldly interest; no, they were conscientious sacrifices, made for the cause of God and truth. If he could have yielded up his enlightened mind to receive the unscriptural dogmas of the Romish Church, and have sold his conscience so far as to have pronounced their *shibboleth*, he might have obtained any thing which the king's ministers or the rulers of the Church had it in their power to give. But he was a man of stern principle, he was a Christian of the old school; he understood the import and felt the force of that eloquent and commanding appeal, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" He had counted the cost of his attachment to Christ and to the Gospel, and this was his confidence and his triumph; "None of these things move me, neither do I count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." He not only knew, that Louis the Fourteenth,\* Le Tellier

\* The spirit of Popery is of that odious nature, that it quenches all sense of obligation and all the feelings of gratitude. Louis the Fourteenth is represented by his own friends as having intended the repeal of the Edict of Nantz at his first coming to the throne, that is, at the

the chancellor, and the clergy, who had lent their aid to promote the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, or praised its piety, must meet him at the judgment-seat of Christ, and that then the unrighteous deed which spread such misery throughout France would be re-judged: he was also satisfied, that the enlightened and unbiassed part of mankind would do him and his fellow-sufferers ample justice; yea, he was not without hope, that the day would come when the country which had disgraced itself by his expulsion, would do justice to his memory and to the cause for which he pleaded, and for which he suffered and sacrificed so much; and the Editor does not say too much, when he adds, that he pleaded it well, and suffered for it like a Christian.

We might still occupy many pages by going over the more prominent and interesting details of the remainder of Claude's Life, but we must compress what remains. Claude was at the Hague the same faithful, diligent, and successful minister he had been in France, nor was he less respected or beloved by those among whom he laboured. He preached often before the Prince and Princess of Orange: one of his best sermons before these exalted personages, was from

very moment when the Protestants had displayed the most unquestionable loyalty, and rendered him and his family the most important services, by vigorously opposing the progress of his enemies, rejecting the great and advantageous offers which were made them, kept towns and whole provinces for him, took his servants and officers into their bosoms when they could not find safety elsewhere, yea, they sacrificed their estates, their lives, and their fortunes to his cause." *Complaints of the Protestants*, p. 140.

Luke 1. 30. on December 25, 1686. This is said to have been a most excellent discourse, was delivered with earnestness, and produced a great impression; and it proved his last, for he was taken ill that very night, and after a short conflict entered into rest. Throughout the whole, his spirit appears to have been devout and cheerful, as is fully detailed by Mr. Robinson in his *Life of Claude*, from which I shall give a few extracts: “Monday, January 6, 1686, he sent for the senior minister of the church, to whom in the presence of all his family he expressed himself thus,—‘Sir, I was desirous to see you, and to make my dying declaration before you. I am a miserable sinner before God; I most heartily beseech him to shew me mercy for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. I hope he will hear my prayer; he has promised to hear the cries of repenting sinners. I adore him for blessing my ministry: it has not been fruitless in his Church; it is an effect of God’s grace, and I adore him for it.

“ ‘I have diligently studied Popery and the Reformation: the Protestant Religion, I think, is the only good religion. It is all found in the Holy Scriptures, the word of God; from this, as from a fountain, all religion must be drawn.’ The pastor speaking to him of what he had preached and printed in books to edify the Church, he replied, ‘Ah, break off; let us not speak of praises when moments are so precious, and when they ought to be employed to a better use.’ To Mrs. Claude he said, ‘I am going to my God, and I leave you in his hands in a free country; what can I desire more either for you or myself.’ Again he said, ‘I have always tenderly loved you. Be not afflicted at my

death; the death of the saints is precious in the sight of God. In you I have seen a sincere piety; I bless God for it: be constant in serving him with your whole heart; he will bless you. I recommend my son and his family to you, and I beseech the Lord to help you. To his son, who with an old servant was kneeling by his mother, he said, among other things, ‘Son, you have chosen the good part: perform your office as a good pastor, and God will bless you. Love and respect your mother: be mindful of this domestic; take care she want nothing as long as she lives. I give you all my blessing.’ To one of the pastors he said, ‘My whole recourse is to the mercy of God; I expect a better life than this.’ At another time he said to his son, ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ is our only righteousness; I need no other; he is all-sufficient.’”\*

Thus lived and died the Rev. John Claude, whose love for the Protestant cause, and whose zealous and persevering labours in its defence, have rendered his name dear to the Protestant Churches in every country and in every age. I am aware, that I have only touched on a few prominent circumstances in the life of this great man, (for so he is justly esteemed, as a Christian, a minister, and a writer,) and they are those which were more immediately connected with the public interests of the Protestant Churches in France, and the ardent zeal he discovered for, and the noble efforts he made in defence of, the general principles of the Reformation. His writings are such as justify us in saying, that he, being dead, yet speaketh. His son pub-

\* Robinson's Life of Claude, p. 45. . 48.

lished his posthumous works in five volumes, 8vo. They contain many pieces of a spiritual and practical nature, calculated to instruct and profit mankind; and it is to be hoped that most, if not all, of the writings of this excellent man will be republished in France, and be as highly valued by the French Protestants of the present day as they were by those of his own time. One of the last efforts of his pen is said to have been a small piece, entitled, *A short Account of the Complaints and cruel Persecutions of the Protestants in the Kingdom of France* :\* in this he has exposed the iniquitous practices of the intendants, the military, and the clergy, not overlooking the paltry shifts and the detestable falsehoods to which the enemies of the Reformed resorted, to conceal the atrocities and diminish the disgust and indignation which the exposure of them must necessarily excite in every civilized and enlightened country. †

\* Although Claude had been driven from his post, and he could no more administer counsel or assistance to the Protestants in person, yet he never ceased to watch over the interest and comfort of his Protestant brethren who remained in France, and used his best endeavours to keep alive their patience, their piety, and their zeal, under the numerous wrongs which they had to endure from an enemy flushed with victory, and determined rather to murder the whole Protestant population of France, than not fully reinstate Popery in the plenitude of its tyranny.

† In this work M. Claude pointedly exposes the deceitful and barefaced eulogiums addressed to Louis the Fourteenth, extolling him for what they esteem the glorious deed in revoking the Edict of Nantz, to maintain which he had solemnly pledged himself. " 'Tis this," says he, " which the clergy of France, by the mouth of the Bishop of *Valence*, calls a glory that raises Louis the Fourteenth above all other



The revocation of the Edict of Nantz, and the expulsion of Claude, were instantly followed by such a complicated scene of inhuman persecutions and cruelties\*

kings, above all his predecessors, and above time itself, and consecrates him for eternity. 'Tis what Monsieur *Varillas* calls labours greater than those of Hercules. 'Tis what Mr. Mambourg calls an heroic action," &c. He closes the paragraph with this strong and severe apostrophe, "Base, unworthy flatterers! must people suffer themselves to be blinded by the fumes of your incense!" *Complaints of the Protestants*, Redmayne's Eng. edit. 1707, p. 149.

\* Since writing the note in which I glanced at the cruelties which the spirit of Popery generates, I have met with the following statements of some of the murders perpetrated by the influence and agents of Rome: "Pope Julius in seven years was the occasion of the slaughter of 200,000 Christians. The massacre in France cut off 100,000 in three months. P. Personius avers, that in the persecution of the Albigenses and Waldenses, 1,000,000 lost their lives. From the beginning of the Jesuits till 1580, that is, in 40 years, 900,000 perished, says Balduinus. The Duke of Alva, by the hangman, put 36,000 to death. Vergerius affirms, that the inquisition in 36 years destroyed 150,000. To all this I may add the Irish rebellion, in which 300,000 were destroyed, as the Lord Orrery reports in a paper printed in the reign of Charles the Second. Besides all these, vast numbers have been destroyed in the subsequent persecutions, in France and Piedmont, in the Palatinate and Hungary. Can this be the religion of Jesus Christ, the humble messenger of glad tidings, peace on earth, and good will to men?" *Extract in the Monthly Review*, February, 1815, p. 222. The author of a pamphlet, entitled, *The Cabinet of the King of France*, printed about 1581, computes their martyrs within a few years at above 200,000; add to these our English martyrs, &c. &c. What a cry of blood is here against the Church of Rome! What a body of evidence to shew that the spirit of Popery is extremely cruel and blood-thirsty! To whom, then, can that passage in Rev. 6. 9, 10. be more suitably addressed, with a view to instruct and alarm, than to the advocates of that persecuting religion—"And

as would scarcely be credited, if the accounts were not supported by the clearest and strongest testimony. The first part of the storm fell upon the ministers who hastened to depart within the time limited; and the cruel and iniquitous measures adopted by their enemies to thwart and harass them, displayed a refinement in barbarity which has fixed an eternal disgrace upon the perpetrators. "They were not permitted to dispose of their estates, nor to carry away any of their moveables or effects; yea, they disputed them their very books and private papers, upon this pretence, that they must prove and justify that their books and papers did not belong to the consistories then in being. Moreover, they would not give them leave to take along with them either father or mother, brother or sister, or any of their relations or kindred, though they were many of them infirm, diseased, and impoverished, and could not in any way subsist without their help; yea, they went so far as to deny them their own children, if they were above seven years old, yea, and some that were under that age, and were as yet hanging upon their mothers' breast: they refused them nurses for their new-born

when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, &c." The government of Louis and the Church of Rome anathematized, expelled, imprisoned, and slew, thousands upon thousands of faithful ministers and Christians; but God has owned and honoured them; they are gone to join those ancient martyrs whom John saw in vision.

infants, although their own mothers could not suckle them. In some frontier places, they stopped and imprisoned them upon trifling and ridiculous pretences—they must immediately prove, that they were really the same persons which their certificates mentioned; they would know, whether there were no criminal process or informations out against them; they must presently justify, that they carried away nothing with them that belonged to any one of their respective churches. Sometimes, having thus amused and detained them, they would tell them, the space of fifteen days, allotted them by the edict for their departure, was now expired, and that therefore they should have no liberty to leave the kingdom, but must be sent unto the galleys. There was hardly any kind of deceit, and injustice, and troubles, in which these worthy ministers of Christ were not involved, and yet through rich mercy very few revolted: the far greater number of them escaped, either into *England*,\* *Holland*, *Germany*, or *Switzerland*, yea, and some are now settled in New England.† Such were the sufferings of hundreds of learned, pious, and useful ministers of Jesus Christ, and such were the character and spirit of their persecutors. How accurately is the conduct of such men pourtrayed by the Scripture, “They sleep not except they have done mischief, and that sleep is taken away unless they came soon to fall; for they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.”

\* 150 of these ministers came into England.

† Quick's *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, Introduction, p. 151, 152.

Let us for one moment or two follow the champions of the Catholic Church in their disgraceful career of injustice and cruelty. They seized and confiscated the property of the churches and consistories, pulled down the former, and even forbid them to pray in their own houses, or teach their own children any of the principles or duties of the Christian religion: some of them they took by force, and placed them in convents to make them Catholics; and if the little heretics were obstinate, they were punished to such extremity, that they died in consequence. Dragoons were quartered in their houses, who lived upon the unfortunate victims of their cruelty, and made free with such parts of their property as they pleased. They levied taxes and duties upon them, to build mass-houses and purchase priestly garments, &c. Their sick were refused admission to the hospitals, nor would they allow Protestant women any assistance in child-birth but from Roman Catholic midwives. In their dying moments, their apartments were forcibly entered by Romish priests, who, in the most indecorous manner, worried them to change their religion; and if they refused, they denied them Christian burial, drew them through the streets on hurdles in the most ignominious manner, and cast them into the open fields to be devoured by ravenous creatures. Some they sent to perish in prisons and dungeons, or to work in the galleys.

In addition to all this, they *forced* some, by the most dreadful violence, to abjure their religion; and having succeeded, they made them affirm, and even sign the most solemn declarations, that no constraint

had been used, but that they had done it freely and of their own accord.\*

“As for the rest of the Protestants,” says Quick, “whom the violence of persecution and the cruel usages they endured had necessitated to abandon their estates, families, relations, and native country, it is hardly to be imagined to what dangers they were exposed. Never were orders more rigorous and severe, nor more strictly executed, than those which were given out against them; they doubled the guards at every post, in all cities, towns, highways, fords, and ferries; they covered the country with soldiers; they armed the very peasants, that they might stop the Reformed in their travel, or kill them upon the very spot; they forbid all officers of the customs to suffer any goods, moveables, merchandises, or effects of theirs, to pass out of the kingdom; they forgot nothing that might hinder the flight of these poor persecuted creatures, insomuch that they interrupted all commerce with neighbouring nations. By this means they quickly filled all the prisons in the kingdom: for the terror of the dragoons, the horror of seeing their consciences forced and their children taken from them, and to be educated in anti-christian superstition and damnable idolatry, and of living for the future in a land where

\* When a representation of these dreadful persecutions was published by Claude in 1686, and printed in England in an English dress, Sir Roger Le Strange and others contradicted them, and the French ambassador succeeded in having the book burnt, and all the copies which could be obtained were suppressed, and both the translator and printer were almost ruined by fines and imprisonment. *Complaints of the Protestants*, Preface, p. 2.

there was neither justice nor humanity for them, obliged every one to think with himself, and consult with others in whom they could confide, how to get out of France; and so they could but escape without polluting their consciences, many thousands of them were ready to, and did actually, leave their worldly all behind them.”\*

After such a recital, I do not wonder that the modern advocates of Popery are anxious to free the clergy from the reproach which must attach to them, even upon the bare suspicion of their having taken the least share in a measure which led to such miserable consequences. Mr. Butler, speaking of the repeal of the Edict of Nantz, boldly affirms that “Fenelon, Flechier, and Bossuet, confessedly the ornaments of the Gallican Church, lamented it; to the utmost of their power they prevented the edict, and softened its severities when they could not avert them.”† He must forgive me in questioning the accuracy of his confident assertion: 1. Because Mr. Butler, in the very same page, candidly says, “It is painful to add, that in a studied letter to M. De Basville, Intendant of Languedoc, Bossuet seems to admit, in theory, the general right of Christian princes to enforce acts of religious conformity by wholesome severities; and thus allows them, for effecting a spiritual good, a resort to temporal means, which the Founder of our faith so explicitly disclaims for himself.” 2. I question Mr. Butler’s statement, because, as I have elsewhere shewn, *Flechier* has considered this infamous deed as an act of piety. 3. Be-

\* Quick’s Synodicon in Gallia Reformata, Preface, p. 152.

† Butler’s Life of Bossuet, p. 79.

cause those who had a painful share in the miseries it entailed, have distinctly charged the clergy with promoting and driving the thing forward, at the same time *concealing themselves*; and when it was matured and executed, saying, “The king will have it so—the king has taken the matter in his own hand—the king carries it farther than the clergy could have wished.” Nay, has not the Pope himself commended the deed? and if the sovereign pontiff thought of it so highly, it is no wonder if the clergy should have been so far mistaken, as to have *helped it forward, and even thought that they did God service.\**

\* I cannot refrain from giving the reader a copy of the Pope’s letter to Louis the Fourteenth, which seems to come from his very heart, bounding with joy on the occasion of that iniquitous transaction.

“ Innocent the Eleventh to our dearest son in Christ, Louis the Fourteenth, the most Christian King of France :

“ Our dearest son in Christ,

“ Since above all the rest of those illustrious proofs which do abundantly declare the natural inbred piety of your majesty, that noble zeal (and worthy the most Christian King) is most conspicuous, with which, being ardently inflamed, you have wholly abrogated all those constitutions that were favourable to the heretics of your kingdom; and by most wise decrees set forth, have excellently provided for the propagation of the orthodox belief, as our beloved son, and your ambassador with us, the noble Duke De Estrées, hath declared to us; we thought it was incumbent on us most largely to commend that excellent *piety* of yours by the remarkable and lasting testimonies of these our letters, and to congratulate your majesty on that accession of immortal commendation, which you have added to all your other great exploits by so illustrious an act of this kind. The Catholic Church shall most assuredly record in her sacred annals a work of such devotion towards her, and celebrate your name in never-dying praises. But, above all, you may most deservedly promise to yourself an ample retribution from the Divine Goodness for this most excellent under-

The practical result of the repeal of the Edict of Nantz carries its own evidence with it, that the spirit of Popery, wherever it reigns, is inimical to, and subversive of, the *national prosperity*. The commercial and manufacturing interests of France were dreadfully injured, civil and ecclesiastical tyranny were consolidated, and the whole population sunk most completely into ignorance and contempt of pure and undefiled religion; the priests, the nobles, and the court, became more superstitious and profane; and the whole train of effects moved on from year to year, though gradually yet effectually preparing the soil for skepticism and revolution—for that revolution, which in a most tremendous manner swept away the lofty throne of one of the most despotic governments upon earth, and with the throne went the splendid altars, the sacred and costly relics, and nearly the whole priesthood of one of the most wealthy, intolerant, and powerful

taking; and may rest assured, that we shall never cease to pour forth our most earnest prayers to that Divine Goodness for this intent and purpose. The rest you shall understand from our venerable brother, Angelo, Archbishop of Genoa. In the mean time, we greet you most kindly with our apostolical benediction. Given at Rome the 13th of November, in the tenth year of our pontificate.”

The pontiff had discernment enough to see, that Louis had done more by the repeal, &c. for strengthening of the Catholic, and ruining the Protestant, Churches in France, than had been heretofore done by all the battles which had been fought, and all the books which had been written; he therefore chaunts the praises of that “*wise decree*,” that “*great exploit*,” that “*illustrious act*,” and that “*excellent piety*,” and feels abundantly delighted with its success. “Rase, rase it, even to the foundation thereof,” had long been the cry of the enemies of the Reformed Church in France; but the period is hastening when it shall be said, “The time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.”



churches in Europe; nay, the sovereign pontiff himself was driven from his throne, his person carried into captivity, and constrained to crown the ambitious rival of the Bourbons.

What luminous, what admonitory lessons have all these events read in the ears of the surviving advocates of intolerance; but with what little effect, let the recent occurrences in Spain and in Rome say. The inquisitors and the Jesuits (worthy coadjutors) are revived, and their iniquitous operations have commenced, and not one Protestant government has entered a protest;\* nay, the measure of reviving the order of Jesuits has been defended and eulogized in some of our Protestant newspapers. Ought not the enlightened and liberal-minded part of the Romish Church, who are so loud and so strenuous in their commendation of candour and of tolerance, to lament over and condemn the measures which the pontiff and his colleagues are reviving? Ought they not earnestly to appeal to him for that reformation which has been so long demanded, and of which their own concessions admit the necessity?

\* "The British Parliament," says one, "assuredly has at this time but one obvious line of duty before it; and it is fitting that the people of England should speak out upon the subject before it be too late. I mean the public and immediate dismissal of the Jesuits now in Ireland, (and perhaps in England,) and the strongest resolutions against the landing of others of the same fraternity." *Brief Account of the Jesuits*, p. 39. What must be the effect of Jesuits visiting Ireland, unless Protestants are roused to vigilance and activity? Can what is contained in the following quotation be true? "The diocese of Killaloe contains 151 parishes, but only 37 churches." Can we wonder at the following fact, that in one district in Ireland the Catholics had made no less than 500 converts? *Missionary Chronicle*, February, 1814, p. 75.

Should they not solicit from him the same toleration and indulgence for their Protestant brethren in Catholic countries, which they, as Catholics, so abundantly enjoy in Protestant ones? Should they not condemn, in the most direct and glowing terms, that prejudice, that bigotry, and that bare-faced intolerance, which is still displayed in Spain, in Italy, in Portugal, and even in some parts of France? If they, however, will not expose or condemn the evil principles and the bad conduct of their own community, let them at least tolerate the well-meant efforts of Protestants to defend their own cause, and to prevent the restoration of principles and practices, which in past ages entailed upon the country such widely-extended and long-continued disasters.

Distressing and mysterious as were the dispensations of Providence towards the Protestant Churches of France, by the dispersion of such a numerous and valuable body of ministers, together with thousands upon thousands of pious and industrious private Christians, yet it was mercifully over-ruled for good to others. England, Holland, and the Protestant parts of Switzerland and Germany, into which the persecuted and afflicted refugees entered, must have received a deep conviction of the injustice, cruelty, and intolerance, which had combined to produce such a train of mischiefs to the Protestants themselves, and also to the country from which they had been so wantonly and so infamously driven. When these Protestant states saw that the deeds perpetrated in France were commended and exulted in by the Pope, the Cardinals, and other men high in the confidence of the Romish Church, as

services truly meritorious in themselves and highly acceptable to God; when they saw such men as Bossuet, Fenelon, and Flechier, (who in all the common walks of human life were estimated as enlightened and humane men,) either conniving at, or having no influence to prevent or diminish, those impolitic, those frantic, those murderous measures of the civil, ecclesiastical, and military despotism, which stalked through the land, eclipsed its true glory, and diminished its physical and moral strength; when they saw that popish rulers did not scruple to extend the population, increase the trade, and greatly promote the wealth and political strength of rival nations, provided they could annihilate Protestantism and toleration at home; when, I say, the Protestants saw these things, their hatred to Popery was strengthened, their union and attachment to each other became more close, as a means of common safety. It also induced them to discountenance every political measure, and every class of men, from whence it was likely the interests of the Church of Rome would derive the slightest advantage. England and Holland especially became more united, and more jealous for the safety of their Protestant communities; and the glorious revolution was hastened, matured, and consolidated, by the serious impressions which the ruin of the Protestants in France had produced.

It is likely I may be censured by some for the remarks I have made on the spirit of Popery, and they may think it is the result of an indiscreet zeal for the Protestant cause;—that I have not given due attention to the nature of the times,—or carefully watched the spirit and language of modern Roman Catholics, who

are much more enlightened than their forefathers,—and have also discovered much more mildness and liberality in their writings;—and that this indicates a new and interesting era in the opinions and feelings of the Catholic body. I wish the reader to know, that it is not the result of ignorance, or inattention to these points, which has led me to speak as I have, but that it is the knowledge of these facts which has impelled me to pursue the course I have taken. I have watched the spirit and language of the moderate, candid, and liberal part of the Catholic body with the greatest satisfaction; and I hope that this spirit and temper will widely spread, and powerfully operate to bring the two great bodies of Protestants and Catholics closer together, at least as to mutual expressions of good will, and to a co-operation in measures of general utility. But I own my apprehension that this spirit is very limited, and also that it is calculated to produce the false notion that Popery itself is altered, that it is not so inimical to Protestantism as formerly, and that there is no need for any caution or jealousy for the interests of the latter. The impression on my mind is different; and therefore I have freely expressed it: but I trust, in doing this, I have not discovered any illiberality of sentiment, or used any expression incompatible with the mild and gentle spirit of the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus. Where I have spoken harshly, it is not against the persons, but against the spirit of their religion, and the measures which that spirit has produced.

The modern advocates of Popery are some of them men of a very different stamp from the ancient ones; they were clumsy, sour, intolerant persons; their very

mode of attack was so rude and coarse, so full of wrath and destruction, that it carried its own remedy with it: but the modern Catholics, at least in England, are enlightened, cool, reflecting men; they preach up candour and charity at the moment in which they are instilling the praises and principles of Popery into publications, in reading which we are so fascinated with the talents of the writers, and the brilliancy of their style and manner, or so pleased with the subjects with which they are interwoven, that we forget that what we are reading of the majesty, the purity, the amiableness, and the loveliness of religion, is not of religion as it is described in the holy Scriptures in its own naked simplicity and beauty, or in our Protestant Churches; but that it is religion degraded and distorted in the pompous ceremonies at Rome, and the gaudy show which is exhibited when the pontiff is performing high mass. If these friends to the religion of Rome are thus active, and force their views of the popish religion upon the Protestant eye by such various and favourable mediums, surely one Protestant minister will be forgiven for a well-meant endeavour to guard his fellow Christians against the danger of deception, and for endeavouring, though feebly, to shew Popery as it has always been, as it still is, and always will be, in its own *nature*, a superstitious, an idolatrous, an intolerant, and a cruel religion.\* I am no friend to persecution; I would ex-

\* That amiable and excellent man, Lord Russel, who fell a martyr to his zeal for the civil and religious liberties of his country, said, almost with his latest breath, "I know that Popery is a bloody and an idolatrous religion."

While the moderate part of the Catholic body are expressing the most liberal and tolerant sentiments, the head of that Church is send-

tend religious liberty and the rights of conscience, in their fullest measure, to the Roman Catholics. But I would also have Protestants steady and zealous in their attachment to the Protestant cause; I would have them strain every nerve in the use of legitimate and honourable means to obstruct the increase of Popery, and to prevent the Protestant population of the United Kingdom from going back to that unscriptural and odious religion.\*

It is very evident, that too many Protestants have lost sight abroad the Jesuits, to renew their machinations against the Protestant Churches. Upon this subject, the following quotation speaks very decidedly and correctly: "We are exceedingly jealous of any institution which lags very far behind the spirit of the age; which preserves, as a sort of relic, the temper and bigotry of older days; which threatens to retard the march of mind, and to drag us back into those regions of prejudice and intolerance from which we imagined ourselves to have escaped: and such an institution, in our humble opinion, is Jesuitism. If an instrument is wanted, which may at once quench the flame of charity—throw us back in the career of ages—sow the seeds of everlasting division—lay a train which is to explode on the citadel of truth, and overturn her sacred towers—we venture confidently to affirm, that Jesuitism is that instrument. *Christian Observer*, March, 1815, p. 176, 177.

\* "No less than *four* public masses for the soul of the Duc D'Enghien have been celebrated in London. Each was numerously attended by fashionable *Protestants*; and the last was given by a subscription, in which Protestants united with Catholics; and some of the former are said to have subscribed as much as 20*l.* towards a service, for their opposition to which thousands of Protestants, in that very metropolis, have formerly gone to the stake. Who can doubt, therefore, that *the influence of Popery is increasing?*" *Fashionable World displayed*, p. 61. Speaking of the passing and repassing of the host in Lisbon, Captain Elliott, in his *Treatise on the Defence of Portugal*, says, "The officers and soldiers of the British army halt and take off their hats, but do not kneel;" it would have been a most shameful thing if they had.

their abhorrence of Popery; that Protestant governments have not used any exertions to remove or to restrain its unfounded and insolent claims, or to procure toleration for Protestants in Catholic countries; that a great number of Roman Catholic institutions have been formed, and have been permitted to spread the doctrines and discipline of that Church; that a great many converts, children and grown persons, have been made from the Protestant faith both in England and Ireland. Let it also be remembered, that the Roman Catholics of the old school have not utterly abandoned the hope of Great Britain once more being brought under the influence of a Catholic king, and of course to a connexion with Rome: a striking proof of this is afforded us by the conduct of the late Cardinal York, who, after having for many years received a pension from his present majesty, actually bequeathed his supposed right and interest in the crown of Great Britain to a foreign Roman Catholic prince. The Pope also claims a power over all the Catholic subjects of even Protestant governments, to which I cannot help thinking conscientious English Roman Catholics are bound to submit; and if so, their religion is incompatible with their allegiance to their sovereign, at least it strikes me so.\*

\* The following paragraph is extracted from a paper said to be a frank declaration which "the holy father had charged the Cardinal Gabrielli, pro-secretary of state, to address to his most illustrious highness Signor Cavaliero Aldini, charge-d'affaires of the kingdom of Italy: 'The Pope is not only the bishop of Rome, but he is at the same time the head of the Catholic Church; and in that character he is entitled to choose his ministers and coadjutors from the different nations of the earth.'" Query, If any Irish or English Catholics are, or should be, appointed ministers and coadjutors to the Pope, will they not be bound *in all things* to obey him?

Although it has been admitted, that the language and spirit of some of the modern advocates of Popery differ widely from what they have usually been, and although, when I read their writings, I feel pleasure in the liberal sentiments they sometimes express, and find that I cannot but respect them as men, still I cannot help repeating to myself the words of good old Isaac, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." There is such a leaning toward the light and liberality of Protestantism on one side, and yet such a cleaving to the darkness and tyranny of Popery on the other, that one is constrained to say, "Why halt ye between two opinions?" All such liberal and well-meaning members of the Roman Catholic communion are strongly appealed to in the following quotation, although two only are expressly named:

"It is not without some degree of compassion, mingled with harsher feelings, that we view the lot of such men as Mr. Butler and Mr. Eustace. It is rather a melancholy destiny, we think, to be fascinated to a Church which rises to view on the great field of history, like a mountain beset almost all over with gibbets, fires, racks, black orifices of dungeons, savages for inflicting torments and death, and graves of martyrs. And it is melancholy to see such men labouring to sooth and coax the revolting, struggling repugnance of their feelings, striving to qualify the characteristic facts with which their Church glares upon them, and seeking for any occasional or collateral causes to charge such facts upon, rather than the genuine inherent spirit of that Church. When driven to condemn unequivocally some of the enormities which resulted from the intrinsic quality of the Church, they contrive, with



admirable dexterity, to obey the precept of hating the sin yet loving the sinner. They would be smitten with horror at the suggestion of execrating and abandoning the Church, which not only has perpetrated such things, but has never been induced to avow, in any public solemn form, its repentance of them, and to enjoin at length, on all its adherents, the duty of giving full toleration to Protestants. How would any suggestion of this kind be received at Rome? How would it at any moment, for half a millennium past, have been there received? How would it be received by the vast majority of ecclesiastics of all Catholic countries excepting France? Those gentlemen know perfectly well, that in those countries, where the Catholic Church retains its full prevalence, the most furious hatred is still entertained against what they call the heretics; and that, in a large portion of Europe, the attempt to form a congregation of Protestant worshippers would draw down the instant rancorous vengeance of ecclesiastics, of magistrates, and of the populace. Such is, palpably, the Church which these intelligent persons revere as the representative of heaven upon earth. We cannot allow them *to make another Church of their own*, with ever so much liberality, tolerance, and so forth, among its constituent qualities, and to let themselves fancy they are good Catholics, while they adhere to such an imaginary Church. The plain question for them is, Are you of this actual Church of Rome, or not? The real, essential nature of that Church is still palpable in its spirit and works;—Do you adopt that Church or not? If you are really the friends of religious freedom, by what paltering with conscience do you elude the conviction of the duty of becoming Pro-

testants? In how many centuries do you expect that the actual Church of Rome will come to that liberality and charity, which you so profess to admire, and the contraries of which you must therefore abhor.”\*

If the Reader is inclined to think, that too much severity and too much apprehension has been discovered in regard to Popery, he must recollect, that the Editor of this new edition of Claude's Defence, in tracing out a sketch of the Author's life, has been constrained to walk over the desolations of the Protestant Churches of France,—to behold the smoking ruins of their colleges and churches,—to hear the cry of their widows and orphans, and witness the poverty and distress of those thousands of fugitives who fled from their native homes into foreign lands: and also, that after looking back upon these scenes, he has looked forwards and calculated what would be the result, if that crown, which Cardinal York has bequeathed to a Roman Catholic prince, should ever be placed on such a head? It is enough for my argument, that the thing is even possible.† What, then, would be the result? It would is-

\* Eclectic Review, February, 1815, p. 155, 156.

† The following circumstance has been announced in the public prints: “The Cardinal York, who was the last of the Stuart family, and who once assumed the title of Henry the Ninth, died at Rome, aged 82. Though a pretender to his crown, *his Majesty of England* has for some years allowed him a pension of 4000*l.* per annum. The Paris papers state, that the cardinal has bequeathed to the King of Sardinia jewels to the value of four millions of francs; the cardinal has also solemnly declared, as far as a pretender can declare, his Sardinian Majesty to be heir to the crown of England and Scotland, and bequeathed to him the royal titles accordingly.” It is also reported, that the King of Sardinia was no sooner restored to his kingdom, and restored to it too through the influence of England, than he revived the

sue in the ruin of our Protestant colleges and academies, the shutting up or demolition of our Christian temples, the proscription of our Bibles; in short, imprisonment, banishment, and death, would again desolate our land; nor would the change be less extensive, or less tremendous, than that which befel the Jewish Church of old. Let Protestants look at and ponder over the awful fact. In the days of her prosperity, David said, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generations following." Such is the present glory and moral strength of our British Zion; pass to the contemplation of the same Church in the days of Jeremiah: "All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth? All thine enemies have opened their mouths against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up, certainly this is the day that we looked for, we have found, we have seen it." Such would be the desolation of our churches, and the exulting language of our enemies, if ever the throne of Great Britain should be re-occupied by a Roman Catholic prince. Improbable as is this danger, and far as I would fain hope it will ever be kept, yet we ought, as Protestants, to watch against the smallest degree of evil; and in respect of our British Zion, we ought to indulge the sentiments and language of Holy Writ, "Peace be within thy persecuting statutes against the mild and inoffensive Protestant inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont, whose long and steady attachment to the Protestant cause reflects the highest honour upon them.

walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee: because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good."

I shall close this Sketch of the Life of Claude with the following passage on the Reformation, from the pen of the immortal author of *Paradise Lost*; it is worthy of being written in letters of gold:

"When I recall to mind at last, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the Church; how the bright and blissful Reformation (by Divine Power) struck through the black and settled night of ignorance and anti-christian tyranny; methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears; and the sweet odour of the returning Gospel imbathes his soul with the fragrancy of heaven. Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the dusty corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it, the schools opened, divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues; the princes and cities trooping apace to the new-erected banner of salvation; the martyrs, with the unresisting might of weakness, shaking the powers of darkness, and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon."\*

\* Milton's Prose Works, vol. i. page 3, 4.

THE

## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

---

**P**REVIOUS to the glorious era of the Reformation, the whole of Europe was covered with the thick clouds of spiritual darkness; the priests and the people, like the foolish virgins, were slumbering in the arms of carnal security, alike insensible to, and altogether unprepared for, the coming of the Lord. Sunk into the grossest immorality and irreligion, they appear to have been as totally unacquainted with the inimitable beauty and spiritual character of Christianity, as with its renovating and sanctifying energy. Nearly the whole of religion, as to the multitude, consisted of a blind submission of the understanding, the conscience, and the actions, to priestly domination, and an endless round of unmeaning, unprofitable, and superstitious ceremonies, equally unauthorized by the opinions and practice of the first and purest ages of the Christian Church, and by the pages of sacred writ.

The princes and the cabinets of the countries in which the Roman Catholic Religion predominated, were infested by agents of the papacy, and subjected to the caprice and intrigues of the sovereign pontiff and his court, who exercised over them the most degrading and oppressive domination—a domination the more abominable in its nature, and the more insufferable in

its consequences, from its execution being left in the hands of priests, whose ambition and intolerance promoted measures, which were so detestable and injurious as to excite the execration of every enlightened and liberal-minded man, who knew how to appreciate the value of social and national blessings, or the supreme excellency of an "enlightened piety"\* and true practical godliness.

With the exception of the clergy and other immediate agents of the Court of Rome, to whom this system was a source of power and emolument, the whole world groaned under this ecclesiastical tyranny and spoliation, and ardently sighed for emancipation, but with hope unusually faint, so deeply had the enemies of civil and religious liberty entrenched themselves. To accomplish such a mighty deliverance appeared so extremely difficult, and even to attempt it was fraught with such hazard and danger, as utterly appalled the best informed and the most determined friends of liberty and truth.

God, who is never at a loss for means or instruments to effect his gracious designs, prepared the way, selected the most suitable moment of time, and out of the very bosom of that Church, the corruptions of which had reached a magnitude unparalleled in the pages of all preceding ecclesiastical histories, raised up champions admirably adapted to perform all the du-

\* Those who were present at the annual meeting of the Westminster Bible Society, March 23, 1815, will recollect that the above expression was introduced in the speech of one of the royal dukes with admirable propriety and effect.

vies and encounter all the difficulties of this momentous work.

In those nations where the Reformation was embraced, the Holy Scriptures were translated, the public preaching of the pure Gospel was revived; the people read and examined the one, and crowded to hear the other; light sprang up in every direction; the governments adopted a more enlightened and liberal policy; the principles of religious and civil liberty were better understood, and more valued: and, to crown all, its moral and religious advantages immediately gave a new aspect to the general face of society; it continues to this day making progress, and finally promises to bless all the surrounding nations with light, happiness, and purity.

It was not to be expected that such a change should be accomplished without opposition: the enemies to this glorious work were extremely numerous, and were as powerful as they were active and severe in their measures for the suppression of the new heresy, which, to the astonishment of the Roman pontiff and his conclave, burst forth in some new direction almost every day. Some of the first agents in the work of the Reformation were imprisoned, and many others banished or put to death; and many strove by their pens to put the Protestant advocates out of countenance. This was bad policy on the part of the Church of Rome, for this discussion became the most powerful engine on the side of the Reformation: the Protestants appealed to the Holy Scriptures, and to the doctrine and practice of the primitive Churches, and the corruptions and defects of the Romish hierarchy were made manifest:

and it became the settled and general opinion of the Protestants, that they had a right to separate from a Church which had so completely departed from the doctrine, discipline, and practice, of the first Christian Churches.

On the other side, the Reformation was condemned as the most detestable and mischievous heresy, and its promoters and abettors accounted deserving of the vengeance of God as well as of the civil magistrate. Of course judgment was denounced against the liberty, the prosperity, and the lives of heretics; and those persons who stood most forward and were most successful in the detection and murder of heretics, were esteemed the best servants and the most dutiful sons of the Church, and most deserving of honours here and of the favour of God and eternal life hereafter. Still the cause was maintained and prospered; the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church: and amidst many sore and bitter persecutions, many zealous and enlightened Christians arose to vindicate the principles and the conduct of the Protestants, nor could their adversaries gainsay or refute their luminous and convincing proofs of the justice of their cause.

Many publications, which for a time have met with a warm and almost universal applause, have gradually sunk into oblivion; on the other hand, there are some books, which, though long since introduced to public notice, continue to be very generally remembered and very highly revered, and, by a combination of circumstances, are even better known, and become more useful, than when they first claimed the public notice, and received the just and grateful plaudits of the wise and



the good. I know scarce any instance to which this remark can be applied with more propriety, than to Claude's Defence of the Reformation.

Almost a century and a half has elapsed since this book first issued from the press; yet its intrinsic value and its admirable adaptation to its avowed object are neither of them in the smallest degree diminished: so far from it, the nature of the times in which we live, the vast importance of the discussion, together with the events which are every day arising, while they bring back the remembrance of the book, afford a strong probability that it will be more generally and more attentively read than heretofore, especially by Irish and English Roman Catholics. The Editor presumes he is not too sanguine in cherishing a hope, that if the well-informed and candid part of that persuasion will read it with impartiality, it must shake their prejudices against the Reformation—that great event, which more than any other has (under Divine Providence) contributed to consolidate the union, the glory, and the strength, of our much-loved country; and without which it might at this very day have been the wretched victim of all that darkness and bigotry, which enslave those countries which still remain under the deadly shade of papal superstition and intolerance, and where all the genuine springs of moral excellence, political strength, and civil and religious liberty, are either dreadfully poisoned or totally dried up.

Among the many illustrious men who have advocated the cause of the Reformation, and who, by their enlightened and ardent zeal, have not only extended its influence and consolidated its strength, but have also

reflected lustre upon the Protestant cause in general, the name of CLAUDE stands one of the most distinguished: he is too well known, and has attained too high a character, to render it needful to say much in favour of the works which proceeded from his pen; one of the most important is this Defence of the Reformation.

It is a book which reflects the highest credit on the talents and piety of the writer. It is just what a book on such a subject ought to be. It is written with the mildness and candour of a Christian, the ability of a scholar, and the fervour of a divine who felt the incalculable importance of the Reformation, and the endless advantages which it had already produced, and which would incessantly arise as it continued to advance and extend. Indeed, if this advocate of the Protestant cause had never been known to the Christian world but through the medium of this single effort of his zeal for the interests of religion, it would have been sufficient to render his name immortal.

To well-instructed and decided Protestants, Claude on the Reformation will always be a valuable book; and the more it is read, the more it will be admired and esteemed: but in the present crisis it is eminently important, especially to that class of Protestants who, either from inattention or want of leisure, have not yet fully examined the excellency and truth of those grand principles on which the early Protestants separated from the Church of Rome, and which must inevitably continue to increase and perpetuate that separation.

Of late years, this country has become a refuge for

foreign Roman Catholics; and they, together with the priests both in England and Ireland, are by no means backward in attempting to make proselytes. In some cases, I fear they have been too successful; consequently, it is of the highest importance that the youth in every Protestant family, particularly of the more respectable class, should read this Defence of the Reformation, which is calculated equally to instruct and fortify the mind with sound Protestant principles.\*

\* I could produce *many proofs* of the increase of Popery in addition to those I have before stated, but they would extend this Preface too much; I will only mention the following cases:

A gentleman, who gives an account of *one of the monastic institutions in this country*, subjoins the following remark: "The number of persons at this place, who within a few years have embraced the Romish faith, is very considerable; the contagion has spread, and is spreading into the neighbouring villages." *Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1801, p. 923.

But Popery not only spreads its baneful influence in the mother country, but in its colonies also. A letter from Newfoundland, inserted in one of our periodical prints, has this passage: "One thousand persons along this coast have become Roman Catholics; the reason they assign is, they think it better to be Roman Catholics than to be of no religion at all."

Again, the same writer remarks, "There is a place called *Cuberts*, in Conception Bay, where it is said that more than 500 persons have become Papists who six years ago were Protestants." Is there not a want of zeal—must there not be a strange neglect somewhere among Protestant statesmen and Protestant ministers—that any of the dependencies of Great Britain, and especially one which has been so long united to it as the above, should be so destitute of the means of instruction and worship? Diseases, even in the extremities of the body, should not be treated with neglect; inasmuch as they have been known, even by a very slow and almost imperceptible progress, ultimately to reach the vitals.

It is of importance to introduce to public notice a new edition of this excellent work, not only because the great question of Catholic Emancipation is exciting a more general and liberal discussion of the subjects which have so long been controverted between Catholics and Protestants, but also because the former are at this time more friendly to education; the higher and middling classes, especially in the United Kingdom, being frequently disposed to read the Holy Scriptures, and even avowed Protestant publications. Let us hope that some may be induced to examine the grounds on which the Reformation took place, and weigh more impartially the arguments which have been adduced in its defence; nor is it an unreasonable hope, that some of the numerous body of refugees, who have resorted from Roman Catholic countries to this kingdom, may be induced to read this work.

I feel no hesitation in saying, that I intended the republication of Claude on the Reformation as a measure of self-defence on the part of the Protestant Churches; and I presume that every candid and reasonable Roman Catholic will allow, that the measure itself has nothing in it blame-worthy. It would indeed be a strange conceit on their part, if, while their priests and laity are republishing old works and writing new ones, with a view to decry Protestantism, and to defend, and with unusual plausibility trumpet forth the supposed truth and excellency of their ancient but unscriptural religion;—I say it would be strange, if they should think it is our duty to be silent and inactive as to the great controversy between us, while they are pushing their united energies against the Protestant interests in

every direction and in every possible form, even in forms the most insinuating and least expected.\*

\* The propriety of again calling the recollection of the Christian world to the powerful arguments by which M. Claude maintains the necessity and the justice of the Reformation, is evidenced by the publication of a work of M. Gregoire, formerly Bishop of Blois, entitled, *A History of the Religious Sects*, bearing date July, 1814. Under the article entitled, *The Protestants*, the author passes a eulogium on Bossuet, positively denies that the clergy had any hand in the massacre of Paris, and charges the Reformation with producing Socinianism and Deism. With as much propriety might he attribute all the errors which sprang up in the first Christian Churches, to the preaching of the apostles. The truth is, that errors and heresies have always sprang up amongst the good corn, and will be mingled with it till the time of the harvest. As to the massacre of Paris, I own I doubt M. Gregoire's statement; the following paragraph will abundantly shew, that it was not so repugnant to the ideas and feelings of all the Romish clergy as he imagines and wishes us to believe :

“ How was the news of this butchery received at Rome—that faithful city, that holy Mother of Churches? How did the vicar of Christ, the successor of Peter, and the father of the Christian world, relish it? Let Thuanus tell the horrid truth: ‘ When the news,’ says he, ‘ came to Rome, it was wonderful to see how they exulted for joy. On the 6th of September, when the letters of the Pope's legate were read in the assembly of the cardinals, by which he assured the Pope that all was transacted by the express order of the king, it was immediately decreed, that the Pope should march with his cardinals to the church of St. Mark, and, in the most solemn manner, give thanks to God for so great a blessing conferred on the See of Rome and the Christian world; and that, on the Monday after, solemn mass should be celebrated in the church of Minerva; (at which the Pope Gregory the Thirteenth and cardinals were present;) and that a jubilee should be published throughout the whole Christian world, and the cause of it declared to be, to return thanks to God for the extirpation of the enemies of the truth in France. In the evening the cannon of St. Angelo was fired, the whole city illuminated with bonfires, and no one sign of rejoicing omitted that was usually made for the greatest victo-

To those who have already read this book, no other recommendation is necessary; and to those who have not read it, I will give a few short extracts from writers of acknowledged merit and penetration: Mr. Bayle says, "It is one of the best books that either himself (i. e. Mr. Claude) or any other Protestant clergyman ever published." Mr. R. Robinson, in his *Life of Claude*, speaking of Dr. Nicolle's work, entitled, *Well-grounded Prejudices against the Calvinists*, says, "The Romanists, however, gained nothing by it; on the contrary, they lost much by Mr. Claude's answer, entitled, *A Defence of the Reformation*, allowed by all to be a master-piece—the best defence of our separation from Rome that either he or any other Protestant minister had ever published." Again, Mr. Robinson has the following strong expressions: "Mr. Claude on the Reformation, one of the best-written books that I have ever had the pleasure of reading: I have seen an English edition of it, but I believe it is scarce—I wish it were reprinted: it is indeed an incomparable performance, and it appears to me to contain neither a line too much, nor to leave room for the reader to wish one line more." If it was a scarce book when the writer from whom the last quotations are made gave this testimony of it, (near 40 years ago,) it may fairly be presumed that it is much more so at the present time, and of course that its republication is not a work of supererogation.

ries obtained in favour of the Romish Church.' "—*Encycl. Brit.* under the word, *Massacre*. What a demonstration of the spirit of Popery does this fact exhibit! The editor of that work, speaking of the massacre, remarks that "Thuanus himself calls it a *detestable villany*."

The first edition in French was printed in 4to. at Roan, in 1673; another edition was printed at the Hague, in 1682, 12mo.; and the English edition, from which the present one is printed, was published in 1683.

I fear, indeed I know, that there are some mistakes, which were not discovered till the sheets were printed off: some of the names of authors, places, &c. are differently spelt; in one or two instances the dates are wrong, especially the registering of the Edict of Nantz is said to be December 22 instead of October. This, as well as some other inaccuracies, have arisen from closely following other authors, in whose works they had escaped correction.

I certainly ought to make some apology for the length of time the work has been in hand. It was from the first designed to afford permanent work to the Manufactory for the Employment of the Deaf and Dumb, and when other work pressed, Claude was, as a matter of course, suspended. It has fallen, however, with the greatest inconvenience upon myself, as I fear it will occasion a considerable diminution in the number of subscribers, by death and other incidents.

JOHN TOWNSEND.

*Jamaica Row, Bermondsey,  
April 27, 1815.*





THE

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

---

---

**H**OWSOEVER men fall into the misery of being deluded by errors, nothing appears amiable under that name; and whatsoever carries the name of Reformation, is therefore thought honourable and glorious, because it professes to cast out those. The Romanists themselves applaud a Reformation, and will therefore own ours to be no other than pretended; and plead that their religion is actually a Reformation, that they may the more confidently urge that any other is unnecessary. But we cannot be ignorant how the name has been abused, and experience has shewn us what Reformation they have made in the Gospel of our Saviour; what truths they have expunged, how they have perverted and depraved, and indeed made it quite another Gospel than what was at first delivered: they have reformed it, only to make it serve their interests and elevate their God, both which it so much opposes and condemns. As this raised a generous indignation and an heroic zeal in those whom God had prepared to discover and overthrow their abuses, so it made them see the high necessity of another Reformation, and to endeavour it with that success which the Protestant world justly admires and blesses God for at this day. Our fathers have, to their honour and praise, taken care to instil the principles and the love of a true Reformation into their posterity, and it has been so strong as to increase with fresh vigour and more largely to diffuse itself in our times. But how many are there even among ourselves, who owe their religion to little else than their education, and cry up still loudly for the Reformation, without being able to give solid reasons and grounds of their profession? They have sucked it in with their milk, and as they took it up without their own foresight, so they have

thought it needless to take a view of the justice and the reasons of it, if they did but profess themselves Protestants. The most have a zeal, but not according to knowledge, which were highly commendable if it were joined with it. Indeed, if we take a view of all who unite under the name of Protestants, and the divers parties who have little else common between them, we must sadly acknowledge ourselves like the Ephesians, who, when they had made an insurrection in the city, and for two hours' space cried up their Diana, yet 'tis hard to define which excelled, their zeal or their ignorance, when a far greater part of them knew not so much as why they were come together. Therefore it is high time for us to be instructed in what we so much talk of, that we may be sensible reformation is somewhat more than a pretence, and that our adversaries are not to be vanquished as some armies have been, by the great noise and clamour before the engagement: no, there must be solid argument, and well-tempered truths, to assert our religion; and our reason, as well as our faith, must be able to remove those mountains, which the deluge of errors in the Church of Rome will be sure to raise in our way; as some impute the origin of natural hills to the universal flood, which caused even the Ararat on which the ark rested. There are Alps to be past, before we can enter Italy by way of conquest; and if we would pass them, we have no other way to do it, but by cutting through them. Considerations like these made me first read, and consequently admire, this author, whose cause was the same with ours, and he maintained it, not without success; and I expected something extraordinary of courage and conduct from a man who had so well defended himself even in the enemies' country, where he had no advantage but his cause: the only conquest he could pretend to, was, not to be overcome; and he could expect no assistance from men, but what our Saviour himself found—when he was assaulted with swords and staves, his disciples forsook him and fled. Yet notwithstanding all these seeming inconveniences and discouragements, they gave him only greater occasions of setting forth his Maker's glory, and purchasing his own; for though he came to them fairly in

the name of the living God, and they armed with helmets of brass and spears like weavers' beams, his smooth stones, taken out of that current of living water, strike down the haughty Gathites, and sink into their foreheads—the certain fate of all those who defy the armies of the living God. And we may guess at the completeness of his victory, by the grandeur of his triumph, for he put them to their last reserve, their censure; they condemned what they could not confute, and when their school-divinity failed, the flames (as I have heard) were called in to their assistance. This is the infallible and Catholic argument, and whatsoever opposeth the Pope's supremacy, must expect to feel that of the faggot. And to shew that this way is ancient enough, the Persians by the same proved the greatness and universality of their deity, because it consumed all the images of the other gods, till Canopus's water retorted the vain sophistry upon them, and, with a more powerful pitcher, quenched their pretensions and their *numen* together. But books have souls as well as men, which survive their martyrdom, and are not burnt but crowned by the flames that encircle them. They quickly found that there was nothing combustible in it, but the paper; the truth flew upward, like the angel from Manoah's sacrifice, untouched by the fire, and unsullied by the smoke, and found a safe refuge at the footstool of the God of truth. And sure whatsoever received so severe a doom from our adversaries, may challenge from us a kind reception; they have taught us to value what they thought not below their malice, and it will be the greatest commendation amongst Protestants, that the Papists knew it worth the burning. This likewise may supply the place of a panegyric upon the Author, than whom none has done or suffered more in so glorious a cause; and seeing we give so great a welcome to numbers of French Protestants that daily arrive amongst us, let us receive Mr. Claude as one of them, and use him no better nor any worse than he deserves. It is the prerogative of a translator, to make him an Englishman, to give him all the immunities our own authors enjoy, and to make him equal in liberty and property with the best of our native writers. And indeed no man

can wonder why he has now crossed the seas, and appears in this dress, with half the reason I do, that he appeared in it no sooner: I have heard it has been the wish of some great divines, but their own employments hindered them from effecting it; and it might have been expected, that it should have moved somebody to have attempted it upon that very account, because they desired it. For since the gift of tongues is ceased, and those inspired linguists have been long ago silenced, translation is none of the worst ways of supplying that absent grace; neither can it be accounted beneath any man by his industry to retrieve a departed miracle. I could wish he had come forth in all the ornaments of our language, as he did at first in those of his own: those ceremonies of speech, though in themselves not absolutely necessary, and add not much to the substance, yet they contribute not a little to the decency and pleasing part of an author; for there is a delightful prospect arising from the agreeable mixture of the colours of language, without which a book is never the less solid, but with which it is much more persuading. However, he appears the more in his own dimensions, the thinner his garments are, and the closer they sit about him. I shall make no apology for the Author, because I know nothing in him that needs it, unless some should mistake some of his expressions about episcopacy. Where if he has let fall any thing that may offend, he has these two things at least for his excuse: First, that he lived under an external constitution of a Church that did not exercise that way of government. Secondly, he himself tells us, those that he mentions were only such who were of the popish communion, and only as such he uses them. I shall not detain the Reader any longer from the book itself, only I am to desire him, that whatsoever faults he finds in the Preface, may not be imputed any further to the book itself; for the more mistakes there are in it, the more proper it is for that perfect piece it is set before; as the errors of the Church of Rome had no small share in the occasion of our religion, and may in some sense be styled, *The Preface to the Reformation.*

THE  
**EPISTLE DEDICATORY**  
OF  
*THE AUTHOR*

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

**THE MARQUIS OF RUVIGNY,**

Lieutenant-General of His Majesty's Armies,

AND

GENERAL DEPUTY OF THE PROTESTANTS IN FRANCE.

---

MY LORD,

**MY** first thoughts, after I had read the book of the Prejudices, were, not to write any answer to it: for besides that I saw in that book nothing else but the same accusations from which our fathers and we have already been frequently justified, and that moreover they were written there in such a passionate and envenomed style, for my own part I did not think myself bound to follow everywhere those persons who seem to make it their design to load me with the number of their volumes, affecting to take me for a party in all the works that they daily publish, and even in those that are most remote from the chief subject of our controversy. Yet when I perceived the loud outcries that these gentlemen and their followers made about their Prejudices, to draw the applause of the world to themselves, as if they had silenced us, and our Reformation remained overthrown under the weight of their victory, I judged it necessary to enter upon this new labour, and the deference

that I had for those who exhorted me to undertake it, has brought forth this Treatise that I now give to the Public. Those who will take the pains to read it, will find that I have not merely tied myself to the book that I confute, but that, to save myself the labour of doing it twice, I have considered the matter in its first principles, and examined it in its just extent, that I might be the better able to judge of it. I acknowledge the subject treated on required more learning, readiness, and leisure, than I was master of; but it may be also they will find in the plain and natural way wherein I have handled it, something more easy than if I had employed more art and meditation in it. It is this makes me hope, that when I shall not fully have answered the expectations of those who have engaged me in this work, yet they will not read this Defence without some satisfaction. However it be, my Lord, I take the boldness to present it to you, and to entreat the favour of you to receive it as a token of the acknowledgment that I have for so much goodness as you have testified towards me. I am persuaded, that those of our communion in this kingdom will very heartily consent, that my weak pen should also express the sentiments that they all have of your person, and of the care that you take to uphold their common interests. I will also affirm, that your merit is so generally acknowledged, that when nothing shall be disputed but the just praises that are due to your prudence, to the wisdom that appears throughout your whole conduct, to the inviolable principles of honour and justice that are the perpetual rule of your actions, and in a word to the great and solid virtues that you practise with such exactness, they can assure themselves that there will be no difference about that, between those of the one and the other communion. But all those qualities that they take notice of in you, how rich and resplendant soever they are, even in the eyes of those who are destitute of them, would be nothing else but a false dazzling light, if they were not accompanied with real piety, which only gives a value to all the moral virtues. You are not ignorant, my Lord, you, in whom we saw it but a few months ago, how

your soul, ready to take its flight, trembled and remained confounded in the view of all that human righteousness, and that you could find no rest in your spirit, any where else than in the bosom of religion and piety. This alone was that which gave you the tranquillity of soul, which taught all those who had the honour to come near your bed, after what manner a good man, who could rest assured of God's mercy and the grace of Jesus Christ, might look death in the face. It is this that has yet prolonged your days, or to speak better, that has restored life to you by an extraordinary blessing of heaven, little different from that which Hezekiah heretofore received as the fruit of his humiliation and prayer.

Continue, my Lord, to lay out that life which has been given you again, in the service of God, and in the employments to which your calling engages you, and of which you have so great an account to render. Those employments are certainly difficult, and if I may take the boldness to say it, they are oppressing, through their quality, through their numbers, and through the accidents that either accompany or follow them. But He who has called you to them, will give you ability to discharge them, and will shed abroad his blessing upon your cares, as far as shall be necessary for his own glory and the good of the people, in whose favour you labour, and he himself will one day give you a reward for all those toilsome labours.

Although you do not need to be excited to do good, yet I take the confidence to hope, that you will be some way encouraged in the duties of your place, by the reading of this Work, which will more and more discover to you the justice of it. You will see therein the conduct of our fathers justified, in regard of their Reformation and separation from the Church of Rome; and by consequence you will therein see not only the right that we have, but the obligation and indispensable necessity also wherein we are, to live apart and divided from that Church, and united among ourselves in a religious and Christian society, till it shall please God to make the causes of that division cease, and join again that which men, I would say which

the Court of Rome and her Council of Trent, have put asunder. That re-union is a happiness that we will always beg of God with the most ardent prayers, and which we will receive as one of his highest favours, if his hand should bestow it. But it is also a thing which it is impossible for us to promise ourselves: while we shall not see the same desire of a good and holy reformation, which was almost general in our West in the days of our fathers, to be again revived in the Church of Rome; which yet they knew how to stifle with incredible skill. An author of those times, who himself contributed as much as any other to elude the good effects of that desire, has not failed to own it, and what is more, to own it to be just. "I do not deny," says he "that many at the beginning were not urged by a motion of piety, earnestly to cry out against some manifest abuses; and I confess, that we must attribute the chief cause of that division that at present rends the Church, to those who, being puffed up with a vain pride, under a pretence of ecclesiastical power, contemned and haughtily and disdainfully rejected those who admonished them with reason and modesty." And immediately after, that same author, reasoning about the means to re-establish a holy peace between the two parties, adds, "I do not believe, that we ought ever to hope for a firm peace in the Church, if those who have been the cause of that disunion do not begin by themselves; that is to say, unless those who have the ecclesiastical government in their hands, relax a little of that great rigour, and contribute something to the peace of the Church; and unless, in hearkening to the ardent prayers and exhortations of the greatest part of good men, they apply themselves to reform those manifest abuses, by the rule of the Holy Scriptures and of the ancient Church, from which they have wandered."\* After this manner spake a man engaged in the communion and interests of the Church of Rome, even in the time of the Council of Trent. He would indeed, after that, have us also, whom he

\* Cassander Consult. art. de Eccles.



accuses to have gone too far in the other extreme, yield something on our side, "and that we should return," as he speaks, "to ourselves;" but it ought not to be thought strange that he, being such a one as he was, would weaken by that corrective, confession that he made before, and it is enough for us that he has owned the force of the evil, and taken notice of the true and only remedy. God, who holds the hearts of all in his hand, kindle in them the love of the true religion, and give us all the grace to look to the blood that has ransomed the Church, and that first Spirit who consecrated it to one alone Jesus Christ, her Lord and Husband. For it is he only who can re-unite us; "Without me," says he, "ye can do nothing; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." I pray that the same God who has given you the knowledge of his Gospel, would make you persevere in it to the end; that he would confirm his love and fear in the souls of your children, who already so well answer the honour of their birth, and the care you have taken of their education; and lastly, that he would more and more shed abroad his blessing over your person, and over all your house. This is that which I desire from the bottom of my heart, and that you would do me the favour to believe that

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble and most obedient servant,

CLAUDE.

### THE ATTESTATION.

*WE* whose names are underwritten, certify that we have read the Answer of *MONSIEUR CLAUDE*, our most honoured colleague, to a book entitled “*The Prejudices, &c.*” in which we have found nothing contrary to the sentiments of the religion which we profess. Signed at Paris the nine and twentieth of November, 1672.

*DAILLÉ,*  
*MESNARD.*

# Contents of the First Volume.

---

## THE FIRST PART.

*Wherein it is shown that our Ancestors were obliged to examine by themselves the State of Religion and of the Church in their Days.*

*Page.*

CHAP. I.—General Considerations upon this Controversy.—The Division of this Treatise . . . . .	3
CHAP. II.—That the State of the Government of the Latin Church some Ages ago, gave to our Fathers Prejudices of its Corruption in Doctrine and Worship, sufficient to drive them more nearly to examine their Religion . . . . .	11
CHAP. III.—That the external State of that Religion itself, had, in the times of our Fathers, Signs of its Corruption sufficient to afford them just Motives to examine it . . . . .	30
CHAP. IV.—That such a Corruption of the Latin Church as our Fathers had conceived, was no ways an impossible thing . . .	47
CHAP. V.—More particular Reflections upon that Privilege of Infallibility which they ascribe to the Church, and of its Authority . . . . .	56
CHAP. VI.—An Examination of the Proofs which they produce to establish the Infallibility of the Church of Rome . . . . .	67
CHAP. VII.—That the Authority of the Prelates of the Latin Church had not any Right to bind our Fathers to yield a blind Obedience to them, or to hinder them from examining their Doctrines . . . . .	93
CHAP. VIII.—A further Examination of that Authority of the Prelates, and that absolute Obedience which they pretend ought to be given them . . . . .	105
CHAP. IX.—An Examination of those Reasons they allege to establish that sovereign Authority of the Prelates in the Latin Church . . . . .	135

## THE SECOND PART.


### *Of the Justice of the Reformation.*

	<i>Page.</i>
CHAP. I.—That our Fathers could not expect a Reformation, either from the hands of the Popes, or from those of the Prelates . . . . .	157
CHAP. II.—A Confirmation of the same thing, from the History of that which passed in the first Quarrels of Luther with the Court of Rome concerning Indulgences . . . . .	178
CHAP. III.—That our Fathers, not being able any more to hope for a Reformation on the part of the Pope or his Prelates, were indispensably bound to provide for their own Salvation, and to reform themselves . . . . .	195
CHAP. IV.—That our Fathers had a lawful and sufficient Call to reform themselves, and to labour to reform others . . . . .	206
CHAP. V.—An Answer to the Objections that are made against the Persons of the Reformers . . . . .	218
CHAP. VI.—A further Justification of the first Reformers against the Objections of the Author of the Prejudices contained in his Tenth and Eleventh Chapters . . . . .	241
CHAP. VII.—An Answer to the Objections of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Chapters of the Prejudices . . . . .	273
CHAP. VIII.—That our Fathers, in their Design of reforming themselves, were bound to take the Holy Scriptures alone for the Rule of their Faith . . . . .	296
CHAP. IX.—An Examination of the Objections which the Author of the Prejudices makes against the Scripture . . . . .	319

---

---

A DEFENCE  
OF  
*THE REFORMATION,*  
&c. &c.



*The First Part :*

WHEREIN IT IS SHEWN, THAT OUR ANCESTORS WERE  
OBLIGED TO EXAMINE BY THEMSELVES THE  
STATE OF RELIGION AND OF THE  
CHURCH IN THEIR DAYS.

---



# A DEFENCE OF THE REFORMATION,

&c. &c.

---

---

## THE FIRST PART.

---

---

### CHAP. I.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS UPON THIS CONTROVERSY.  
THE DIVISION OF THIS TREATISE.

**I**T is not difficult to understand why those who were possessed of the government of the Western Church in the days of our fathers, and those who have since succeeded them in the Church of Rome, have thought themselves so much concerned to oppose the Reformation: it would oblige them to strip themselves of that sovereign and absolute authority which they had usurped, and by which they had disposed the consciences of men to their wills; and it would force them to give an account of that public management which they held in their hands; and no person is ignorant that that is a thing of all others in the world most intolerable to those persons who have made a secular empire of the government of the Church. As those interests have made them lay hold of all they could to defend themselves, so they have raised a new controversy touching the right that our fathers had to reform themselves. They demand of us who our reformers were, from whence they came, and what call they had for so great a work? They accuse them to have been rebels and

schismatics, who lifted themselves up against the authority of their mother the Church, and broke the sacred bond of the Christian communion. They have defamed their persons as much as ever they could, and have laid to their charge the most wicked manners, to the end they might render them odious. In fine, they have put forward all that they could believe capable of retaining the people in a blind submission, and hindering them from entering upon any examination of the matters of religion.

But, blessed be God, that notwithstanding all the endeavours they have hitherto made on a subject that has exhausted all the subtleties of the schools, the justice of our cause, which is the same with that of our fathers, has not received the least prejudice; and we can even assure ourselves that there has been nothing said, the weakness and impertinency of which may not easily be displayed to the bare light of common sense.

For either those things which our fathers rejected, and which we reject with them, are indeed errors, superstitions, and inventions of men, as we believe them to be, or they are not. If they are not, we will be the first that shall condemn the Reformation; and when they shall let us see that, on the contrary, they are the truths and right worship that belong to the Christian religion, we shall be very ready to receive them. But if indeed they are errors and corruptions, as we are persuaded they are, with what reason can any man demand by what right we rejected them, since it is all one as to demand what right we have to be good men, and to take care of our own salvation? We may see then, from thence, that all those evasions are nothing else but vain wranglings, and that we ought always to examine those tenets that are controverted; for the justice or injustice of the Reformation entirely depends on their truth or falsehood. If we have right at the foundation, they ought not to raise a contention about the form: for to be willing to believe in God according to the purity of his word, and to be ready to serve



him sincerely, are the things to which we are all obliged, and which cannot be condemned, in whomsoever they are found; as, on the contrary side, to harden one's self in errors, to practise a false worship, and to expose one's self to the danger of damnation, under pretence of observing some formalities, is such a guidance of one's course as can never be justified.

It will here be to no purpose that they say, that in this controversy concerning the justice of the Reformation, they do not suppose that we have any reason in the foundation of it; but that, on the contrary, they have a mind to let us see that we have no right at all in the foundation, since we have none at all in the form: and that they would only say, that those things which we call errors and a false worship are not so indeed as we imagine them to be; since they are the institutions of a Church that cannot err, and to whose authority we ought absolutely to submit ourselves. This is, in my judgment, the course that not long since an author has taken, in a book entitled, "Just Prejudices against the Calvinists:" for he pretends to conclude that our religion is faulty in the very foundation, because there are errors in the manner of our reformation; and that those things which we reject as errors are the truths that we ought to believe, because we ought to acquiesce in the authority of the Church of Rome.

But that can never hinder us from coming to a discussion of the foundation itself, separated from all forms and from all prejudices: for when these gentlemen have reasoned against us after this manner, You are faulty in the very foundation, because you have not had right in the form; we oppose to that this other reasoning, whose consequence is not less valid, as to the subject about which it is concerned, We have not done wrong in the manner, because we have right in the foundation. And when they tell us, That which you call our errors, Transubstantiation, Adoration of the Host, Purgatory, &c. they are not errors, since we cannot err; we an-

swer them, You can err, because the Transubstantiation, the Adoration of the Host, the Purgatory, &c. that you teach, are errors. And when they reply, You ought to believe that which we teach you, because you ought to acquiesce and rest in our authority; we rejoin again, We ought not to acquiesce in your authority, because you teach us those things which we ought not to believe.

In these two ways of reasoning, it is certain that ours is the more equal, the more just, and more natural. For it is by far the more just and natural, that the judgment of those formalities should depend on the highest interest that can be in the world, which is that of the glory of God, and our own salvation; than, on the contrary, to make the glory of God, and our own salvation, to depend upon some formalities. It is far more reasonable to judge of the infallibility that the Church of Rome pretends to by the things that she teaches, than to judge of the things that she teaches by a pretence of her infallibility.

But although these two ways were equally natural and equally reasonable, they cannot deny, that that which at first sight drew nearer to the examination of the foundation were not more sure, and that all good men who ought to neglect nothing conducing to their salvation were not bound to enter into it, in order to the avoiding of errors. They propose on one side for a principle the authority of the Church of Rome, against which there are a thousand things to be said; on the other side we propose the authority of God himself, speaking in those Scriptures which all Christians receive, and which the very enemies of Christianity respect. Who will dare to deny that in this opposition it were not more sure to side with that part which rules all by the authority of God? You may deceive yourselves, say they, in taking that for the word of God, which is not so. And are not you, answer we, more liable to deceive yourselves in taking that for the church of God, which is not so, and in taking those for infallible, who are no ways so? There is far greater

reason to hope that God will *then* assist you with the illumination of his Spirit, when with humility you search out the sense of the Scriptures, which you are so often commanded to do, than when you search them through human prejudices, to submit your consciences to a certain order of men, whom God has never told you that they ought to be the masters of your faith.

After all, if they will make use of the authority of the Church of Rome, and the pretended faults of our reformation, as an argument sufficient to let us see that those things which we call errors are not really so, they can demand nothing more of us than to set down this proof in its order with the rest, and maturely to consider it in its turn, before we determine ourselves. But to pretend that that ought to hinder us from considering also the proofs on the contrary side, by which we may see that those things that we call errors are really so, this were an unjust pretence, and bordering on the greatest rashness. For the authority of the Church of Rome, and the pretended faults of the Reformation, whatsoever they be, are not principles so demonstrative and so evident among Christians, that after them they ought to hear nothing more. We ought then to yield to this proof its place in our discussion, but without any prejudice as to those that may be drawn for or against the very tenets that are contested, which ought to be first examined, as the more natural and most decisive. That being so, I hold that that which they have set before us will be to no purpose at all. For if from the examination that we shall make of those matters in themselves, it results that those things are not errors which we have rejected as such, but Christian truths, we have no further need either of the authority of the Church of Rome, or of the prejudices against the Reformation—the Reformation is sufficiently overthrown. And if, on the contrary, it results that those are errors, all the authority of the Church of Rome, and all the prejudices in the world, shall not be able to persuade men of good understandings that they are truths, and by consequence that the

Reformation is not just; for it is always just to extirpate errors.

It seems to me to appear already, that that debate which they have raised against us about the justice of our Reformation, and our separation from the Church of Rome, is rather a field wherein they would busy themselves in subtleties and declamations to amuse the people, than a just controversy whence one might justly expect any profit. Yet, as those subtleties and declamations, how vain and false soever they are, fail not of finding applause in the world, and always making some impressions on the minds of men, we acknowledge the too great effect that they have produced, which is, that the greatest part of those of the Church of Rome look upon us as schismatics, and think that we have disturbed the peace of the family of God, and violated the right of that religious society which had united us with them. The *idea* which they form of our religion appears not half so odious to them. After what manner they have disguised us, the most equitable among them discern, and fail not sometimes freely to confess the same, that we have all doctrines that are necessary to men's salvation; that our worship, as plain as it is, has nothing which does not tend to nourish in their hearts a true piety and a solid virtue; and that as to the form of our government, it has nothing so remote, either from prudence or from equity, or from the charity that Jesus Christ has recommended to us. But it is a far different *idea* which they form within themselves of our separation; for it becomes insupportable to them, when they compare it with the specious name of a Church, that ought to command the veneration of all holy men. So that this is most ordinarily the matter of their reproaches, which they the more exaggerate, as a thing about which they imagine we have not the least shew wherewith to defend ourselves: I dare affirm, that as to the far greater part, that is the chiefest and almost the only matter that makes them appear so much exasperated against us.

It is necessary then that we justify ourselves, and that we

clear to their minds that honour which we have, not only to live among them in the same civil society, but also to depend on their lawful authority in respect of those human affairs wherein we are engaged. Our own innocence commands it of us; not to say that the inheritance which we have received from our fathers is of a value sufficiently great to merit a defence, after what manner soever they attack it. We ought then to endeavour to let them see, that that which they are made to believe concerning us is nothing but a false imputation; that we have an infinitely greater respect for the Church than any of those who oppose themselves to hinder its reformation; that their maxims tend to the ruin of the Church, where ours tend only to preserve it; that our separation from Rome is nothing else but an effect of that love and jealousy that we have for the Church; and that it will be most unjust if they shall hate us upon an account that ought on the contrary to draw from them all their esteem and love toward us.

It is then about this that we entreat that they would calmly hear us, and judge us without passion and without interest, in the fear of that God whom we all acknowledge for our Sovereign Judge. Those who always act against us with a pride that hurries them away, and who have resolved to condemn us, and to the uttermost of their power to destroy us, whatever we say, will not possibly take our request to be just; and in that case we shall content ourselves as to them with the testimony of our consciences, which persuade us not only that God will not condemn us for having been reformed, but also that he certainly will, if we do not in that follow the sense of our hearts. But there are yet enough persons in the Church of Rome of too much equity to follow the example of such a sort of people: these equitable persons are those of whom we demand that hearing, and that same equity and moderation of which they make such profession, and which the importance of the subject treated on challenges them to yield to us. We will tell them nothing which shall

not be founded either on matters of fact known to all, or upon the inviolable principles of religion, or upon the light of common sense.

To set down this matter in some order, I propose to myself to make evident these four propositions.

1. That our fathers had both right and obligation to examine the state of religion and the Latin Church, such as it was in their days.

2. That the reformation which they made was just and lawful.

3. That in reforming themselves they had right, and were bound to separate themselves from the Church of Rome.

4. That in reforming and separating themselves, they had right and obligation to maintain among themselves a Christian society by public assemblies, and the exercise of the ministry.

I do not pretend that in treating of these four propositions I have exhausted all my subject, but yet I hope that there will be few questions that have any relation to it which I do not sufficiently touch upon, and few objections which I do not answer. I will particularly answer to all those that are contained in that Book of Prejudices, as the order of the matters that I treat of shall present them to me; none of which will begin to oppose themselves till the Seventh Chapter, because that author having passed by in silence a great many things that belong to the foundation of this controversy, it will be necessary to touch upon them before we go any farther.

## CHAP. II.

THAT THE STATE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LATIN CHURCH SOME AGES AGO, GAVE TO OUR FATHERS PREJUDICES OF ITS CORRUPTION IN DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP, SUFFICIENT TO DRIVE THEM MORE NEARLY TO EXAMINE THEIR RELIGION.

AS our fathers did not reform themselves, but by following the examination which they made of religion, such as it was in their days, and as they did not enter upon that examination but by the prejudices which they received that its state was extremely corrupted, it is necessary to our judging of their conduct, to consider in the first place of what nature and force those prejudices were—whether they were just or unjust, rash or reasonable, and whether they justly led our fathers to make a more particular reflection upon that which they taught them. It shall be then by this fundamental question that we will begin, and first propose the prejudices that the corrupted state of the ecclesiastical government gave them some ages before; and afterwards we shall consider those that the same external state of religion furnished them with.

But because this matter will engage us to declare those truths which it may be will not be agreeable to all the world, they ought to remember that we are within the bounds of a just and natural defence, having been publicly provoked to it by a famous book, which is alleged on all occasions with great boasting; and that that book, in assaulting us with *Prejudices*, has furnished us with the very same example to defend our ancestors likewise by *Prejudices*; and that it will be a strange injustice, if, while on the one side they charge us with such foul accusations, they will not allow us on the other side to declare those things that are

essential to our justification. We will declare them then, but no otherwise than historically, and upon the proper testimony of those authors which the Church of Rome approves, with a design rather nakedly to shew them, than subtilly to represent or exaggerate them.

In the first place, Our fathers beheld that, instead of having followed that evangelical simplicity which Jesus Christ and his apostles had so much recommended by their sermons and their example, they had, on the contrary, framed the government of the Church according to the form and model of secular empires: they saw an almost innumerable company of dignitaries, elevated by pompous titles, canons, honours, pre-eminences and privileges, upheld by the vast riches and the splendour of the world, and all of them together depending on a sovereign high-priest who had lifted himself up above the whole church as its rightful monarch, yea as a divine monarch, whose words must be laws, and whose laws must be oracles; who pretended to reign not only over the external actions of men, but to lord it also over their souls and their consciences, and who left nothing so reserved in the deepest and most inward motions of the soul, of which he did not demand its subjection. It had been very strange if our fathers had not found in the midst of the grandeur of this body so ordered, something very opposite to the natural aspect of the Church of Jesus Christ, which is much rather a ministry than an empire, in respect of its external government. Indeed, if Jesus Christ had had a design to have established such a dominion as our fathers beheld established, he had never told his disciples that which he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But it shall not be so with you: but he that is great among you let him be as the less, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Luke 22. 25, 26. St. Peter would never have said to the pastors of the Church that which he told them, "Feed the flock of Jesus Christ which is com-



mitted to you, not as being lords over God's heritage." 1 Pet. 5. 2. It had then already from thence, in that very dominion, a great sign of its corruption. It was an evil, but an evil that discovered divers others. For it had this appearance with it, that the spirit of the world had got possession of the ministers of the Church, till it made them forget what they were in their first institution, besides which it had made them often commit many outrages.

2. They had not contented themselves to establish a spiritual dominion upon the plan of secular ones, unless they joined the very temporal one itself to it. The greater part of the bishops were become lords properly so called, and even some of them had got to be sovereign princes, with the titles and prerogatives of other princes and lords, without any difference. Had not the Popes themselves done far better, if they had put themselves in possession of that which they now call the state of the church under the quality of temporal lords and monarchs? I will not mention by piecemeal the disorders, the complaints, the contentions, the wars, that this spirit of temporal dominion has raised—this is not my design: it is sufficient for me to remark, that one can scarce give a more certain character of the corruption of a church, than that. For where that spirit reigns, it is by that men will easily bring in errors and superstitions, at least those that can bring them any advantage, and those that have a tendency to adjust the crown with the mitre, and the worldly grandeur with the dignities of the Church. It is not very easy in such a state to be studiously watchful over the flock, and much less to repel the doctrines, the customs, and the maxims, that can any ways advance or favour that elevation.

3. Covetousness is almost always inseparable from ambition. They are those two things that nourish and mutually sustain one another. So, our fathers saw them reigning together through a long tract of time among the churchmen. I will not here speak of the complaints which they made many

ages ago of the avarice of the Court of Rome, because I shall mention something about them hereafter in this discourse.

I will only say, that those complaints were universally extended to all the clergy, whom they reproached with an insatiable greediness of heaping up riches. The vast stocks they had gained, the great cares they took to hinder an alienation, and procure an increase, would not possibly be the worst proofs. But as that evil spread itself very far, so it was lamented for a long time after; "They feed on the sins of my people," said St. Bernard, who lived in the twelfth century; "that is to say, they require money for their sins, without making any other account of the sinners. Who of the clergy may you not observe far more careful to empty the purses of those set under them, than to destroy their vices?"\* "A disorderly appetite of those lands that are annexed to the churches," said Cardinal Cusanus, "dwells at this day in the hearts of the aspiring bishops, so that we see them do that openly after their promotion, which they secretly coveted before. All their care is for the temporal, and nothing for the spiritual. But this was never the intention of the emperors. They did not then think that the spiritual affairs would be ingulphed in the temporal, when they gave those goods to the churches."† So, our fathers were but too well acquainted with that spirit of avarice which animated the governors of the Church in their days; and every one knows that one of the matters that very much scandalized them, and made them deliberately examine the state of religion, was the traffic of indulgences. In effect, what likelihood was there, that a vice that corrupts all things, and which St. Paul calls "the root of all evil," (1 Tim. 6. 10, 3.) and elsewhere a kind of *idolatry*, (Col. 3. 5.) being as it was for many ages so universally spread over the clergy, over the head, and the members, even to the monks themselves,

\* Bernard in Cant. Serm. 77. Item, Serm. 33.

† Nicol. Cusan. lib. 3. de Concord. Cath. c. 29.

what likelihood I say was there, that this vice, which was found to be so much increased by their superstitions, should have left religion in its natural purity?

4. Our fathers discerned a prodigious neglect of the functions of the ministry joined with that covetousness: for a preaching bishop was for a long time so rare, that it was altogether unusual. The care of the poor, the visiting of the sick, the comforting the afflicted, the correcting the ignorant, the studying of the Scriptures, and all the other offices belonging to the pastoral crosier, were, if not quite abandoned, yet at least extremely neglected: all was almost reduced to saying of the service as one speaks, and to reading of the administration of the sacraments, and the formularies of a liturgy, which a very few of the people understood, and neither he himself sometimes who read it before them. It was this that made Nicholas de Clemangis, archdeacon of Bayeux, who flourished in the beginning of the fifteenth century, to say that “the study of the Holy Scriptures, and those who taught them, were derided by all; and that which is yet more amazing is, that it is chiefly the bishops that scoff at them, preferring their own traditions to the ordinances of God. Now-a-days, the charge of preaching, which is an office so admirable and so glorious, and which heretofore belonged to the pastors only, is thought so vile by them, that there is nothing which they judge more unworthy of their grandeur, and to bring more reproach to their dignity.” He adds, that they made no difficulty openly to profess, “that it belonged only to the begging friars to preach, and not to them.”\* But this negligence did not spring up in that age of the Reformation, nor in that that immediately preceded it; for since the ninth century, the pastors of the Church have been extremely slack in dressing the vineyard of our Lord: which could not but have made way for false doctrines and superstitions, and have caused a very great alteration in religion.

\* Nicolans de Clemangis de corrupto Statu. Ecclesiar.

5. Ignorance was one inevitable consequence of that carelessness of the ministers of the Church, that is to say, that which of all things in the world was the most improper to engage any to have relied on their conduct, and to have rested assured of the sincerity of their instructions. This ignorance was very great and very general in the time of our fathers, and the most prejudiced of our adversaries will not deny it. But it had began a great while before their days, as appears from the barbarism of the schools, and from the matter and style of the greatest part of the books that the preceding age had produced, and from the express testimony of divers authors. “The Church of God,” saith St. Bernard, “every day in divers manners finds by sad experience in what great danger she is, when the shepherd knows not where the pastures are, nor the guide where the right way is, and when that very man who should speak for God, and on his side; is ignorant what is the will of his Master.”\* “In these days,” said Marsilius of Padua, in the fourteenth century, “in these days wherein the government of the Church is corrupted, the greatest part of the priests and bishops are but meanly instructed in the Holy Scriptures, and I dare say they are incapable of deciding the doubts of their faith. For ambition, covetousness, and canvassings, obtain the temporal benefices, and they purchase, in effect, by their services or by their prayers, by their gold or by their favour, all the dignities of the age. God is my witness, and a great number of his faithful also, that I remember I have seen many priests, many abbots, and many prelates, so void of knowledge, that they have not known how to speak even according to the rules of grammar.”† Is it not very natural to conclude that a number of errors and superstitions would infallibly accrue from the favouring of this ignorance, and thereby be established in the Church, and that that would produce

\* Bernard de verbis Evangel. Dixit Simon, &c. p. 1000.

† Marsil. de Pad. Defens. pacis. Part 2. cap. 20.

novelties, and that those which formerly were but private opinions, or which consisted but in some first dispositions and tendencies to errors, would become general, and be changed into habits?

6. But might not our fathers very well conclude the same thing, from that dreadful depravation of manners, which they and their fathers had seen reign for so long a time among the churchmen? Those who have any knowledge of history are not ignorant of the lamentations that all honest men made then, and the mournful descriptions that they have left of those times in their writings. One may read for the twelfth century, only St. Bernard; for the thirteenth, Cardinal Hugo; for the fourteenth, William, Bishop of Mende; for the fifteenth, Werner Rollewink, a Carthusian Monk of Cologne; for they say but too much for the justifying of these articles: and for the sixteenth, which was the age of the Reformation, who does not know that it was extremely corrupted? One of the matters of which the ambassador of the Duke of Bavaria so vehemently complained before the Council of Trent, on the behalf of his master, and upon which he so much insisted, was, the wicked lives of the clergy, where he said, "that he could not describe their horrible wickednesses without offending the chaste ears of the audience." He subjoins, That the prince his master remonstrated to the council, "That the correction of points in doctrine would be vain and unprofitable, if they did not first correct their manners. That the clergy were defamed by reason of their luxury. That the civil magistrate did not suffer any layman to have a concubine: that notwithstanding, amongst the clergy it was so common a thing to have them, that amidst a hundred priests one could not find above three or four who either kept not whores, or were not married; the one secretly, and the others publicly."\* "It is with shame that I speak of it," said the Cardinal of Lorrain, in an oration that he made to

\* History of the Council of Trent. Book 6.

the same council, “but it is also with a sensible displeasure that I mention the lives that we have led. We are the causes that have swelled this storm so high; let us cast ourselves into the sea, and since you have our confession, punish us after what manner you please.” A little before that, he had said, “That the troubles wherewith France was found to be agitated, were the effect of a just judgment of God; and that they had drawn that judgment upon themselves, by that corruption of manners which was to be found among all orders of men, and by the subversion of all ecclesiastical discipline.”\* Charles the Ninth also, in those memoirs that he gave to that cardinal for the council, had expressly set down this article, “That his majesty with the most extreme regret was constrained to complain of the unclean lives of the ecclesiastics, who brought so much scandal and corruption amongst the common people, beyond the scandal they took at their ministers, that to him it seemed necessary that it should be very speedily provided against.”† Tell me, I beseech you, what could any justly conclude from the so licentious lives of persons who for so long a time since had made themselves masters of that religion, but that there was very little appearance that that religion was preserved in its ancient purity? I acknowledge, the ill life of the pastor is not of itself a sufficient reason to separate from him; but I affirm, that when that wicked life is found to be so general in the clergy, and remains there for some ages without amendment, it gives a prejudice exceeding reasonable of some great corruption in that very religion itself: for men of such impure manners can be but very ill guardians of faith and piety.

7. The corruption of the Church of Rome in particular, that is to say, of that church which calls herself the Mother and Mistress of all others, and which had in possession the

\* In the Instructions and Missives of the most Christian King, for the Council of Trent.

† In the same Instructions and Missives.

government of them according to her own will, confirmed our fathers in this prejudice: for by this means they saw the evil did not confine itself only to the borders, but that it was got into the very heart itself; that is, into that church which, as the chief, shed its influence on the others. Further, I think I need not prove that corruption, where every one will yield it as a thing that cannot be contested. Those who have read the histories of Luitprand, of Glaber, of Matthew Paris, of Platina, of Baronius, and Onuphrius, and of many others, cannot deny that since the ninth century, the see of Rome has been most frequently filled with Popes, whose lives and government have not very much edified the world. Every one knows the complaints that all the earth had made, and which it made yet in the days of our fathers, not only against the Popes, but against all that they call the Court of Rome, the corruption whereof was looked on as the cause of that in all the other churches. I shall not urge this matter further, but it seems to me that our fathers did not deserve the least blame, if they could not believe that such a sort of men could have a great zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men, or that they were so fit and likely to preserve Christianity entire amongst them; nor, in fine, that whereas it was for so many ages accused to be the very centre of all vices, it could be the centre of all the doctrines of faith and holiness.

8. But although our fathers should not have reflected on the persons of such men, yet it is very certain that they found enough characters of irregularity in the maxims, in the pretensions, and the government of the Popes, to make them justly conclude that they could not but be very ill conservators of the purity of religion. What else could they gather from that excessive pride, so intolerable to all Christians, that consisted in making their feet to be kissed with a submission far beyond what was yielded to kings, in making themselves to be borne on the shoulders of men, and to be served by the greatest princes, or by their ambassadors, to wear three

crowns, and to be adored upon the altar after their election, &c?

9. What could they say to those proud titles which they with the greatest scandal affected to have given them, as that of *God* in the canon law, whereof see the words, “It evidently appears that the Pope, who was called God by Constantine, can be neither bound to any thing, nor loosed, by any secular power: for it is manifest that a God cannot be judged by men.”\* To the same purpose Augustin Steuchus says, “That Constantine called the Pope God, and that he acknowledged him to be so; and he assures us that from thence it was that he made that excellent edict in his favour;” he would say, that false donation. “He adored him,” says he, “as God, as the successor of Christ and of Peter, and rendered him, all the ways that he could, divine honours, worshipping him as the living image of Jesus Christ.”† So Clement the Seventh, Anti-Pope, with his cardinals at Avignon, in a letter which they wrote to Charles the Sixth, which is set down by Froissard, they make no scruple of calling him a God upon earth; “Seeing as there is,” say they, “but one only God in the heavens, there cannot, and ought not of right to be, more than one God on earth.”‡ After the same manner, Angelus Politianus, in an oration that he made for those that were sent as deputies from the city Sienna to Alexander the Sixth, ascribes divinity to him: “We rejoice among ourselves,” says he, “to behold you raised above all human things, and elevated even to divinity itself, seeing nothing next unto God which is not set under you.”§ He was not the only person that treated that Pope as God; for Raynaldus relates, that amidst the pomps of his coronation one might see in divers places of the streets of

\* Distinct. 96. Canon. 7.

† Aug. Steuchus De fals. Donat. Constantini.

‡ Froissard. Tom. 3. fol. 147.

§ Angel. Politian. Orat. pro Sen. ad Alexand. Sextum.



Rome the arms of the Pope, with verses and epigrams underneath, among which this distich might be read:\*

*Cæsare magna fuit, nunc Roma est maxima, sextus  
Regnat Alexander: ille vir, iste Deus.*

10. What could our fathers say to that divine power that the flatterers of the Popes attributed to them? As the Glossary of the Decretals, which remarks, “That every one said of the Pope that he had all divine power—*cæleste arbitrium*; that by reason of that he could change the nature of things, applying the essential properties of one thing to another; that he could make something of nothing; that a proposition which was nothing he could make to be something; that in all things that he should please to do, his will might serve for a reason; that there is none that could say to him, Why dost thou do that? that he could dispense with whatsoever was right, and make injustice to become justice, by changing and altering of that which was right; and, in fine, that he had a plenitude, a fulness of power.”†

11. What could they say to those titles which the Popes attributed to themselves, of being the spouses, husbands of the Church, and the vicars of Jesus Christ? “The Church my spouse,” said Innocent the Third, “were not married to me, if she did not bring me something: she has given me a dowry of an inestimable price, the fulness of all spiritual things, the greatness and spaciousness of temporals, the grandeur and abundance both of the one and the other. She has bestowed on me the mitre in token of things spiritual, the crown for a sign of the temporal; the mitre for the priesthood, the crown for the kingdom; substituting me in His place who had it wrote on his vestment and his thigh, The King of kings, and Lord of lords.”‡ After the same style.

\* Raynald. ad Ann. 1492. Sec. 27.

† Decretal. Greg. lib. 1. tit. 7. Can Quanto, in Glossa.

‡ Itinerar. Ital. Part 2. de coron. Rom. Pontif.

Martin the Fifth entitled himself in this manner, in the instructions which he gave to a nuncio that he sent to Constantinople, as Raynaldus relates, “The most holy, and most happy, who has heavenly power, who is the Lord of the earth, the successor of Peter, the Christ or anointed of the Lord, the Lord of the universe, the father of kings, the light of the world, the sovereign high priest, Pope Martin.”\*

12. What could they say to that scandalous applying to the Popes those passages of the Scripture which only and immediately regard God himself, and his Son Jesus Christ? Baronius relates, that Alexander the Third making his entry into the town of Montpellier, a Sarasin prince prostrated himself before him, and adored him as the holy and venerable God of the Christians, and that those that were of the Pope’s train, ravished with admiration, said one to another those words of the Prophet, “All the kings of the earth shall worship him, and all nations shall do him service.”† So, in the council of Lateran, one complimented Leo the Tenth with these applications of Scripture, “God has given you all power both in heaven and in earth. Weep not, daughter of Zion. Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, of the stock of David.”‡ And those of Palermo, by the relation of Paulus Jovius, prostrate at the feet of Martin the Fourth, made their addresses to him in the same words that they say to Jesus Christ before their altars, “Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.”§

13. What could our fathers say to those strange declarations of some Popes, that maintained that all laws resided in them, that all the rules of justice were enclosed within their breasts, that it was necessary to the salvation of every

\* Raynald. ad Ann. 1162.

† Baron. ad Ann. 1162.

‡ Concil. Lateran. Sess. 7. & 9. in Orat.

§ Paulus Jovius in Philippo 3.

creature that he should be subject to the Pope of Rome, that they had in their hands the temporal and spiritual sword, and other expressions of the like nature? So Paul the Second answered Platina, who requested him that he would dismiss him \* to the prosecuting of his suit about a very important affair, before the auditors of the *Rota*,† because the sentence that the Pope had given was unjust, “Is it so then,” says he, “that you would have us be brought to be tried before the judges? Do not you know that we have all the laws shut up within our own breast?” In the close of that business, Platina having taken the boldness to say he would demand justice of a council, the Pope put him into a close prison. So also Boniface the Eighth begins one of his decretals in these words, *Licet Romanus Pontifex qui jura omnia in scrinio pectoris sui censetur habere.*‡ It was the same person who defined the necessity of subjecting one’s self to the Pope after this manner: *Subesse Romano Pontifici, omni humane creaturæ, dicimus, declaramus, definimus, et pronuntiamus, esse de necessitate salutis*; and who said, “that although the papal authority was given to a man, and that though it was exercised by a man, it was never the less divine; that though the papal power came to be depraved, yet it could not be judged by any man, but by God alone, because the Apostle has said, that the spiritual man judges all things, and is himself judged of no man; that there are two swords that are in the power of the Church, the spiritual and the temporal, the one of the which had its use for the Church, and the other the Church herself exercised; the one is in the hand of the Pope,

\* (*Renvoy* signifies properly a simple dismissal granted to one that, being appealed or called before a superior judge, requires to be dismissed to the prosecuting of his suit already begun before the inferior (his ordinary) judge. Platina in vit.

† The chief jurisdiction of the Court of Rome.

‡ Sexto Decret. tit. 2. cap. 1.

and the other in those of kings and soldiers, but whose management depends on the good pleasure and the sufferance of the Pope.\*

14. What could our fathers say to those prodigious pretensions that the Popes made over emperors and kings, even to make their crowns depend on their pleasure, to dethrone them, to give away their kingdoms to others, and to absolve their subjects from their oaths of allegiance? Every one knows what the decisions were that Gregory the Seventh made in a council held at Rome, in the year 1076, against the emperor Henry the Fourth, whom he had deposed, and whose subjects he had absolved of their oaths of allegiance. One may call those decisions the *Dictatorship of the Pope*: do but see some of their articles, as they are set down by Baronius. “That the Bishop of Rome only could wear the imperial ornaments. That all princes were wont to kiss the feet of the Pope alone. That only his name ought to be mentioned in the churches. That there was but one chief name in the world, which was that of the Pope. That he had right to depose emperors. That his decrees could be made void by none, whosoever he were, but that he alone could make void all others. That he could loose the subjects of wicked princes from their oaths of allegiance.”† The Decretals are full of the like attempt of Boniface the Eighth upon Philip the Fair, one of our kings. He went so far as to excommunicate him, and to absolve his subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and in fine to give away his crown to the Emperor Albert. I confess that he was punished as he deserved, and that the French on this occasion served their prince with great zeal. The same Platina, mentioned before, could not forbear making this reflection on the death of this Pope; “Thus died this Boniface, who thought of nothing less than of terrifying emperors, kings, and princes, and all men,

\* Sexto Decret. Extravag. lib. 1. De Major. & obed. cap. 1.

† Baron. ad Ann. 1076.

that he might the more inspire into them a religious respect; and who pretended to give and take away by force whole kingdoms, to overturn and re-establish all men by the mere motion of his will."\* But howsoever it was, the bad success of Boniface could not hinder our fathers from judging as they ought of these insolent pretensions of the Popes, and taking notice, that those who made their very religion to serve their ambition, seeing their ambition had no bounds, had a peculiar interest to feed the people with their superstitions, for they were such as enslaved their souls, where true piety would have ennobled, and freed men from that yoke which they would have imposed on us. Further, if any would more particularly see how far the claims of the Roman See went, they need but to read what Augustine Steuchus, library-keeper to the Pope, has wrote; for he ascribes to the Popes the very same temporal rights, in the same latitude wherein the old Roman empire possessed them; and he proves from the register of Gregory the Seventh, that Spain, Hungary, England, Denmark, Russia, Croatia, Dalmatia, Arragon, Portugal, Bohemia, Swedland, Norway, Dacia, did all heretofore belong to the Popes, and that all that Pepin, Charlemain, Henry, and other emperors, gave to the Church, brought him not any new rights, but only set him in the possession of that which the violence of the barbarians had wrested from him.

15. What could our fathers say to those unjust usurpations of the Popes over the whole body of the Church, over which they pretended supremely to reign, to have authority to decide matters of faith, to make new laws, to dispense with the ancient constitutions, to call councils, to transfer them from one place to another, to authorize or to condemn them, to judge all the world without being liable to be judged of any, in a word, of making all things to depend on their power, and binding all churches to submit themselves to its decisions

\* Platin. in vit. Bonif. 8.

about matters of faith and rules of discipline, not only with a bare external obedience, but with a real acquiescence of their consciences? By reason of which they were accustomed, as they practise it even at this present in their bulls, to place in the front "the fulness of their power," and to adjoin this clause, "That no man should dare to be so rash as to infringe or go contrary to their decrees, under penalty of incurring the indignation of God, and the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul." I know there were some that sometimes did very strongly oppose these pretensions of the Court of Rome; that some councils did labour to repress them; and that the Church of France has appeared often enough jealous of its liberty. But besides that those oppositions never had that success which might justly have been hoped for, on the part of the Popes, who almost always eluded them, besides that, I say, they did but serve to confirm the prejudices of our fathers, by daily discovering to them more and more of the corruption of the See of Rome.

16. What could they judge of those dispensations that the Popes gave in the business of marriages within prohibited degrees, against the express words of the law of God, and in the case of vows which they themselves held to be lawful, and in divers other matters, even against that which they call the general state of the Church? "What do we think we ought to say at present," said Gerson, "of the easiness whereby dispensations are given by the Pope and by the prelates to lawful oaths, to reasonable vows, to a vast plurality of benefices, against all the minds, or as he speaks even to a universal gainsaying of councils, in privileges and exemptions that destroy common equity? Who can reckon up all the ways whereof they serve themselves to loosen the force of ecclesiastical discipline, and to oppose and destroy that of the Gospel?"\* Who can read without some commotion that which Innocent the Third has wrote? "That

\* Joan. Gerson. de Eccles. potest. Consid. 10.

by the fulness of his power he had a lawful power to dispense with that that was beyond all equity?"\* And that which the Glossary has subjoined, "That the Pope can dispense against an apostle, against the canons of the apostles, and against the Old Testament in the case of tithes." It is added, that he cannot dispense against the general state of the Church;† and yet elsewhere the gloss on the decree of Gratian assures us, "that the Pope may sometimes dispense against the general state of the Church," and for that alleges the example of Innocent the Third in the Council of Lateran.‡

17. What could our fathers judge of those vast abuses that were committed in dispensing with the ecclesiastical functions, given most frequently to persons altogether unworthy and incapable, and sometimes to children, to the great scandal of Christianity, which complained of it highly a long time ago? "They prefer," said St. Bernard, "little school-boys and young children to Church dignities, because of the nobility of their birth. So that you may see those that are just got from under the ferula,§ go to command priests; who were yet more fit to escape the rod than to be employed in government, for they are far more sensible of the pleasure of being freed from their masters, than of that of becoming masters themselves. Those are their first thoughts; but afterwards growing more bold, they very soon learn the art of appropriating the altars to themselves, and of emptying the purses of those that are under them, without going to any other school than that of their ambition and their covetousness."|| "How few may one find now-a-days of those who are raised to the episcopal grandeur," said Nicholas de Cle-

\* Decretal. Gregor. lib. 3. tit. 8. cap. 4.

† Decret. part. 2. Caus. 25.

‡ Quest. 1. Canon. 6. ad Gloss.

§ An instrument with which young scholars are beaten on the hand.—JOHNSON.

|| Bernard. Epist. 42.

mangis, “who have either read or know how to read the Holy Scripture, otherwise than by first beginning to read? They have never touched any other part of the Holy Bible than the cover, although in their instalment they swear that they know it all.”\*

18. What could our fathers say to that simony which was every where openly exercised in the Church of Rome in all things? “The Court of Rome,” says Æneas Sylvius, “gives nothing without money:† it sells the very imposition of hands, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and will give pardon of sins to none but such who will part with their money.”‡ “The Church that Jesus Christ has chosen for his spouse without spot and blemish,” says Nicholas de Clemangis, “is in these days a warehouse of ambition and business, of theft and rapine. The sacraments and all orders, even to that of the priests, are exposed to sale. For money they bestow favours, dispensations, licenses, offices, benefices: they sell pardons of sins, masses, and the very administration of our Lord’s body. If any one have a mind to a bishopric, he needs but to get himself furnished with money; yet not a little sum, but a great one must purchase such a great title. He needs but to empty his purse to obtain the dignity that he seeks, but he may soon after fill it again with advantage by more ways than one. If any one desire to be made a prebendary, or a priest of any church, or to have any other charge, it matters not whether his merits, or his life, or his manners be known, but it is very requisite it should be known how much money he has; for according as he has that, he must have his hopes succeed.”‡ Such were the complaints that honest men made in those days; and one might make a large volume of them, if these ancient disorders were not so publicly known. One has published not

\* Nicol. Cleman. de Corr. Stat. Eccles.

† Æneas Sylv. Epist. lib. 1. Ep. 66.

‡ Nicol. Cleman. de præsul.



long since a Book of the Rates of the Apostolic Chamber, or Chancery, and the taxes enjoined for penances, which alone declares more than it will be necessary for us to stay upon for our edification. There, not only every despatch of business, but every sin also, every crime, has its set price; and as there is nothing to be done without money, so there is nothing which money cannot do.

19. I could add to all that I have said, a multitude of other things, that could not but have been very proper to have raised those prejudices in the minds of our fathers, whereof we have spoken. For those unjust ways which Rome has made use of to draw all affairs to itself, with all the riches of the West—all the underhand canvassings and strange practices it has used in the elections of Popes—the scandalous schisms that have sprung from the divisions of parties and differences of elections—the bloody wars that the Popes are accused to have divers times kindled among Christian princes—the intrigues, the dishonest ways, whereby they are said to have served themselves to engage the kings and grandees of the world in their interests—the endeavours they have always used to elude the demands of a reformation—all these things sufficiently discover more of the spirit of the world than of the spirit of Jesus Christ, and will easily persuade all those who are not wholly deprived of their reason, that there must needs have been latent at the bottom an extreme corruption.

But we ought to make an end of this chapter, and to leave a matter so unpleasant, into which we had not at all entered if we had not been obliged by the necessity of a just defence, as I have before declared. It only remains that we shut up in the close of all those things which we have represented, by concluding that they cannot, at least without renouncing all equity, any more condemn our fathers, either of rashness or presumption, if they durst persuade themselves that the Church and religion were fallen into the very worst hands, and if they judged from thence that they ought to enter upon

a more particular scrutiny of those doctrines that they taught, and of those laws whereby they would bind their consciences. That consequence which they drew from thence, was but the just effect of a reason animated by the fear of God, and a desire which they had of their own salvation: for what colour or pretence could there be, that a disorder in the government of the Church, so great, so ancient, so general, should not be accompanied with a multitude of other errors contrary to the word of God, and prejudicial to the salvation of men?

---

---

### CHAP. III.

**THAT THE EXTERNAL STATE OF THAT RELIGION ITSELF  
HAD IN THE TIMES OF OUR FATHERS SIGNS OF ITS  
CORRUPTION SUFFICIENT TO AFFORD THEM JUST MO-  
TIVES TO EXAMINE IT.**

ALTHOUGH these reflections that I have already set down, drawn from the government of the Church, were very weighty, and by themselves capable of making the most just impressions on the minds and consciences of those who would set themselves to work out their own salvation, according to the exhortation of the Apostle, with fear and trembling, yet we ought not to imagine that our fathers were determined by those considerations alone. They yet made others which they had, that we may yet be more sensibly touched by them, since they had for their object not the outward form or state of the ministry, nor the persons who possessed the offices and dignities of the Church, but their religion itself, in that state in which it was in their days. For it is most true, that it was scarce possible for those who did the least in the world fix their eyes on that religion, to

consider its draught and its external form, without discovering, or at least without discerning, infinite characters of its corruption. And this is that which I design to treat of in this chapter.

I. One of the chief objects that presented itself to our fathers, was that of the great number of ceremonies with which they beheld that religion either shrowded or overwhelmed: it matters little which of the two we affirm, for which way soever we take it, it was always a true portrait of the old economy of Moses, which seemed to be revived in the world. They took special notice of their external sacrifices, their solemn feasts, distinction of meats, of their altars, of their tapers, of their sacred vessels, of their censings, of their set fasts throughout the year, of their mystical figures, and a multitude of particular things altogether resembling those that were enjoined under the law, and, in general, a great conformity to that ancient worship, consisting in such a love and excessive usage of ceremonies. This was without doubt a character very opposite to that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, where the *spirit* rules, and not the *letter*, and which is made free from all that great cumbrance of external observations. St. Paul calls these observances weak and beggarly elements,\* a yoke of bondage,† the rudiments of the world,‡ the shadow of things to come, whereof the body is Jesus Christ: and St. Peter, a yoke which neither the Jews in his days nor their fathers were able to bear.§ Jesus Christ himself told the woman of Samaria, “that the time was come, when the true worshippers of his Father should worship him in spirit and in truth.|| What likelihood was there that they would have spoke after that manner if the Church of Christ herself should be burthened with as many or more ceremonies than the synagogue; and if, as Tertullian speaks, “God had not removed the difficulties of the law, to substi-

\* Gal. 4. 9.

† Gal. 5. 1.

‡ Col. 2. 17.

§ Acts. 15. 10.

|| John 4. 23.

tute in their places the easy rules of the Gospel?" They would have preached to us the *spirit* and *liberty*, only to have us subjected again to the *letter*, and to have placed us under a servitude far more insupportable than the former.

2. Moreover, as our fathers saw one part of those ceremonies taken from the Jews, so they perceived a multitude of others that were drawn from or imitated the Heathens, by their approving of the same, which they either authorized or practised. For we might put into this rank the use of holy water, or water consecrated for sprinkling, in the entrance into churches as well as private houses, and the funerals of the dead; the blessings and the sprinklings, the using of spittle in the baptism of little children, the invocation of saints, their canonization, their patronages, and ordering of their charges and employments; their images and pictures, their *Agnus Dei's*, their feasts for all the saints, for the deaths of St. John and many others, their usage of processions, of rogations, their visiting the shrines or relics of saints, of setting up the sign of the cross where four ways met, of anniversaries for the dead, of swearing by their relics, and I know not how many others, that were evidently either the remnants or imitations of ancient Paganism. Who would think it strange that an idea of a religion that plainly appeared to be so little advantageous to it, or to say better, which was so contrary to the spirit and the true design of Christianity, should have touched our fathers, and inspired into them a desire of knowing those things a little more particularly than they had as yet done?

3. They were yet further carried out with that desire, when they considered the ill effects that those ceremonies borrowed from the Pagans had produced, and some others that were annexed to them, as rosaries, chaplets, holy salt, their pilgrimages and monastic vows, and such like things: for they manifestly filled the minds of men with superstition; they caused a thousand abuses among the people; they ordinarily made way for lying forgeries; and, which rendered

them yet far more odious, they fomented a too natural negligence, which every one has, for works of true and solid piety, whether by busying the minds of Christians too much, or persuading them that they had very well acquitted themselves of their duty by doing these external things, or, lastly, whether it was by infusing into them a false idea of divinity, as if all its worship did consist in such trumpery. Who is it that sees not what a great prejudice this was against a religion that taught such things, and so solemnly enjoined them to be practised?

4. It had been also very strange, if our fathers had not been offended by that worldly pomp wherewith they saw religion so excessively clothed: for they very well knew, that true Christianity was contented to gain the hearts and souls of men by the majesty of its doctrines and the holiness of its precepts; and that for the rest, it professed to retain its simplicity: notwithstanding which, they observed a clean contrary character in the magnificence of their temples, in the gold of their tabernacles, in the pride of their sacrifices, in the riches of their ornaments, and in general in all that external splendour which seemed destined only to strike extraordinarily the senses, and by this means to raise an ill-grounded admiration, that which is proper to only corrupt religions, which, as Tertullian takes notice, “labour to gain their authority, and to obtain the belief of the people, by their pomp and their profuseness.”\*

5. The natural effect of the doctrines of Christianity, when they are received with faith, and when its worship is practised with devotion, is to comfort the conscience, and to give it a certain satisfaction and calm, which is better felt than it can be expressed. But our fathers were so far from receiving that effect from the doctrines and worship wherein they made in their days almost the fundamentals of religion to consist, as in the invocation of saints, the absolute obe-

\* Tertul. de Baptismo.

dience to the Pope or to his councils, the conceit of men's satisfactions, the adoration of relics, the pilgrimages, and other things of the like nature; they were, I say, so far from receiving it from these doctrines, that, on the contrary, they could not but feel secret remorse after having practised them. For the consciences of Christians are naturally carried out to none but God alone, and cannot endure that that which is due to him should be divided between him and the creatures. They have naturally a reluctance to call upon any other being than the First Cause of all, to pay a religious service to lifeless images, to subject themselves to any other oracle than that of God, to attribute any part of their redemption to any others besides Jesus Christ, who has acquired for them a fulness of salvation; and, in a word, to lay hold on any creature as the object of their confidence or piety. So our fathers, knowing from their own experience that these tenets and devotions were not only barren of all that quiet, but at the same time contrary to the peace of their souls, they could not but receive a great prejudice against those tenets, and against those devotions themselves, and against that religion that proposed them.

6. But that was not all; they saw yet many things in that religion directly opposite to many plain and express passages of Scripture: as the point of images, to the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, &c.:" (Exod. 20. 4.) that of communion only in one kind, to that command of Jesus Christ, "Drink ye all of this:" (Matth. 26. 27.) that of praying in an unknown tongue, to the prohibition of St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, "Else, if thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say *Amen* at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified: (*ch.* 14. *v.* 16, 17.) and the business of blind subjection to the ministers of the Church, to that strict declaration of the Apostle, "We have not dominion over your

faith:" (2 Cor. 1. 24.) that of the Papal monarchy, to these words of our Saviour, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship, &c. but it shall not be so with you:" (Luke, 22. 25, 26.) that of human satisfactions, to the words of 1 John, 1. 7. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin:" and that of the sacrifice of the mass, to the doctrine of St. Paul to the Hebrews, "That Jesus Christ has once offered up himself for us." I do not at all inquire whether the force of these passages may be eluded, and distorted to a sense that may agree with those points which I have mentioned; I do not enter upon that. It is enough if any see that opposition of which I speak to appear at first sight, that it likewise strikes the soul, and seems at least strong enough to create great scruples, and to form a prejudice that carried our fathers on to examine those things a little more narrowly.

7. To which they were yet further urged by the consideration that they made of some maxims and distinctions which they ordinarily made use of to uphold the worshipping of creatures, for they discovered in them something that was extremely scandalous. For example, where they maintained the worshipping of angels, and that of the saints, by saying that they did not adore them but by a lower sort of adoration, proportioned to the excellency they acknowledged to be in them, not, that they gave them that supreme adoration which is due to none but God alone. I do not here put it in question, whether this distinction be good or bad; it is sufficient that it had the ill luck to fall in with that which the ancient Heathens made use of for the defence of those adorations which they paid to their genius's, to their heroes, to their demi and inferior gods, &c.: for the Pagans said the same, that men did them great wrong in laying it to their charge that they worshipped their genius's and inferior gods with that sovereign worship which they gave to none but the chief and greatest of the Gods; and that that worship about which the question was, was only an inferior and lower kind of worship. So they defended their worshipping of images

by that distinction of absolute and relative worship; but that was the very same distinction which the Pagans served themselves of to excuse the worship they rendered to the statues of their gods, alleging that any one very much wronged them, in imagining that they served stocks of wood or stones, but their devotion was carried out only to those objects that those statues represented. They defended the invocation of saints by that distinction, that they did not pray to them as the authors of those graces which they desired, but only as they were mere intercessors before God. But yet the very Heathens said the same as to those prayers which they offered up to their inferior gods, whom they acknowledged to be but as the friends and favourites of the great God, whom they made use of towards him to obtain blessings for themselves. They defended a set of opinions and customs in their religion, by saying that they were the traditions which they had received from the hands of their fathers: but that defence had yet this unhappiness, that it favoured the Jews against those censures of Jesus Christ, and that which Jesus Christ had wholly beaten down by those words, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matth. 15. 9.

8. We might here very well join to what has been said, the scandal our fathers must needs have taken at that school-divinity which for a long time had filled the world with questions not only vain and frivolous, but pernicious also, and leading men to wickedness: we could make a long catalogue of those questions, if the common interest of Christianity did not oblige us to conceal them from the Public; but because we fear the ignorant or the malicious will lay it to our charge that we would impose on the world under a pretence of an affected modesty, we will send our readers to that collection which Cardinal Perron himself has made in his *Treatise of the Eucharist*, (page 920.) where I assure myself they will find on one only article, which is that of the Incarnation of the Word, more than enough to justify that which



I have said. What can any one think of such a manner of treating of the mysteries of religion, and of that art they had joined with it, to defend all things by, and that even the most remote from sense, and by distinctions crude and senseless, if it were not that all that was very likely to raise an abundance of errors, and excellently contrived for the maintaining of all such as ignorance, passion, engagements, or interests, would yet have produced? I know that the wiser sort among our adversaries are themselves ashamed of it, but they cannot deny that it was almost the only way of teaching the divinity of Rome for a long time before the Reformation, and that it was but a very just prejudice against the state of religion, that depended so absolutely on that of the Schools.

9. One of the effects of that disorder of the schools, was the vitiating of Christian morality, by the introduction of divers destructive maxims, which tended only to corrupt men's minds and hearts, as well in respect of piety towards God, as of justice and common charity toward men, and of that temperance that every man ought to maintain in his actions. It would be too long to relate in this place all the proofs that make good this charge; I shall content myself to allege only some pieces that have made too much noise in the world to be unknown: they are on one side the Provincial Letters ascribed to Mr. Paschal, and some other treatises which we have seen published against the Moral Divinity of the Jesuits; and, on the other side, the Apology for the Casuists, and the Book of Amedeus Guimenius. Those former pieces accuse the Jesuits of teaching and establishing maxims, rash, erroneous, scandalous, and altogether contrary to good manners; and the others let us see that the doctrine of the Jesuits in that respect is wholly like to that of the ancient school-men, and that one cannot condemn the Jesuits without condemning at the same time the whole ancient school of the Roman Church. For example, the one sort accuses the Jesuits of teaching that it is lawful for one man to rejoice within himself at the death of another, and to desire it, not only when it

is an evil to him who suffers it, but also when it is advantageous to him who desires it: but Guimenius shews us that that is exactly the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, of Cajetan, and divers others, who all maintain the same. The one accuses the Jesuits for teaching that it is but a venial sin to be disobedient to divine inspirations: but Guimenius shews that that is also the doctrine of Aquinas and Cajetan. They accuse the Jesuits of teaching that it is lawful to advise and at the same time to draw in a man to commit a lesser sin, to avoid a greater evil; as to persuade a lascivious man to mere fornication, that he may avoid committing adultery: but Guimenius proves this to be the doctrine of Cajetan, Scotus, and Sylvester Prierias. They accuse the Jesuits of maintaining that a man may not only not remove an occasion or ground of sin from another whom they know will abuse it to that end, but that they may at the same time present it to him, and by that means lay a snare for him to make him fall into sin, provided they do it with a good intention, either to correct his viciousness, or to make him shun some other inconvenience; so that a Husband who is jealous of his wife's committing adultery, may present her with an opportunity or occasion to commit it, and a father may lay an occasion in his children's way to steal from him: but Guimenius lets us see that this is the very opinion of Aquinas, Scotus, Navarre, and of Cajetan. I omit an abundance of other beastly cases, which no one can propose without wounding his modesty. They will say to this, it may be, that the Sorbonne has censured that Book of Guimenius: but this answer signifies nothing, for we are not concerned to know what the Sorbonne holds in these days, nor what it approves or condemns, but to know whether those authors that Guimenius has alleged are well or ill quoted, whether it were not true that those scandalous and pernicious maxims were taught in the school in the days of our fathers, and whether our fathers ought not to have looked on them as evident and certain proofs of a great corruption?

10. I know not whether we might not here make a particular reflection on the procedure of the Council of Constance, which, notwithstanding the safe conduct granted by the Emperor Sigismund to John Huss and Jerome of Prague, made no scruple to condemn them to be burnt alive, and to cause that sentence of their condemnation to be executed: for so that council violated the public faith, by a most solemn and resplendent action. But it was not contented with that, unless it did at the same time add a decree that it expressly made on that subject, bearing this with it, that all letters of safe conduct granted to heretics by any emperors, kings, or princes, ought not to hinder the judges (to whom it should appertain to take cognizance of their crimes, whether they were lay-men or church-men) from proceeding against them, and punishing them with the greatest severity.\* Æneas Sylvius relates that that sentence, through the force of which they were exposed to the fire, was given in full council. *Lata est, says he, in concessu Patrum adversus contumaces sententia, Cremandos esse qui Doctrinam Ecclesiæ respuerent, prior igitur Joannes combustus est, Hieronimus diu postea in vinculis habitus, cum resipiscere nollet, pari supplicio affectus.*† He adds, that those two men suffered that torment with an admirable fortitude, singing of hymns in the midst of the flames. This was in that time very astonishing, to see a council gathered in a body, wholly intent upon the causing the death of two Christians; since it is certain amongst Christians, that the Church has no power over the temporal lives of men. But that scandal was yet made greater by the way they carried it on; for to come to that, they made no difficulty of violating all that was the most sacred and inviolable in human society, I would say, the public faith given by the authentic authority of the sovereign magistrate, and given with every appearance of their own

\* Concil. Constant. Sess. 19.

† Æneas Sylv. Hist. Bohem. cap. 56.

consent, as one may collect from the words of Æneas Sylvius. For he says as that council was labouring in the affairs of Bohemia, *Placuit tandem, Sigismundo Imperatore suadente, Joannem & Hieronymum ad Synodum vocari*—*They thought good, through the entreaties of the Emperor Sigismund, that John and Jerome should be called to the Council.* They then made no scruple of violating that faith to which they had consented, and not only to break it by that action, and in that practice, but framed at the same time a decree to authorize that breach of faith, and made it a lawful rule for posterity to go by. Who can deny that our fathers had not here a just cause to be shaken at that management of affairs which had violently borne down all that wise and moderate men since have conceived, and that they had not reason to join that to all those other things I have mentioned, as a most powerful prejudice against a religion that maintained itself by such strange proceedings?

11. They might have added also to the rest, methinks, the establishment of inquisitions, and usage of crusades against those who were pretended to be heretics. For it is most true that such a way of maintaining religion by torments and armies raised by the clergy, as the Popes had used some ages since against the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Wicklifites, and the Hussites, was not at all proper to make it be beloved, or to instil into men's minds an extreme good opinion of it. There where they would introduce the faith by force, they shut up people's hearts instead of gaining them. That course is good no farther than for temporal monarchies, or religions, where men are not much concerned whether they reign over the spirits of men, provided they reign over their bodies. But that is not at all the way that Jesus Christ uses, who sets up his throne in their consciences, and who knows no other conquests but those which the sword that comes from his mouth gains.

12. But besides those cruel ways which they made use of for the upholding their religion, they employed yet others as

well as those, which, though they were not so severe, did not fail of being as odious, and of raising as strong suspicions against that religion itself. I might rank in this place those false miracles which they invented every day to gain credit to some doctrines and devotions, which of themselves had no foundation at all in the word of God. For every one knows how much these sort of fables were in use in the days of our fathers, and some ages before, with what care they spread them among the people, in preaching them up with zeal and defending them with heat, and in stuffing their legends with them, and other books of that nature. But every one knows likewise that the greatest part of them were so grossly invented, that a very mean understanding could easily detect their falseness. We might join with those false miracles, those stories of visions or apparitions of the Blessed Virgin, or some other saint, to the religious men or women, which were so frequent, that one can find nothing else in the books of the monks of those ages. We might place here also those so often devised tales of the returns of souls out of purgatory, of their apparitions, their complaints, and pitiful groans, of their requests to be eased of their pains by their masses and foundations, and of the outcries and terrible din that they made upon men's least neglect to perform what they begged of them. I do not now examine whether those doctrines which gave ground to those pretended miracles, to those visions and apparitions, were evangelical or not; it is enough for me to note, that that falseness which appeared in the greatest part of those gross inventions which were so often publicly detected, rendered that religion justly suspected, not only in respect of those opinions and devotions which they pretended to authorize by those frauds, but also in general as to all that which came under the name of traditions.

13. Might we not say the same thing of so many forged and supposititious books, the making and use of which had been so frequent in the ages that preceded the Reformation; not to meddle with what is reported of the monks, that they

did not scruple to serve themselves by forged deeds, to enrich their convents, and gain privileges to them. Without touching upon that, there are few persons that are ignorant of what character the Decretal Epistles of the ancient Popes are, collected under the name of one Isidore Mercator, whereof the Court of Rome has made so advantageous a use for the establishing of its authority, and of the pretended donation of Constantine, by which that emperor is said to have given away the Roman Empire and all its rights to the Pope. Every one knows also how they had forged whole books and treatises under the most ancient and venerable names, as the Epistle of the Blessed Virgin to Saint Ignatius; the Works of Dionysius the Areopagite; the Epistles of Saint Martial; the Acts of the Passion of Saint Andrew, by the Priests of Achaia; the Liturgies of Saint James, Saint Peter, and of Saint Mark; and divers others of the same nature. None are ignorant how they had mingled some false pieces with the true works of the Fathers, as in those of Justin Martyr, of Origen, of Saint Cyprian, of Saint Athanasius, of Saint Hilary, of Saint Ambrose, of Saint Chrysostome, of Saint Jerome, of Saint Augustine, and almost generally of all the Fathers, whose names they have made use of to authorize their forgeries. None are ignorant what alterations they had made in the true writings of the Fathers, whether by changing their words, or adding to them, or sometimes in cutting off considerable clauses and whole passages entire. Who sees not that these ill practices, which of themselves are so odious in all sorts of matters, and especially in those of religion, could not but increase the just suspicions that our fathers had of all that which they named tradition?

14. We might make the same judgment of that visible abuse about relics which was brought into the Church. For on the one side, the devotion of the people was so hot as to that point, that it could not keep itself within any measure; and on the other, the cheats about them were so multiplied, that even those of the weakest understandings could not be-

hold them without being ashamed of them. That prodigious quantity of the wood of the true cross which is scattered over the world, witnesses this; as likewise the slippers and hose of Saint Joseph; the shift of the Blessed Virgin, her coifs, her fillets, her girdles, her two combs, her clothes, her wedding-ring; the sword wherewith Saint Michael fought with the Devil; the twelve combs of the Apostles; some of the stones wherewith Saint Steven was stoned; the skin of Saint Bartholomew; the coals that broiled Saint Laurence; Aaron's rod; the bones of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob; and beyond all that, the multiplication of one and the same relic, which is to be found in divers places; for there is nothing more ordinary than for one to see two, three, or four bodies of the same saint, as of Saint Gervase, Saint Protais, Saint Sebastian, of Saint Pretonilla, Saint Anthony, and some others. All which being very much recommended to the people as the true objects of their devotion, not only without any certain grounds, but very often with all the appearances of falseness, could not but create a vast prejudice of corruption in that church and religion.

15. Moreover, when our fathers cast their eyes upon the four chief means that God has established in his Church for the preserving of true faith and piety in it, which are, the Scriptures, the public worship, preaching, and the sacraments, and when they considered after what manner they were altered, and the use of all those means almost brought to nothing, it was not possible they could do otherwise than conclude that corruption whereof we dispute. For as to the Scripture, instead of making that the only rule of faith, they had joined traditions with it; that is to say, the most uncertain thing in the world, the most subject to impostures, and the most mixed with human inventions and weaknesses. Instead of recommending the reading of that divine word to the faithful, for their instruction and their comfort, it could scarce be found even in the hands of some ecclesiastics. And as for the schools, they knew far better how to quote Aristotle,

the Master of the Sentences, Albertus Magnus, Saint Thomas, and Saint Bonaventure, than the Prophets and Apostles. As for the public service, they performed it some ages ago in a strange tongue unknown to the people, who by this means were deprived of that benefit which they might justly expect: so that the assemblies were become, in that respect, springs stopped up for any public edification; and their little prayers themselves, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, were then read almost only in Latin, and the women, and children, and people, seemed to know God only by the idea that was given them of that tongue, in which notwithstanding they understood nothing. As for preaching, besides that the pulpit in the greatest part of that time was abandoned, we have yet some books of the sermons which they made in those days, as of Jacobus de Voragine, of a Menot, a Maillard, a Barelette, a Discipulus de Tempore, which did no very great honour to their age. They treat there far oftener of the legends of the saints, than the truths of religion; and that which was yet more deplorable, instead of the word of God, they preached almost nothing else but scandalously extravagant opinions, raw parallels of a saint with Jesus Christ, ridiculous stories, pleasant buffooneries, and such like things, which, to speak moderately, were exceedingly remote from the natural design of the pulpit, and rendered it not only despised, but after a sort odious.

For that which respects the sacraments, (not to touch on those multitudes of unprofitable ceremonies wherewith they had loaded them,) we must confess, that that opinion of the necessity of the intention of the priest, which was so generally taught in the school, and which Eugenius the Fourth had defined in his instruction to the Armenians in the Council of Florence, it destroyed almost all the benefit of those sacred mysteries, and cast men's consciences into perpetual scruples and uncertainties. For unless they could establish a revelation for every particular Christian, what assurance could we have, that he who administers the sacrament to us, had an intention



to do that which the Church enjoins him to do, or that he had not an intention contrary to that of the Church? What assurance could be given, that in all that long train of priests, bishops, and popes, that is to say, the bishops of Rome, who had been from the beginning of Christianity down to this present time, there had not been any in whom that intention, which they make so necessary to the operation of the sacrament, had been defective? Yet if one only priest that shall happen to baptize a pope, had not had an intention to baptize him, or if he himself was not truly a priest, by the default of the intention of him who gave him orders, or him who baptized him; if one only bishop who confers orders on a pope then when he is made priest, had not an intention to do what the Church pretends to do, all that which would come in consequence of that default would be spoiled, the bishops that that pope afterwards should promote would not be lawful bishops, the priests on whom those bishops had conferred orders would be no lawful priests, and the sacraments that those priests should administer would not be lawfully administered. What could our fathers think of such a dreadful confusion, which they knew not how to undo, unless by supposing a perpetual miracle? Which is, that God should have so over-ruled the intention of all those men, that howsoever wicked, atheistical, hypocritical, or profane they should have been, yet that not one of them nevertheless should fail in having an intention to do that which the Church enjoins. But what assurance have we of such a miracle, or what promise can we find of it in the Scripture? Not to insist here, that it very ill agrees with the doctrine of those among them, who make the will of man so much lord of all his actions, that whatsoever grace God shall manifest towards it, it remains always indifferent and free to follow that grace, or to reject it. It is then very certain that hitherto our fathers could not be very much edified in the point of the sacraments in general; but they were yet far less in the matter of the sacrament of the eucharist in particular. For if we look only on one side, they were plunged into that

perplexity about the intention, where they taught one another that the transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Jesus Christ was the effect of that consecration, and that they were bound to worship the host after the words of consecration, as being Jesus Christ himself. What assurance could they have of so important a change? Since it also depended upon so impenetrable a secret as that of the intention of the priest, which could only be known by God alone, what assurance could they have that they were not deceived? What ground had they to give a supreme worship to an object of which none could have any certainty of faith, what likelihood they should believe it to be that which it was pretended to be, and that it ought to be reckoned an adorable object? What likelihood that God would have given to his church so doubtful an object to be the object of perpetual adoration? Which on one side, is so visible and so determinate that one may always say, *Behold it*, but of which notwithstanding no one can be assured that it is that indeed? Is it any ways agreeable to his goodness and his wisdom, to leave the Church to be perpetually held in suspense in that inexplicable doubt, and exposed to the danger of taking the bread for the true Son of God, and the wine for his real blood, and reduced to the necessity of putting that adoration daily to a hazard upon the credit of one man?

---

## CHAP. IV.

THAT SUCH A CORRUPTION OF THE LATIN CHURCH AS OUR FATHERS HAD CONCEIVED, WAS NO WAYS AN IMPOSSIBLE THING.

THESE things were well nigh the chief objects that struck the minds of our fathers, and led them to a more strict examination of the matters of that religion. Whether those motives were weak or strong, just or unjust, I leave to the judgment of every rational man to determine.

But, some may say, what, did your fathers never call to mind that maxim, so common, and so generally received in their days, That the Church could not err, at least in matters relating to faith, and the general rules of manners? And if they had so called it to mind, could they not by that very thing easily have repelled all those importunate prejudices of corruption which you have set before us?

It cannot be doubted but our fathers did often think of it; but it cannot likewise be imagined, that they would not have endeavoured to search a little more narrowly upon what that maxim was founded, what construction they ought to make of it; if, in a word, that corruption, whereof they saw such great signs, had been a thing absolutely impossible.

I say then, in the first place, that one of the thoughts that most naturally fell into their minds, upon this matter, was this; That the same thing which has happened almost in all human affairs, might very well befall the Christian Religion in the space of about five hundred years, wherein it had been in the hands of the \* Romans. Every one might observe it to be changed by the succeeding age, to be rendered so as it could not be known, and to become quite another thing than

\* Latins.

it was at first, according as they degenerated from their original. That inclination that men had to alter the first institutions of things, to add to them, or diminish from them, to give to them new forms and new customs, reigned at least as much in our western parts, as among other nations. It reigned also so universally, that there was nothing reserved from its dominion, either in their languages, or their discipline, or their professions, or in the governments of the people, or in their laws, or in the distribution of justice, or, in one word, in any of those things that depend in any manner whatsoever on the management of men. It had been then a kind of miracle, if religion had been spared, and its truth, its worship and customs, regarded and kept with so great care, that nothing should be altered in that, either by additions or diminutions. And we cannot say that religion, being so heavenly and divine a thing, is also above all those accidents. For it is most true that it is divine in itself, and consequently inviolable *de jure*, and of right; but there is none that sees it not in effect too often violated through the rashness of men; and our fathers were not ignorant, that as perfectly holy as it was, yet it was found to be as much or more exposed to the passions and disorders of the soul of man, as all other things.

2. But besides that general inclination which never fails to change things from their natural state, our fathers could not but know also, that all men did very much lean towards superstitions and errors in the matters of religion; they saw the proofs of this in those chimeras wherewith the false religions had filled the world: chimeras that were yet so much the more strange, as those people who believed and authorized them, as the Greeks and Romans did appear, as to every thing else to have minds exceedingly enlightened (and refined,) which made our fathers clearly see that blind love that men always had for errors in the matters of religion. And without doubt, that very thing carried them out to suspect that that pretension to infallibility was null and vain, and that there might very well be corruptions in the state of the Church of

those times; for what likelihood was there, that that ill inclination should have had no place among those of the Latin Church, that it was wholly extinguished beyond a possibility of returning, or that the enemy of our salvation would not make use of it for our destruction, or that having made use of it, it should remain so long without any effect during the course of so many ages?

3. The example of the Church of Israel, whereof the Bible teacheth us the history, confirmed our fathers in those thoughts. That was the very Church of God, as well as that of the Christians: that church was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, as well as ours, although that blood had not yet been shed. God not only kept his chosen and his truly faithful under that ministration, but he had not any other church, nor any other ministry in all the world, for the salvation of his children. Whence it follows not only that God had the same concern in the preservation of the purity of that church, as of that of the Latin Church, but that he had yet a far greater. For above this, that church had external help for the conservation of its purity, far greater than the Latin Church ever had. For it was shut up in one people, and in one country only. It had but one language, but one tabernacle, but one temple, but one civil government, but one political law, and but one king; where the Western Church had all those apart in many places. And yet notwithstanding all that, it could not be kept from corruptions, not only at one, but divers times: not only in matters of small consequence, but after a strange manner, by a heap of depraved traditions, by false glosses on the law, by open idolatries, and by a multitude of other things, wherewith their prophets reproached them. Had they not then very great reason to think that the Latin Church, which had no peculiar promises that it should be kept from corruption, in being distinguished from that of Israel, was not more happy than that in the conservation of its purity?

4. To this example of the Church of Israel, our fathers ad-

joined that of the Greek and other eastern churches, which God had at first honoured with Christianity, as well as the Latin; and that the times had nevertheless so disfigured them, that they did not any farther appear to be what they were heretofore. Indeed into what errors and superstitions did not those churches fall? And in how many points does not the Church of Rome find itself to differ at this day from them? Some of them observe circumcision with baptism, others keep up the sacrificing of living creatures, after the manner of the Jews; some solemnly every year baptize their rivers and their horses; others believe that the smoke of incense takes away their sins; others hold that the prayers of the faithful deliver from the pains of damnation those souls that are then in hell; others give passports in due form to the dying, to carry them to Paradise; and a thousand other such-like impertinencies that are found to be established among those people: why might it not be possible that the Latin Church should have degenerated as well as those churches? Is it, that their Christianity was from the beginning different from that of the Latins? or is it because the Latin Church had some peculiar privileges beyond all others? No, certainly, their vocation was equal on one part, and on the other; and the nature of things being so, if those nations had corrupted themselves, those of Rome might corrupt themselves as well as they.

5. Our fathers, who were not ignorant of those examples, could not, in my judgment, but represent to themselves also the times past, wherein errors and corruption had visibly prevailed over the truth, even then when those very churches of the East and West were joined together in one body. They knew that which had passed in the Council of Antioch, in favour of the Macedonians; in the Councils of Sirmium, of Milan, of Ariminum, at Selucia, and at Constantinople, in favour of the Arians; and in a Council at Ephesus, in favour of the Eutychians; without thinking of that which they said of those two Councils held at Constantinople in favour of the *Iconoclastes*, (or abolishers of images,) the one under the

Emperor Leo Isauricus, the other under Constantine Copronimus. That very thing was an evident token to them, that the Latin Church might be very likely in their times fallen into other corruptions, and that error had triumphed over truth. For it was not at all impossible, that that which had happened frequently in respect of some errors, might not yet with greater success and longer duration happen in respect of other errors.

6. Moreover, they observed that Councils of a great name among the Latins, as those of Constance and Basil, had been rejected and opposed by other Councils, and that in the most weighty points of religion, to wit, in the case of the supreme authority that ought to govern the Church upon earth. For some raised the authority of the Councils above that of the Pope, and others would have it that the Popes should have an absolute and an independent and perfectly monarchical rule over the Church. What could our fathers conclude from so manifest a contest, if not, that it had a vast confusion in it, and that it was exceeding necessary to the quiet settling of their minds and consciences, to enter on an examination of that which those men taught in the business of religion?

7. Our fathers were confirmed in that design, when they set before their eyes those obscure ages through which the Latin Church had past. For who knows not what the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries were, not to speak of those that followed them? As for the ninth, Baronius is forced to conclude the history of it with saying, "That it was an age of affliction to the Church in general, and chiefly to the Church of Rome; as well by reason of the complaints it had against the princes of the West and East, and the schism of Photius, as by reason of intestine and implacable wars, which had began then to be formed within the very bosom of that church. That this age was the most deplorable, and dismal, above all the rest, because those who ought to have been watchful in the government of the Church, not only slept profoundly, but the very same persons laboured all they could entirely to

drown-the apostolic ship.”\* For the tenth, as there are very few persons but will acknowledge that it was buried in darkness more gross than that of Egypt, so it will be needless here to produce the proofs. The eleventh was scarce happier, and Baronius begins the history of it with a remark of so universal a corruption of manners, chiefly among the churchmen, “that it had made way,” says he, “for the common belief of the near approach of Antichrist, and of the end of the world,”† How could it be possible, that during such gloomy times, religion, faith, and worship, should be preserved without any alteration? Saint Paul has joined together faith and a good conscience as two things that mutually sustain one another, and has taken notice that those who cast off a good conscience, make shipwreck of the faith. 1 Tim. 1. 19. “In effect.” saith Saint Chrysostome, “then when men lead corrupted lives, it is impossible they should keep themselves from falling into perverse doctrines.”‡ †

8. To these considerations, we might join that of the two sorts of philosophies which successively had reigned in the Church, to wit, the one of Plato and the other of Aristotle, to whose principles they had strove to accommodate the Christian religion. For it is scarce to be conceived but that mixture of Platonic and Peripatetic opinions with the doctrines of Jesus Christ, should have defaced the faith, and quite altered his true worship. It was for this reason that Saint Paul had cautioned the faithful to take heed that no one seduced them through philosophy and vain deceitful reasonings, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the wisdom of the world, and not after Jesus Christ. Coloss. 2. 18—20.

9. They will say, without doubt, that all these considerations, how strong soever they appear, do yet make no more than conjectures and likelihoods, which ought to have been immediately stifled by the only name of the Church, which

\* Baron. ad Ann. 899.

† Baron. ad Ann. 1001.

‡ Chrysost. in 1 Tim. 1. hom. 5.



improves so profound a respect for itself in the souls of all true believers. But that very thing served but to increase the just suspicions of our fathers; they understood what respect they owed to the Church; but then they were not ignorant how easy it was to be deceived by so specious a name. That visible society of men who profess Christianity, which we call the Church, is not wholly composed of true believers, it takes into its bosom a great number of false Christians, of wicked, worldly, and hypocritical men, who are mingled with the good, as chaff amongst the wheat, or as the mud of the stream is with the water of the fountain. And as, on the one side, the false Christians are not all so after the same manner, for some are full of light and knowledge, others of ignorance; some are profane, others superstitious; one sort are full of contrivances and intrigues in the affairs of religion, others take little care of its interests; some are ambitious, others covetous, others fierce and inflexible, others full of impostures and deceits, according as we see those different humours ordinarily reign among the men of the world; so, on the other side, the true believers who are in the same visible society have not all of them the same degree either of knowledge or sanctification, that they have more or less of natural light, more or less of supernatural grace, more or less of zeal, of courage, or of vigour, according to the measure of the spirit that is communicated to them; it is now almost scarce conceivable, that that medley should not corrupt religion in a long train of ages, and that it should not cause to enter in maxims, doctrines, services, and customs, far more conformable to the spirit of the world, than to that of Jesus Christ. "There needs but a little leaven," saith Saint Paul, "to corrupt the whole mass." 1 Cor. 5. 6. From thence, that two parties, whereof the one is good, the other is evil, are joined together, experience always instructs us, that the ill does far more easily deprave the good, than the good improve the bad. And we cannot say that God is bound to hinder that corruption, and that otherwise his Church would perish from the earth: for besides

that it no way belongs to us to order so boldly what God is bound to do, or not to do, for the execution of his designs, it is certain that he has not hindered it, as we have but just before seen, in the Church of the Jews, nor in the Eastern Christian Churches, nor in the whole body of the Church in the time of the Arians. He has other ways to preserve his elect, and his sincerely faithful ones, who only are, to speak properly, his Church; he can preserve them in the midst of a corrupted ministry, and when that is become impossible, he knows how to separate them from the wicked, and to draw them away from their communion. But we will speak to that more largely at the end of this treatise.

10. To go on with our remarks, that which I have said supplies us with another, which is not less considerable than the rest. It is in consequence of that mixture of the good and the wicked in the same visible Church, that it might fall out, and it has very frequently happened, that the far greatest number, the external splendour, force, and authority, is found among the party of the wicked, and that they are chiefly those who fill up the highest places in the Church. For as those highest places yield them honour, and the goods of the world in a very great measure, so it is very natural that they should be more hunted after and obtained by the men of the world than by the truly faithful, who ordinarily are not so violently carried out to those things. After that manner, one may very often see the government of the visible Church to fall into exceedingly wicked hands, and then there needs but a capricious humour, but a passion, but an interest, but a whimsey, but some neglect or some other thing of the like nature, which it is not hard to conceive to be in such persons as we suppose, to bring into the Church false doctrines, and false worship, to which those of the best minds shall no sooner oppose themselves, but they shall be immediately quelled, which often forces them to keep silence, and to give way for a season, till it shall please God to deliver them from that oppression.

11. Could it not in the least happen, that those errors and superstitions that were but little taken notice of at first, sprung up in the schools, or among some other sort of men, should be by little and little, and insensibly, spread over the body of the Church, by the means of ignorance and negligence of the pastors? And might not the same thing fall out according to the pleasure and interest that the pastors might take to see them established? That in the end being found to be rooted in men's minds, and as I may so say, incorporated into religion, they might be looked upon as traditions, or as customs that for the future ought to be observed as laws. No one can deny that a multitude of things had crept after that manner into the Latin Church; as the keeping back the cup, which the Council of Constance had taken up in express terms, as "a custom that had been rationally introduced, and which ought to be kept as a law."\* It was after the same manner that the celibacy of priests, the worshipping of images, the distinction of meats, and many other things, which how particular (and private) soever they were at first, came after to be made public, and, in the end, to be changed into articles of religion.

12. All these reflections might serve to let our fathers understand that it was no ways impossible for the state of the Latin Church to be corrupted; but besides that reason, those examples, and that experience, which convinced them of it, they yet farther saw the plain proofs of it in the declarations of the Holy Scripture. For after whatsoever manner they expounded that *mystery of iniquity*, of which Saint Paul speaks to the Thessalonians, which in his days had began to work, (2 Thes. 2. 7.) and that captivity of God's people, whom God commanded to go out of Babylon, lest in partaking of its sins, it partook also of its plagues, (Rev. 18. 4.) no one could avoid acknowledging from those two places, but that a great corruption must needs fall out in the visible

\* Concil. Constan. Sess. 13.

Church. "The mystery of iniquity which had began to work," or to form itself, could not be conceived of but under the idea of a secret plot, whose lowest foundations were laid in the very days of the Apostles, and which must at length after a long train of ages have come to its utmost pitch, and be manifested. And as to that other passage, it supposes in the first place a captivity of the people of God; "Go out of Babylon." Secondly, a captivity of that people, who did not yet fail to be the people of God, "Go out of her, my people." And in the third place, a captivity, in which, while they abode, they were in danger of partaking of the sins of their oppressors, "Lest," it adds, "in partaking of its sins, ye partake also of its plagues." All that formed an idea of a Church that groaned under the weight of a great corruption, which easily gave way to that thought, that it might possibly be the Latin Church as soon as any other, and that it might as well fall out in the times of our fathers, as in any other season.

---

## CHAP. V.

### MORE PARTICULAR REFLECTIONS UPON THAT PRIVILEGE OF INFALLIBILITY WHICH THEY ASCRIBE TO THE CHURCH, AND OF ITS AUTHORITY.

ANY one may now see, methinks, from what I have laid down, what judgment ought to be made of that pretended infallibility that the Latin Church ascribed to itself, and by what means they would shut our eyes, and reduce us to a slavish obedience. We shall yet nevertheless make here some reflections upon it, and see whether it has any solid foundation, and any justice in that claim.

1. But before we proceed farther, it will be necessary to know what they understand by that infallible Church, and examine all the senses that may be given to this proposition, That the Church cannot err: for our adversaries themselves very differently understand it. In the first place, then, if they would plainly say, That that which has been believed, and universally practised, by all those who have composed the body of the visible Church, throughout the extent of all ages, is infallibly true; I say that it is a very useless principle, since, to speak according to men, it is impossible to know that which has been so believed, and universally practised. So that one need say no more against it, but to send back those men to an infallibility of that nature. Who could make a search so just, so clear, and so general as he ought, to assure himself of the unanimous consent of all the particular members, unless he could raise all that were dead, and understand them one after another? I acknowledge that we have the books of the ancients; but all have not wrote, and who can warrant us that those who have not wrote had the same sentiments with those that have? Who can warrant that the many books that are lost were not in very many points contrary to those that are extant? Who can teach us nicely to distinguish what those authors have wrote in copying out of, or in imitating one another, from their true and natural sentiments; and that which they have wrote on their own heads, from that which they have wrote as witnesses of the general belief of their ages? Who can assure us that they were not sometimes deceived in taking for the general belief or practice of the Church, those things which were not so? For the same case happens in these very days, that as to those things that seem so exceeding clear, there are yet a sort of men who would persuade us, that we do not very well and perfectly know what is the general belief of the Church of Rome, and that we may very easily deceive ourselves, and deceive others; how much more then heretofore, when those things were by nothing near so clearly decided, and so mani-

fest as they are now at this day? Who can exactly enough tell us what those articles were wherein all the ancients were universally agreed, and those wherein they did not agree, since it has very often fell out that one and the same author has wrote things very contrary upon one and the same subject? Who can assure us that what three or four ancient authors had wrote after an agreeable manner, was not one of those particular deviations from the truth, which one may often discover in them, which does not at all hinder, but that the contrary opinion may be more received, and more general? In fine, there is nothing so vain and so fallacious, as that pretended infallibility of the Church, if they restrain it to those doctrines which shall be found established by the unanimous consent of all persons and of all ages.

Moreover, such a kind of infallibility would not only have been no hinderance to our fathers from entering on an examination of the matters of religion, but it would also have obliged them to it. For they must always have known whether that which was taught and practised in the Church in their days, concerning faith and worship, had been confirmed by the consent of all the foregoing ages, which they could never have known but by such an examination. So that those who in these days dispute with us about the right of the Reformation, will never find any reason on their side. The Church of Rome must needs be very infallible with them, but it can be so but in one respect; I would say, in those matters wherein she agrees with the Church throughout all ages, and with all those persons who compose it, which could not in the least have taken away her possibility of erring in those matters wherein she should withdraw herself from the ancient Church, and by consequence she must submit herself, her decisions, her doctrines, and her customs, to a rule and an authority that was superior, according to which they ought to be examined.

2. If they understand by it, that the Church in every age cannot err, that is to say, for example, That that which was

believed and generally practised, and beyond all controversy, in the Church in the days of our fathers could not be otherwise than true and good, I say that they make this a principle which cannot be to any purpose, and from which they cannot draw any advantage. For how could they assure themselves that all those who made up the body of the visible Church a little before the Reformation, did well approve of the doctrines that they then taught, and the worship that was then practised, and how could they distinctly and precisely affirm, that any such thing had been generally received? For it cannot be imagined, under a pretence that some certain opinions had been ordinarily taught in the schools, or that certain devotions had been commonly used, that they should be brought into the public service, and spread over their books under that same pretence; it cannot I say be imagined, that there had not been many in the world who disapproved them, and looked on them as errors and abuses, although they did not forbear as yet to abide with the rest in the same communion. And it was certainly from thence, that as soon as our first reformers had began to speak openly against such kind of things, their voice was heard, and their words received with the applauses of, and being followed by a great part of Europe. For that was from no other reason, but because they found all matters ordered so readily, and that for a long time they had vehemently breathed after reformation. There is then nothing more ridiculous, than when they would send us back to an infallibility which could never be found there, and of which they can give us no marks or sure characters that may be had there. Besides which, if the Church is not infallible, but only in those things that are generally believed and approved of without all disputes, and if it may err in other matters, none can blame our fathers for having entered on an examination of them, since it had formal oppositions to one part of the Church in a great many points, as in the opposition of the Berengarians, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Wickliffites, and the Hussites. They will

say that these were such heretics as the Church had condemned. But this answer will be but a mere fallacy; for if then when the Church was divided into two parties, and that which was the weaker should have been condemned by the stronger part; they would treat all those as heretics who should have been condemned, to elude under that pretence the weight of their opposition, and that they might still attribute infallibility to the stronger party, in respect of those very things that are contested, this is but to deceive ourselves, to say at the same time, that the Church is not infallible, but only in regard of those things that all generally hold without controversy. They ought to change their principle, and to say the same of it that they affirm in the case of that contestation, that their infallibility follows the stronger side, and that those who oppress the other by their intrigues, by their authority, by the force of their arms, or otherwise, are the truly infallible, since the opposition of the others ought not to be looked on but as the insurrection of heretics, and not as just opposition. It will always depend on the most powerful to make themselves infallible, by beating down all that oppose themselves; for there will need no more for that purpose than to condemn them, and they are presently heretics, excluded from all right in their oppositions; either this is that which I call a fallacy, or there never was any such thing in the world.

3. But if they will indeed change their principle, and say, that that infallibility is to be placed in the greater number, in the ruling party, any one may convince them of the contrary, by the example of the Arians, who had made themselves masters of the Church, under the successors of Constantine. The greater part in the Council were for them, the pulpits were for them, the people followed them as they were led either by their own humours or by constraint and force, they persecuted the orthodox, which evidently shows the falseness of this proposition, That the greater number, or that side that finds itself the stronger, can never err. Jesus Christ had



never had any defenders, if in the days of his flesh all had been persuaded of the truth of this maxim.

4. This experience of the Arians makes it appear more evidently that infallibility could not be attributed to that which they call the Church representative, that is to say, to the whole body of pastors, or, as they speak, to all the clergy: for it is but too true, that the whole body of pastors, assembled in a very great number at the Council of Ariminum, gave way to the Arian infidelity, by rejecting the word *consubstantial*, which signified that the Son of God was of the same essence with his Father, and declared only, “that he was like to the Father, and that he was not a creature, as other creatures were,” which supposed that he was a creature, although different from others. They will say that it was not of their own motion that these bishops made that Arian confession, but that they were forced to it by the Emperor’s ministers: that moreover they were deceived by the Arians, not taking notice that that clause that the Son was not a creature as other creatures, made him always a creature, and in fine that they rejected the word *ὁμοούσιος* because they did not thoroughly understand it. But all that is not of any advantage to their cause; for if the whole body of pastors, assembled in council to decide matters of faith, did determine of heresy either out of weakness or through surprise or ignorance, since they determine of it in effect, what does it signify in what manner or in what respect they determined it? Could they call those men infallible who were capable of making a wicked and infidel confession, in an article so fundamental as is that of the eternity of the person of the Son of God, in such a manner, and by such principles as that came to pass? We can never commit any faults, but that they must have some cause; but what cause soever they have, our faults are always faults, and certain arguments that we are not infallible.

5. There are some of them that say, that councils are not infallible but when they are approved by the Popes. But

neither has that any solid ground, for how can an approbation which ordinarily passes after the separation of a council, possibly confer any infallibility on it? Has that any retroactive virtue, and can that change the state of a thing already past? They will say, that the Pope does not confer any infallibility on it, but only acknowledges it, and makes it to be acknowledged by others, and that his approbation is as the seal and impression that denotes that such a council ought to be held infallible. But if the Pope himself is not infallible, as the sounder part of the Gallican Church holds that he is not, what certainty can his approbation give us? May he not err in approving those things which he ought not to approve, and in taking for infallible a council which was really deceived? And let not any one say that I produce the opinion of the Gallican Church to the prejudice of all the others, for after what manner soever it be, it seems to me that one may very well affirm, without offending any person, that it is not an article of the faith of the Church of Rome to believe that the Pope must needs be infallible, for otherwise the Gallican Church would be guilty of heresy. And from that only it follows, that one could have no such assurance as one ought to have to settle the mind and conscience in quiet, if it were possible for him to err in approving a council, and by consequence, his approbation could not be a certain character of the infallibility of that council.

But why do we use arguments in a matter in which experience has sufficiently instructed us? The Fifth Council assembled at Constantinople, on occasion of three books published, the one of Ibas Bishop of Edessa, the other of Theodorus of Mopsuesta, and the other of Theodoret Bishop of Cyrus, was it not held in spite of all the oppositions of Pope Vigilius, did not that council condemn those writings as heretical, against the express prohibitions that Vigilius had made, by a public decree to condemn them, and yet notwithstanding was not that very council in the end approved by the

successors of Vigilius, and in fine received throughout all the Church for a true and holy *Oecumenical* Council? \* Those approbations therefore are only a juggle, which wholly depend on the capricious humours of the Popes, on their different interests, on their good or ill humours. One Pope disapproves of a council, and makes it void, to advance all that he does; by that the council is remote enough from infallibility, and ought not to be held for infallible: another Pope comes, and receives and approves of it, and behold on a sudden that council changes its condition and becomes infallible.

Besides that, did not Pope Liberius approve an Arian council held at Sirmium, in subscribing an heretical confession that had been drawn up, and which Saint Hilary calls the Arian perfidiousness, the heresy sprung from Sirmium, for which he pronounced an anathema against Liberius. † For what else was that subscription in consequence of which Liberius embraced the communion of the Arians, but a ratification and real approbation of the act of an erroneous council? ‡ and it signifies nothing to say, That Liberius was in exile when he committed that error, for without alleging here what he himself declared to the Eastern Arian Bishops, That he was in peace and unanimity with them, and all their provinces, in good earnest, and that he had received that Catholic faith with all his heart, that he had never in the least contradicted it, that he had readily given his consent, that he followed and held it; his exile and concern to get away from them, does not hinder but that it should be true, That he did approve an infidel confession, nor by consequence, letting us see, that it might very well happen, That the Popes did authorize the acts of wicked councils, and that it ought not to be pretended that their approbation makes

\* Vide Baronium in Justiniano & Vigilio, Tom. 7, & sirmundum præfat. in sæcund.

† Hilar. In fragment.

‡ Apud Hilar. *ibid.*

councils infallible, nor that it has any certain ground for declaring them to be such.

6. That example of Liberius encounters also all those who ascribe that infallibility to the Popes; for behold one in whom, by the testimony of St. Hilary,\* and St. Jerom,† that privilege had no effect. But as that opinion is not generally received in this kingdom, and we need not to fear objections from any here, so it is needless to refute them. I shall only say, that that dispute that is in the Church of Rome about those to whom this infallibility belongs, whether to the Pope only, or a council only, or to a council approved by the Pope, or to the Pope as the head of the council, lets us see that that pretence in general has no ground; for if in truth the Latin Church had that privilege, it would never be so uncertain as they have made it, but it would have been known a little more clearly where it resided.

However it be, it plainly appears that the Latin Church does not pretend to it as a law of nature, for she is composed of no different blood from the rest of men, nor as a right joined to the profession of Christianity, nor as a mere quality of a church, for in that case the Greek and other churches would have the same advantage, but that she pretends to it as a peculiar privilege, whereby they were distinguished from other churches, as the Greek and Armenian, &c. It appears that they would not set this prerogative before us, as a first principle, which is evident of itself, without needing any proof: for, in fine, it is not so clear that the Latin Church should be infallible, as it is that one and one make two, and that the whole is greater than any of its parts. It is then certainly but very reasonable to demand that they would give us the proofs and grounds of so important a right. I mean other proofs than those that are commonly taken from the same authority of that church. For it will not be enough to confirm that infallibility, for her only to say,

\* Hilar. ubi supra.

† Hieron. in Chron.

*I am so*; every church may say the same, and yet not be believed. They ought to produce proofs, and proofs that come from heaven, since there is none besides God that can confer so great a right, and they ought to show them to us, to the end we may judge of them and weigh their cogency and truth. That being so, I affirm that our fathers were bound to use all sorts of rational methods to examine that question, Whether the Church of Rome was infallible or not? and to look to both sides to settle themselves in a good judgment. This is that which, in my opinion, none will contest. But from thence these things will clearly follow. 1. That our fathers had right to examine one of the tenets of the Latin Church, which is that of her infallibility. 2. That they had right to judge of it according to the nature of those proofs which presented themselves for or against it. 3. That they might lawfully reject it as false, if in their examination of it, it appeared to be false. 4. That it is neither absurd nor rash to maintain, that every one has right to examine a tenet of the Church, and to judge of it. 5. That all those general objections which they have hitherto made against that truth are false and frivolous; such as these: That if one give all that liberty of examining, every one may make a religion of his own. That there is no other way to keep men in the unity of the faith. That he who examines, makes himself a judge above the Church. That it is the ready way to bring in a private spirit, and other such like things, all which are refuted by that one example in the point of infallibility. 6. That if it is no ways absurd that every one should have right to examine a tenet of the Church that cannot be proved otherwise than by the Scriptures, neither is it absurd to say, that that right of searching out the true sense of Scripture belongs to every Christian. 7. That it is not absurd to say, that a believer is master of his own faith, by depending only upon God, and independent on men. 8. That if every Christian has right to examine one of the chief articles of religion, it is no ways inconvenient to say that he has right to

examine all, for there is not less danger, nor less consequence, for all than for one. 9. In fine, it will also follow from thence, that our fathers were bound upon that pretence of the Latin Church to examine all the points of that religion. For firmly to assure themselves of the truth of that privilege, it was not enough to consider it in its grounds and its causes, which are those proofs that they call *a priori*; they ought further to look on it in its effects, that is to say, to see it in the doctrines of that church, in its maxims, in its voice, and diligently to take notice whether they may see all the characters of infallibility resplendent in it, or whether they may not discover some error. It was after this manner that the disciples of Jesus Christ acknowledged and cleaved to him. "I have given unto them," says he, "the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee." John 17. 8. "To whom should we go?" said they to him; "Thou hast the words of eternal life." John 6. 68. Our fathers had so much the more reason to imitate them, when all the prejudices of corruption which we have taken notice of in the foregoing chapters, presented themselves to their sight. They observed there all the characters of human weakness, of ambition, covetousness, interest, negligence, of plotting contrivances, and of the spirit of the world, and all the other marks of fallible men; who can then blame them for holding so circumspect a course to come to the full and clear knowledge of the truth? So that that pretence of infallibility was so far from driving our fathers from the examining of those doctrines which were taught in their days, that the very same thing necessarily engaged and led them to it.

---

## CHAP. VI.

## AN EXAMINATION OF THE PROOFS WHICH THEY PRODUCE TO ESTABLISH THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

LET us see nevertheless upon what foundations that pretended prerogative of the Latin Church is built. They produce on this subject some passages of Scripture, and some arguments. But as to the passages of Scripture, it is evident that there is not any one which respects more peculiarly the Latin Church than the Greek, the Egyptian, the Ethiopian, and others, every one of which has as much reason to apply them to themselves as the Latin. Yet we do not here dispute about a favour common to all Christian societies, but about a peculiar prerogative pretended to by the Latins. For they are all agreed that all other societies have erred, notwithstanding all those passages. They ought then necessarily to allege something which belongs to the Latins peculiarly, exclusively from all others; or they ought to come to an acknowledgement that those passages do not at all establish the infallibility of a visible church, since if they did so establish it, being so general as they are, they would have the same cogency in favour of the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Jacobites, as well as the Latins.

1. In effect, one sort of those passages respects the true Church of Jesus Christ, that is to say, not that multitude of men who make profession of Christianity, or who live in the same external society of religion, but the truly faithful, those holy men whom God has inwardly regenerated by his Spirit, and whom he leads to life everlasting. It is of that Church that it is said, That she is the body of Jesus Christ. Eph. 1. 23. That there is one body, and one Spirit, (Eph. 4. 4.) That Jesus Christ is her Head, (Eph. 5. 23.) That she is his

spouse. Hos. 2. 19. It is only of the truly faithful and no otherwise that these promises are verified, "Upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matth. 16. 18. "I will be with you always unto the end of the world." Matth. 28. 20. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever." John, 14. 16. "The Spirit of truth shall lead you into all truth." John, 16. 13. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be there in the midst of them." Matth. 18. 20. These passages denote nothing like an infallibility, either in the whole body of the visible Church, or in the side that is strongest, or in councils, or in the decisions of Popes, or in traditions and ancient customs; but they only signify that God will have always some truly faithful upon the earth even unto the end of the world, and that he will accompany them with such a measure of the light and grace of his Spirit, as shall in the end bring them to the glory of his kingdom.

2. There are others, which they yet make use of, far less to the purpose, because they signify only the duty of pastors, and what they are appointed to do, and not that, which in effect they shall do. Such as these: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Matth. 28. 19. "Son of man, I have set thee for a watch-man over the house of Israel." Ezek. 33. 7. "The priest's lips shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth." Mal. 2. 7. "I have set watch-men upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." Isa. 62. 6. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph. 4. 11. These and some other like passages show to what the office of the ministry is naturally appointed, and the obligation of those that are called to it; but they are very far from giving from thence a prerogative of infallibility.



3. They allege also some passages that recommend to the faithful the having a respect for and an obedience to their pastors. Such are these; "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me." Luke 10. 16. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls." Heb. 13. 17. "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works." Matth. 23. 3. But I cannot see what this last passage sets before us, but that all those exhortations that God makes to the faithful to have a submission to the word of their pastors, denote very truly the duty of the people in that matter, but they do not in the least settle any infallibility in their pastors. For is this that that Jesus Christ would say, That the Scribes and Pharisees, as long as they sat in the chair of Moses, were infallible: he that on the contrary accused them of having made void the commandments of God by their traditions, and who elsewhere gave his disciples such a charge to take heed of the leaven of the Pharisees, that is to say, of their pernicious doctrines? How many times is that obedience, that respect, and that submission, recommended to children to give to their fathers, in the Scriptures? Is it that the Scripture in that ascribes to their fathers an infallibility? It is without doubt the King's pleasure that we should submit ourselves to his officers, and that we should obey them; but he does not mean to advance them to be infallible, nor to ordain us to obey them if they shall happen to command us those things that are directly contrary to his service, and to that fidelity which we owe to our sovereign. It is then true that all those exhortations to hear our pastors and to obey their words, are always to be restrained by this clause understood, *as far as their words shall be conformable to that of God*; that they can never go beyond that, and that they cannot from thence draw any privilege of infallibility.

4. As these gentlemen omit nothing that may serve for their interests, so they ordinarily make use of that passage in

the 18th chapter of St. Matthew, where Jesus Christ ordains that if any one receive an injury from another, he is to reprove him between himself and him alone ; and if that first complaint signifies nothing, then he must take witnesses with him ; and if he neglect to hear those witnesses, he is to tell it to the Church ; and if he neglect to hear the Church, he is to be unto us as a heathen and a publican. All that which follows in the close of that discourse of Jesus Christ shows, that he speaks there neither of faith nor worship, but of some private quarrels that we might have against our brethren to be taken away, and of the use of that discipline. For the mind of our Lord is, that before we break off absolutely with our brethren, we should observe all the rules of charity, and that we should there make use of the Church ; but if he would refuse to hear the Church, that in that case it was allowed us to treat him no longer as a brother, but as a real stranger. Who sees not that if they would draw any thing of consequence from that passage, they ought to pretend that the Church is infallible not in matters of faith, for they are not meddled with there, but in matters of fact, and in the censures that it gives upon private quarrels, in which nevertheless all the world agrees that she may be deceived. And therefore it is that these gentlemen are wont to allege these last words, "Tell it to the Church, and if he will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as the heathens and publicans ;" and they allege them also as separated from the sequel of that discourse, because otherwise they could not but observe that they would signify nothing to them.

5. In fine, they produce those words of St. Paul to Timothy, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly : but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. 3. 14, 15. How, say they, can the Church be the pillar and ground of truth, if it is not infallible in the doctrines it proposes as of faith, and in the worship which it practises ?

But what likelihood is there that he would have established an opinion so important, as that of the infallibility of the Latin Church, on such metaphorical terms, which St. Paul did not make use of upon the sight of any infallibility, which should respect no other but the Latin Church in particular, and which should much rather have respected the Church of Ephesus, or the other Churches of Asia, where Timothy was then, when the Apostle wrote to him, which yet did not fail of falling into error; in terms which may be explained in divers senses, and which have been applied to divers particular bishops, without yet pretending to raise them up to be infallible, what colour, I say, is there that they can prove the infallibility of the Church of Rome? It appears in the end of that discourse of St. Paul, that he never thought of making the Church infallible, for in all that chapter, he aims at nothing else than to set down the duties of bishops and deacons; and after having marked out in particular some qualities with which they ought to be endowed, and from what vices they ought to be more especially exempt, after what manner they ought to govern themselves, he adds in the close of all, that he wrote all that to his disciple, to the end he might know how to behave himself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Who sees not that that infallibility comes not in at all to the purpose in that close of the discourse? Let the bishops, says he, and the deacons take heed they be wise, sober, &c. That they hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, that their wives should be honest and faithful in all things, that their children should be well educated, &c. And that which I say in general, I apply also to thee, Timothy, to the end thou mayest live unblameably in the house of God, in the Church of the living God. Add, according to the interpretation of these gentlemen, which Church is infallible and cannot err; and there is nothing of any natural connexion in it. On the contrary, that conceit of the infallibility of the Church, according to the principle that our adversaries make use of in the

doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, would harden them in security; for let them do as they will, all would go well, and after whatsoever manner the pastors govern, the Church could never be corrupted, nor its truth be lost. Which would seem far more proper to inspire negligence into the bishops, than to animate them to do their duty. In effect, if they cannot tell how to exhort men by motives of that nature, they ought then to confess the truth, to wit, that these words, *the pillar and ground of the truth*, note the end and natural design of the Church, that for which she is made, and to which she is called, which is to sustain and bear the truth, and to make it subsist in the world, and so the discourse of the Apostle appears very just, and well connected: behold, says he, after what manner the bishops ought to frame their course, and after what sort thou oughtest to live in the Church of God, in behaving thyself in it so, as remembering that God has appointed it to be the pillar and ground of his truth; live therefore in that manner that may answer that end, or that natural appointment of the Church. Just as if the King, exhorting one of the officers of his Parliament to do his duty, should tell him, That he lived in a body that was the pillar and ground of justice, and the rights of the crown; that is to say, which is naturally ordained for the maintaining justice in the state, and to defend the rights of the crown. But as that speech of the Prince would not establish any privilege of infallibility in the Parliament, so neither can that of the Apostle do it for the Church: for societies do not always follow their natural appointments, we see that they often enough depart from them. I confess that the Church does not always wander from its end, nor in all things; yet it cannot also be imagined that she never departs: for the wicked are mingled with the good in the same society, the dignities of the Church are sometimes to be found more possessed by the men of the world than by the truly faithful; the very best men themselves are subject to weaknesses, and they sometimes commit faults of that importance, that may consequently be dilated by continuance,

and all that cannot but produce errors and corruptions, which it will be most necessary to reform.

Behold all those passages of Scripture upon which, they seem to me, to found that pretension of the infallibility of the Latin Church! To them they join some arguments.

I. If, say they, it be possible for the Church to err, why do we call it *holy*, as we do in the Creed? "I believe the Holy Catholic Church." "Such an assembly that is united in the profession of an error, is so far unfit to be called *holy*, that, on the contrary, it is impious, since it agrees in a doctrine that is contrary to the holy truths revealed by God."\* I answer, That if this argument were good, it would follow, not only that the Church should be infallible as to matters of faith, but also that she should be impeccable in respect of manners, for she is called *holy* as well from that holiness that regards good works, as from that which regards the faith. The Church is holy, but yet after an imperfect manner, while she is here upon earth, and she will never be perfectly so, but in heaven. Furthermore, they ought to remember that the title of *holy*, and generally all other titles of honour and glory that are given to the Church, belong to it in truth only, in respect of the true believers, and not in respect of the hypocrites and wicked which are mingled with the good in the same visible society; and that it is only on the same account of the good, that all that visible body is called the Church. For none but those whom God has called to his salvation, can be the true mystical body of Jesus Christ. When then it shall come to pass that the number of the wicked prevails in that visible society, they will fill up the pulpits, they will be masters of councils and of decisions of faith, of the government and ministry of the Church, and will not fail to introduce errors and a false worship; but when those persons should introduce and authorize them, the Church would not cease to be holy, not in respect of those wicked

\* M. le Card. de Richelieu. liv. 1. ch. 13.

men who waste it, and corrupt it as much as it lies in their power to do, but in regard of the faithful whom God will keep pure by the illuminations of his Holy Spirit, and the methods of his providence. The Church of Israel, in the midst of its greatest idolatries, did not cease to keep the titles of “a holy nation, and a kingdom of priests,” (Exod. 19. 6.) which Moses had given her, but she kept them, not in respect of her corruptors, and those wretched men that would have seduced her, but in respect of those that were holy. For it is certain that God has always done that which he did in the days of Elias, when he reserved seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee unto Baal, and it is in those that the Church is preserved, and always kept holy.

2. But yet further, say they, If the Church may err, and particularly the Church Representative, that is to say, the body of pastors, why do the Councils pronounce anathemas against all those who shall not consent to their decrees? Would it not be very unjust to bind men under so great a penalty to consent to things that are uncertain, and which may be false?\* I answer, that the force of the anathemas of those councils depends altogether on their justice. If those councils have lawfully decided controversies according to the word of God, and if with the truth they have kept love and charity, according to the precept of the Apostle, their anathema is very efficacious, and all that they bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. But if they have decided any thing against the truth, or against charity, if they have abused their places, their anathemas are vain and rash, and will fall upon none but their heads who pronounce them. For God has never submitted his righteousness to the unrighteousness of any prelates. All the force of those thunderbolts depends on those very things which have been decided. “We can do nothing,” says the Apostle, “against the truth:” we ought not then to imagine that those anathemas must needs be infallible, neither ought we to believe that they could not be

\* Bellarm. de Eccles. milit. lib. 3. cap. 14.

rightly used if they had not that infallibility. Saint Hilary did not pretend to be infallible, and yet nevertheless he pronounced an anathema against Liberius, who was a deceiver.\* Saint Paul did not pretend to make us infallible, and yet notwithstanding he commands us to anathematize even an angel from heaven, and himself; if he should preach any other Gospel than that which he had preached. Gal. 1. 8. Cyril of Alexandria did not aspire after infallibility, and yet he thunders out his anathemas against all the errors of Nestorius. The second Council of Tours never thought of being infallible, and yet nevertheless it anathematized all those who after the third admonition refused to restore the goods of the Church. In fine, every private person pronounces an anathema against all heresies. The anathemas of the Councils are not the sentences of the magistrate, the force of which depends on the authority of him who pronounces them; they are only the denunciations that men make on God's side, as his interpreters and his ministers, of the severity of his judgments against the unbelievers, the wicked, and the heretics. And provided that those denunciations should be founded on the word of God, as far as the light of the pastors of the Church and their good consciences could persuade them, we ought not to doubt but that they would be just, although they would not be infallible. For howsoever it be, that good and lawful councils, assembled in the name of Jesus Christ, would never pretend that their anathemas should bind any person, any farther than their decisions and their canons were just, and conformable to the Scripture.

3. They add, yet, if it were possible for the Church to err, it were possible for it totally to fall away after that manner, that there should not be any longer a Church upon the earth, and yet notwithstanding how many promises have we in the Scripture that denote the perpetuity of the Church?† God

\* Hilar. in Fragm.

† Monsieur le Card. de Richelieu. liv. 1. ch. 13. & liv. 1. ch. 4.

says in Hosea, (ch. 2. 19.) That he would betroth her unto him for ever. Saint Paul calls her the body of Jesus Christ. But the body of Jesus Christ is eternal. Jesus Christ promises to be with his even unto the end of the world, and says, that the Comforter shall abide with them for ever, and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his Church. But there is no need of heaping up these proofs of a thing which was never contested. God will always keep a Church upon earth; that is to say, he will always have a number of true believers, whom he will guide by his word and by his Spirit, and they are those that are betrothed to him for ever, and the mystical body of his Son, to whom he will grant his gracious presence for ever, and an assured victory against the gates of hell. There is nothing disputed in that point. Our business is only to inquire, whether all that body composed of the good and the wicked, that assembly in which the worldly men and hypocrites are mixed with the truly faithful, and that which they call the visible Church, can never fall into error, after what manner soever it be. Whether it is not possible, for that party of the men of the world which may be sometimes the stronger, to corrupt the public ministry, and for the same, in respect of some errors and superstitions less fundamental, to infect the good, and to draw them, though not so far from the truth as to make them wholly lose the true form of piety, and communion with God, (for if that might happen, the Church would be brought to nothing,) yet after such a manner as that their faith and their religion could not be said to be altogether pure. But this experience justifies. For in the corruptions of the Church of Israel, and in those times wherein they had introduced the worship of false gods into the public ministry, God had reserved seven thousand men who had not bowed their knees to Baal, and that which is most considerable, is, that that very religion of those seven thousand was not pure; for they lived in that schism that Jeroboam made, and no more went to render that worship to God which they were bound to pay at Jerusalem, but to Bethel. It will



signify nothing to them to say, that the Church then subsisted in the tribe of Judah; for besides that, that would not hinder any from seeing clearly by that example of those seven thousand, that God can when he pleases preserve his own in a corrupted communion, and that yet the far greater number might fall into error, and that the public ministry might be contaminated, it will not follow notwithstanding that that Church was wholly extinct, which is only that which we say: besides that, I say, it is yet manifest, that those two churches, that of Israel, and that of Judah, were often found to depart both together sometimes from the true worship of God, as it appears from that which Jeremiah says; that God having given a bill of divorce to that of Israel for her idolatries, Judah her sister feared not, but that she also had turned aside from his true worship. Jer. 3. 8. It appears also by that which Ezekiel said, that Samaria had not committed half the sins of Judah, who had justified her sister in multiplying her abominations. Ezek. 16. 51. The same history of the Kings of Israel and Judah teaches us concerning Joram the son of Ahab King of Israel, that he clave to the sins of Jeroboam, by which he had made Israel to sin, and that at the same time Joram the son of Jehoshaphat, and his son Ahaziah, reigned in Judah, and walked after the ways of the Kings of Israel, in doing that which displeased the Lord. 2 Kings 3. 8. But, without going so far, is it not true that when Jesus Christ came into the world, he did not find a pure church upon earth? The schismatical Samaritans had such a confused religion, that Jesus Christ did not scruple to say, that salvation was of the Jews. The Jews on their side had defaced their religion by a thousand superstitions, and by the false doctrine of the Pharisees, and in fine, they had crucified the Lord of life, the only Messias they expected. Notwithstanding which, we ought not to believe that the Church was perished from the earth, and that God did not preserve his children in the midst of those confusions. The same thing happened then, when the Arians had made themselves masters of the ministry

of the Church; and when under the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, the Eutichians prevailed in the second Council of Ephesus. For it would be a very absurd thing to imagine that during the time of the triumph of those heretics, there were no more any true believers in those churches, all whose pulpits they had filled, and none in all that communion but those who obeyed the erroneous Councils of Milan, of Ariminum, and of Ephesus. At this very day the most zealous among those of the Church of Rome acknowledge, that God saves many persons who live under the schismatical ministry of the Greeks, and the Muscovites, although besides that schism, they accuse them of holding a multitude of errors and superstitions. For so Possevin sets it down in one of his descriptions of Muscovy.\* We ought not then to make the subsistence of the Church to depend absolutely on that infallibility, whereof we dispute. We ought yet far less to abuse the promises of God, by pretending, under that pretext, that they can never do that which is ill. The true use of the promises, is to encourage us to do our duty, and instead of making us presumptuous, they ought on the contrary to humble us, and to show us the horror of our sins when they are contrary to the promise. For so the Scripture makes use of it in the Second Book of the Kings, upon the subject of the idolatries of Manasseh King of Judah; for after having reckoned them over particularly, it adds, "that he set up a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house of which the Lord had said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever." 2 Kings, 21. 7. See there the promise employed to its right use, not to defend Manasseh in what he had done under a pretence, that God had promised that his name should never depart from the temple, which is the language they speak in these days; but to condemn Manasseh, in that as much as it lay in his

\* Possevin in Muscov.

power he had nullified that promise of God. And so also it is that good men ought to speak to the corrupters of religion. God has promised us, that he would betroth his Church to himself for ever; and you have laboured to break off that happy marriage. Jesus Christ has promised us, that he will be always with us even unto the end of the world, and you have endeavoured to deprive us of his presence. He has promised us that his Holy Spirit shall be always with us, and you have grieved and drove him away.

4. If the Church might err, say they yet farther, God would then be unjust, in commanding us to keep ourselves under the guidance and the ministry of the Church, for that would not be an assured means of obtaining salvation. "All men know," says Monsieur the Cardinal of Richelieu, "that God could not with any justice bind his creatures to incline to an end without giving them means to come to that end. The Church cannot err, since if she did err we should not have any means to come to everlasting salvation, where God would have us come under the conduct of the Church."\* But the answer is not difficult; God would that we should be saved under the conduct of the Church, that is to say, of the pastors of it, not by giving a blind obedience to all that they tell us, but by a wise discerning of that which is good from that which is bad: and that we may make that discernment, he has given us his word, to which he will have us bring all that the pastors teach, to examine their doctrine according to that rule. This is the assured means that he has left us for that. If that means is not so agreeable to the men of the world, who have other business to mind, and will not break their brains with the reading of the word of God, God will tell them one day, that their greatest business was to serve him, and to save themselves, and that if they have not searched out the true means, they ought only to accuse their own neglect, and their too great grasping of the things of this world.

\* Chap. 13. de la Methode.

If they yet urge, that that means is neither easy nor proper for the meaner sort; we need but compare it with that of the pretended infallibility of the Church, and we shall quickly see that this last is infinitely more difficult, and far less proper for the simple than the other. For without taking notice of the impossibility that there is for them to be assured of this principle that the Latin Church is infallible, supposing at the same time that it was, where should any woman or tradesman go to seek that infallibility, to be persuaded that that which they believe, and that which they practise, is the true belief, and the true worship of the Church? Will they go to seek it in the practices and customs of the people? But they all agree that the people may fall into those abuses and superstitions, that the Church does not at all approve of. Will they look for it then from the voice of their curate, or from that of their bishop? But their curate and their bishop may be mistaken. Shall it be then from the words of the Pope pronounced *ex cathedra*? But that poor tradesman, and that woman, can neither know where to find the Pope, nor what they mean by *ex cathedra*. Shall it be then from the universal consent of the Church and her common customs? But who shall tell them what that universal consent is? Must those poor people know what they generally hold and practise in France, in Germany, in Spain, in Italy, or that which they generally teach in the schools? It is then necessary for them to learn Greek and Latin. But when they shall have learnt that, how can they understand the true sense of the Councils, since that without going any further the greatest part of the canons of that of Trent are conceived in general and ambiguous terms, which may be explained in divers senses, and which very thing some say was done with design for the carrying on the different opinions of the schools. Moreover, those general and ambiguous terms sometimes leave the mind undetermined, and the conscience in suspense, in matters of practice, where they make it necessary to do a thing without shewing them after what manner they should do it. For example, the Council

of Trent decides, "That one ought to give to images that worship that is due to them,"\* this is the infallible voice of the Church, which binds a man to give some worship to images, which if he does not, he fails in doing his duty. But what that worship is, the Council says nothing to. Is it a negative or a positive worship? Is it that the same that they give to those they represent, should be communicated to the image as well as the original? or is it meant only of such relative worship that the image should have no part of it, or if it has any part, what is it? Is it simply a customary worship, which consists in making use of those representations to excite their piety, by the remembrance of things past? To tell that, the Council says nothing. It says indeed, that the worship which they give to images, relates to those they represent; but this is not to define of what nature that worship is, for of what kind soever it is, one may always say it has reference to the original. It says indeed yet further, that when any kiss their images, when they bow to them, and kneel before them, they adore Jesus Christ and the saints; but those terms denote only an external worship, without determining any thing of a more internal one, and when it should determine of an internal, that Council says not a word whether the image has any part, or what part it has. Notwithstanding which they ought necessarily to determine it to some internal worship, for of that they treat. How shall any man know whether that side which he takes in this matter be good or bad, since the voice of the Church has abandoned him, and after it has as it were set him in the midst of four ways, and commanded him to march on, never shows the way that he ought to follow, but leaves him in the necessity of placing his devotion at the greatest uncertainty? They will say, that this is to urge things too far as to what relates to women and tradesmen: for those persons know not what use to make of the infallibility of the Church, but only for certain general articles, which they

\* Conc. Trid. Sess. 25.

cannot doubt that the Church teaches. But, not to insist here, that those general articles are themselves subject to form different meanings in the minds of the more simple, and that they ought to make their choice with some certainty: I say, that the worshipping of images, and other such like things, is more used by such sort of persons than others, and that many of those devotions are proper to them, about which they cannot have any certainty, nor by consequence practise them with any faith. I place in this rank the feast of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin, which they solemnly celebrate, for who can give them any certainty in that point? Yet nevertheless it is a piece of worship, it is a matter of practice or duty, whereof they cannot acquit themselves of a good conscience, without being assured of that which they do.

5. In fine, they make use of the visibility of the Church, to prove its infallibility. The true Church of Jesus Christ, says one, ought always to be visible, always plainly to be discerned, whence it follows that she cannot err; for if it were possible for her to do so, she could be no longer acknowledged as a true Church, and there would be no more means proposed to all men for their salvation. None can be saved out of the communion of the true Church, since it is impossible for any to be saved without faith, and that according to the Apostle none can have faith without that preaching which ought to be made by the ministers of the Church. The true Church ought then to be always visible, to the end that all men should set themselves under its ministry to obtain salvation, or that at least they should be inexcusable if they did not so place themselves, and by consequence it is necessary that she should be infallible.\* To this reason, which alone makes a long controversy, and about which they make very long chapters, they add some passages of Scripture, from whence they conclude that the Church is always visible, and some others that

\* Monsieur le Card. de Richel. livr. 1. ch. 6.

contain in their opinion, not only the promises of a perpetual visibility, but of a visibility shining with such brightness and such splendour, that the true Church may be known to strangers and infidels to be so.

To answer this argument of theirs, in the first place I say, That the true Church may be so far from being always discernible by all men, as they pretend it to be, as that one cannot say so much as that all men have always been able to know that there has been a society of Christians in the world; for not to allege that the Christian Church, in its original, then when the Apostles were as yet in Jerusalem, or thereabouts, was very little known to the rest of the world; not to say, that the knowledge of that new society did not so soon spread itself over the Roman Empire, nor in the bordering countries, that the most of the people were ignorant for some time, of what it was to be Christians; it cannot be denied that many ages had slipped away, before that the most considerable part of the earth, as all America, could have any knowledge that there were any Christians in the world. How then can any one say the true Church is always visible, and always discernible to all men? Is it because those Americans before these last ages were not men, or is it because they were not bound to work out their own salvation? They ought then in good earnest to acknowledge that God is most free in the dispensing of the means of salvation, which he proposes to whom he will, and refuses to whom he will. Till the external communion with the true Church shall be the only means of, and absolutely necessary to, salvation, none can conclude that she ought to be perpetually visible, and discernible by all men. For it frequently happens, that God for most just reasons, but which we ought not to search out with too great curiosity, may withdraw from men the external means of their salvation, and yet notwithstanding he does not fail to convince by other ways, which render them inexcusable, and worthy of condemnation. Men are bound to place themselves in the true Church, then when it is discernible to them to be

so, but when it is not so, as it is not at this day to the southern nations, we ought not to believe that God will damn them for not having put themselves into it; they have other crimes enough to be punished for without making God to violate his justice in that respect.

See here what I say for the defending of God's justice, and to let you see the rashness of those arguments, which suppose that God is bound to make those gentlemen infallible, to the end that he may condemn men with some reason. But further, I do not deny, that one cannot in some sense say, that God has always preserved some true Church visible upon earth; but that one ought not to play with those ambiguous terms, it is necessary to make a distinction, and to shew clearly in what sense it may, and in what sense it may not, be found to be true. For beside that that I have said in the first place, That the true Church is not visible, nor to be generally known by all, we ought not to imagine that the true Church must be always visible in one certain place, that is to say, that one only people, one society, one body which has been for time a true Church, may not in the end lose that quality, after whatsoever manner that comes to pass, whether it be by an entire forsaking of Christianity, or whether it be by an extreme and general corruption of that religion. God has sometimes taken away his candlestick from the midst of a people, according to that threatening which he made to the Church of Ephesus; "I will come quickly unto thee, and take away thy candlestick out of its place except thou repent." Rev. 2. 5. The greatest part of the African Churches which heretofore were so flourishing, are now no longer so; and there is not any place upon the earth, neither Paris, nor Constantinople, nor Jerusalem, nor Antioch, nor Rome, nor Avignon, neither the Latin Church, nor the Greek, nor the Armenian, nor the Ethiopian, neither the chair of Saint Peter, nor that of Saint James, nor that of Saint John, nor that of Saint Denis, that can promise inself that it shall never perish. There are no



such promises in the Scripture, and it is a speech very criminal in the mouth of any church, whatsoever it be, if she says, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Rev. 18. 7. When therefore they shall say that God keeps up always a true Church in the world, let them remember, that it is in a way intependent on any places and sees; or if that restriction will not please them, let them produce those clear and solid and peculiar privileges to us, which may set the Latin Church above all its fellows. For as to that that some set before us that saying of Jesus Christ to St. Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," (Luke 22.32.) it is clear from a plain view of that passage, that it only regards the person of Saint Peter, with relation to that violent temptation wherewith he was overwhelmed in the house of the High Priest, and under which there wanted but a little of his faith having wholly perished, and that it does not in the least concern his pretended successors, whereof there is not so much as one word in all the Scripture. I say the same, to that commandment that Jesus Christ gave him, "Feed my sheep," (John 21. 17.) which respects only his re-establishment in the office of an apostle after his fall, nor is there any promise adjoined for his successors, nor for their see, whereof there is not a word mentioned either there or any where else. And as to that passage, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, &c." (Matth. 16. 18.) whether they understand it of that confession which Saint Peter had made, or whether they refer it to his person, I say that no one can understand it of his successors, since there is not any mention made of them either directly or indirectly. For when the See of Rome was not, when it had never yet been; the Church did not fail of being built upon that confession of Saint Peter, which comprehends Jesus Christ, upon whom the Church is every way built; but also because that confession of Saint Peter, or Saint Peter confessing, was as one of the chief stones in that mystical building, which is not left alone, for Jesus Christ, who is not only the Founda-

tion, but the Sovereign Architect, has added many others in all ages, and will always join others to them till the building be entirely finished, that is to say, till God fulfilled the decree of his election.

But to go on with our discourse of the visibility of the true Church. I affirm in the third place, that we ought to know very well what a true Church visible is. For we ought not to imagine that all those persons who compose that visible society, should be that true Church. None but those true believers; I would say, those who join to their external profession of Christianity, a true and sincere piety, are really the Church of Jesus Christ, and as for the others, that is to say, the worldly, profane, and hypocritical, they are but the Church in appearance only, and not indeed. For having no inward calling, which consists in faith and love, they do not belong to the mystical body of our Saviour, nor are they of his communion. Notwithstanding, they do not fail to be mixed with the faithful by reason of that external profession, as if they really were in the same religious society with them. What then is the visibility of the true Church as to us? It is not that we can distinctly, and with any certainty affirm, Behold these be the truly faithful of Jesus Christ. None but God alone can know them after that distinct manner, and without a possibility of being deceived. But this we may say of that visible society, that under that ministry, and in that communion, God preserves and raises the truly faithful. Whence we may form this judgment with solidity and truth, and I may say also without a possibility of being deceived, that there is a true visible Church. In that sense, I declare, that there has always been some way or other a true Church visible upon earth, not but that God can make it wholly disappear to the eyes of men whensoever it shall please him to do so without doing men any wrong, or any breach of his promises, since he has, without doubt, extraordinary ways to beget faith in the hearts of his children, and to keep them on in that course,

and to lead them in the end unto salvation, without making use either of the public assemblies, or ministry, but only because we ought not to believe that there ever happened since the first rise of Christianity an eclipse so full and entire, that one could not some way say, There is a society in which God does keep the truly faithful. I say, after some way; for as that judgment depends on two things, the one to be able to know a society and a ministry, and the other to know that under that ministry and in that society a man may work out his own salvation, in respect of the first it is necessary to distinguish between two seasons, the one of liberty and prosperity, where the Church has its assemblies and exercises its ministry openly in the face of all the world. For then she is much more visible than she would be otherwise, that is to say, it is far more easy to be known what society and what ministry that is. Such was the state of the Church under Constantine and other Christian Emperors; and it is in such times as those that the promises of its outward splendour, if there are any such in Scripture, are accomplished. The other season is that of its afflictions and persecution; such was that of the first century of the Church, under the Pagan Emperors, and the enemies of Christianity. For none can deny that then the Church was less discernible by its assemblies, not only because they were more private and less exposed to the public view, but also yet further because the name of Christian had been defamed by a thousand calumnies, and charged with a thousand false imputations, which made the knowledge of the Church to be far more difficult. And it will be to no purpose to say, That then the Church was visible, and illustrious by the blood of its martyrs. For the blood of its martyrs did not in the least hinder the accusing of the Christians of most odious crimes, it was that which hindered its being liable to be easily known. Those accusations were as a cloud before the eyes of the common people, which was necessarily to be dissipated, before they could come to know

what Christianity was. So that the true Church is more or less visible according to the difference of its seasons.

As to the second thing, which is to know that one may be saved in that Society and under that ministry, it is necessary that we distinguish of the two states or conditions wherein that society may be found. The one is a more pure state, when the word of God is preached without mixtures of the doctrines of men; when the public worship is performed without superstitions, and the sacraments plainly administered according to their primitive institution; and when generally religion is established, taught, and observed, after the same manner wherein Jesus Christ and his apostles left it to the world. In that condition, it is certain that the true Church is very visible, and very discernible; for it is easy to behold all the characters of its truth, which only consist in its conformity to that lively, primitive, and natural image of Christianity, which God has left us in his Holy Scriptures. But it is not less certain that a Church may fall into a quite contrary condition, that is to say, into a state of corruption, when it adds to divine truths, strange and adulterate doctrines; when it mingles superstitions with the true worship of God; and when, instead of a just government, it exercises an insolent and absolute dominion over men's consciences; in one word, when all things appear so confused and in that disorder, that one can scarce any more see any traces of that beautiful and glorious image of Christianity which I have before spoken of, as shining forth. In that condition I affirm that the true Church is very hard to be known; for howsoever it were most visible in quality of a Church, because its assemblies might be much frequented, it would be nevertheless least of all so in the quality of a true Church, in that its natural beauty is so darkened and its visage so disfigured, that in judging according to its appearances, one can but scarcely say that God does yet preserve some faithful ones in that communion and under that ministry. But they will say, May not

a Church fall into that condition, and yet for all that be a true Church? I answer, that a visible society, as I have shewn, is not called a true Church, but only with respect to those true believers who are in it, and not with respect to the others. When then it comes to pass, that the party of the men of the world prevails, and fills that society with its corruptions, all that society taken in the general does not fail as yet to be called a true Church, while there is some appearance, how small soever it may be, that God does yet keep and hold in it those good men who do not defile their souls with that corruption of the wicked. But they say, yet farther, How can those good men preserve themselves in the midst of such a society? I answer, that they may preserve themselves there, after that manner that one may preserve himself in a contagious air, where he draws in the air, because it is necessary to his life, but yet he may keep himself as well as he can from that contagion, by the help of antidotes. There are two things in a corrupted church, the good and the evil: if a man can separate that good from the evil, that is to say, if he can take the one and keep himself from the other without falling into hypocrisy, and being bound to do as those who equally take the good and the evil, (which he knows not how to do without dividing between God and his conscience,) he may be saved in a corrupted communion, and there may not be another more pure. This evidently appears from the examples of Zacharias and Elizabeth, of Simeon, of Joseph, and the Holy Virgin, and divers other persons who lived in the Jewish Church, when our Saviour came into the world, and who preserved their piety though that church was fallen into the highest corruption under the ministry of the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus Christ himself, who reprov'd the abuses of those wicked men, and exhorted his disciples to take heed of their false doctrines, did not fail to live in that common society, and to be found in the temple with them; and after that he had been crucified by them, his disciples did not wholly

withdraw themselves from their communion, during some time, and till they had indispensable reasons for it. I will shew in the progress of this treatise, that it does not from thence follow, that we may at this day abide in the Roman communion, and that it much less follows, that we may return thither by forsaking the communion of the Protestants, under a pretence that we may separate the good from the bad, the pure from what is impure, since we can no more do that, than not become wicked, impostors, hypocritical and detestable before God and men. But as this is a point that belongs to another place, it shall suffice me to have clearly shewn in this chapter, in what manner and with what distinctions it may be said, that there is always a true visible church, and to have made it appear that it no ways follows from thence, that she must needs be infallible, as the Church of Rome pretends that she is.

After all this, it is not difficult to find out the just and true sense of some passages of Scripture, which they abuse in this matter of visibility. For as to that of the Gospel whereof we have spoken; "Tell it to the church; and if he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as the heathens and the publicans." Matth. 18. 17. It is clear, that particular churches are treated of there, and the personal differences which we may have one with another; and the meaning of it is, that the faithful are bound, when they receive any wrong from their brethren, to carry their complaints to the church, and to refer themselves to its judgment. Or, if it is not to be understood in those times, and in those places where there shall be churches established, to the judgment of their guides and pastors, who may end those private quarrels. And if they will infer from thence, that then there must be always a visible church, that may be in a condition to attend to those reconciliations, this is that that has no colour of reason. For that command of Jesus Christ obliging the faithful no further than as it lies in their power, it would be but a very bad arguing, to say

that he has so engaged for that, that he will so order it, that there shall be perpetually a visible assembly, to hear complaints and give judgments. It is within a little, as if one should say, that he was engaged that we should always have wherewithal to lend, and wherewithal to give alms, because he has bid us to lend without hoping for any thing again, and to make ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Or, that our kings were bound never to leave vacant the office of a constable, or that of the mayor of the palace, under a pretence that heretofore they ordered their subjects to acknowledge those dignities, and to have recourse to them in certain affairs. *Tell it to the Church*, then does not in the least suppose that the true Church ought to be always in such a state, wherein she should have authority to pass her judgments for the determining private quarrels. And besides what I have said, experience contradicts it; for it is most true, that during the hottest persecutions of the Heathen Emperors, where all was laid in desolation, that it had in many places nothing like a visible tribunal, to which men could easily address themselves.

There are some other passages that denote the duty of the pastors, and in particular of the Apostles, as those where they are called, "The salt of the earth, the light of the world, a city set upon a hill, a candle not lighted to be set under a bushel," (Matth. 5. 14, 15.) and the gentlemen of the Roman Church do not fail to set them down, to give some colour to their pretensions. But this is evidently to abuse the Scriptures, to make them establish the perpetual visibility of the Church, after that meaning wherein they understand those passages which exhort the Apostles, and after them the ministers of the Gospel, to acquit themselves faithfully of their charge, without negligence and weariness, from the consideration of their calling, and the end to which God had appointed them. For besides that their office does not bind them to that of a martyr, which does not suppose a very splendid state of the Church. Nay more, it does not

oblige them to be martyrs at all, if they were not specially called to it; Jesus Christ having told them, that when they should be persecuted in one place, they should fly unto another: besides that, I say, there is so great a difference between the duty of the pastors of these last ages, which are so far behind that of the Apostles, and that which those pastors have actually done, that one cannot know how to draw any consequence from the one to the other.

Neither can one conclude any thing from some expressions of the ancient prophets, which seem to promise a great temporal prosperity to the Church; no one is ignorant that the style of the prophets may be full of figures and obscured with veils, that they ought not to be taken literally unless men would be deceived and imitate the error of the Jews, who take them in that manner. For the prophets are wont to represent spiritual blessings under the borrowed images of temporal things, and so also the spirit of Christianity obliges us to explain that which they said of the Messiah and of his Church, and not to delineate its prosperities and worldly grandeur, which have no relation at all to the nature of the Gospel. Not that one cannot say, that some of those prophecies have been accomplished according to the letter of them, in the times of Christian Emperors, for then kings were its nursing-fathers, and queens its nursing-mothers. But that one ought not to draw a necessary consequence from thence either for all times or for all places, and as men are always prone to abuse temporal blessings; such a worldly prosperity of the Church would tend but in the end to corrupt it.



## CHAP. VII.

THAT THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRELATES OF THE LATIN CHURCH HAD NOT ANY RIGHT TO BIND OUR FATHERS TO YIELD A BLIND OBEDIENCE TO THEM, OR TO HINDER THEM FROM EXAMINING THEIR DOCTRINES.

HITHERTO we have not opposed in our course the *Book of Prejudices*; not but that the end which he proposes to himself, has a great connexion with the things of which I have treated; but because that author has not believed it necessary (to make us renounce the Reformation) to justify the Latin Church from those strange disorders which moved the minds of our fathers, nor to speak of that privilege which she pretends that God has given her by making of her infallible. “We do not pretend,” says he, “to prove directly the authority and infallibility of the Catholic Church. For although it would be most profitable to do it, and though those among the Catholics who have taken that method have used a most just and lawful way, yet as the prepossessions wherewith the Calvinists are full, keep most of them from entering upon these principles, howsoever solid and true they are, charity obliges us to try other ways also, and that which follows here seems one of the most natural. It supposes for a principle nothing but a maxim of common sense; to wit, That a man who finds himself joined to the Catholic Church by himself or by his ancestors, ought not to break off from her to join himself to any other communion, if he discover in that new communion any signs of error, which may make him judge with reason that he ought not to follow it, and that he cannot reasonably hope that God has established it, to lead men into the truth.” So it is that he has thought himself bound to employ himself wholly in that way, to rid himself of a great deal of trouble,

and that he may in this progress load us with a multitude of reproaches.

Yet he must excuse me, if I am not of his mind. The way which he takes is neither just nor natural. It is not just, because it takes for granted and indisputable those things, which not only are, but are almost only the matters of our difference. For it supposes that that party which would not have a reformation, and from which our fathers broke off, was the Catholic Church; but that is the very thing which is questioned, and our dispute can never be decided, but by deciding the whole controversy. If he will take that advantage of us, that we to accommodate ourselves to the custom of the world, sometimes give those of the Church of Rome the name of Roman Catholics; he cannot be ignorant that those sorts of condescensions which only respect words cannot infer any consequence as to things, nor that they can give any ground to make those suppositions in this dispute, which may be regulated by more solid principles. Further, that way which he would follow, supposes that our fathers, in reforming themselves, made a new communion, and yet that is the very thing that is in question, and we maintain that it cannot be reasonably called so, as it will appear in the progress of this treatise. I say also, that that course is not natural. For before we should come to consider whether there were not signs of error in our reformation, the nature of things would first let us see whether our fathers had not just reasons, taken from the state of the Latin Church, to reform themselves, and whether it was not possible for that church to corrupt itself. But that could not be well known, but by examining what that state was in the days of our fathers, with that pretence of infallibility; as we have done.

But though the author of those *Prejudices* has believed that he might spare himself the trouble of proving to us the infallibility and authority of those whom he calls the Catholic Church, yet he fails not to require us to submit ourselves to those by rendering them an absolute obedience. He would

have it that we being all so apt to deceive ourselves in our judgments, and that the search of true religion being so difficult, that the surest way is for us to see with their eyes, to tread in their steps, and wholly to strip ourselves of our own guidance to give it unto them. So also the chief Priests and the Scribes spake among the Jews; "This people who know not the Law, are cursed." John, 7. 49. But Jesus Christ said of these also, "Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matth. 15. 14. If the maxim of that author be good, he must affirm that our fathers were very unhappy, for having had their eyes to see those disorders which reigned among the church-men in their days; and that God had highly favoured them, had he made them to have been born stupid and blind; for he conceives it would be so far from causing them to fall and be deceived, according to the threatening which Jesus Christ gives to those who leave themselves to be so blindly guided, that it would be on the contrary the only means to go on with any certainty. Howsoever it be, we are not bound to be so blind, that before we lose the use of our eyes, we must not examine this question, Whether we ought to lose them or not. Nature and grace have given them to us, they would have us to surrender them; but let them give us leave to use them at the least this one time, to search whether it be just that we should deprive ourselves of them. Jesus Christ himself has forbid us to do it, the author of those Prejudices has commanded it. We ought at least to examine which of the two has reason on his side. That then shall be the business of this chapter, wherein I propose to myself to shew, That the authority of those prelates who governed the Latin Church in the time of the Reformation, could not be high enough to oblige our fathers blindly to believe all that they told them, nor to hinder them from examining the doctrines of those prelates.

But as we find it frequently fall out that they disguise our sentiments, and that they may render them odious they urge

them beyond their due bounds, it will be meet, before we go farther, precisely to determine what is treated of in that right, to the end that all equitable persons may the more easily judge of it. We do not here treat of the use of the ministry in general. We acknowledge that God has appointed it in his Church, and that it would be a rashness very criminal to go about to abolish it. The confession of our faith, our practice, our books, and the very writings of our adversaries, sufficiently justify us, to make us believe that they will not lay any thing to our charge in that point. We do not here meddle with that order that ought to be observed in the election and ordinâtion of pastors; we all agree, that when the state of the Church is regulated, it ought not to be permitted to any that will, to thrust themselves into the ministry, nor to encroach upon their function without being lawfully called; and if there is any difference in this matter, it only regards other questions, and not that which we handle at present. Nor do we further treat of that respect or that obedience which every one owes to good and lawful pastors. Jesus Christ has said, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me:" and St. Paul exhorts the faithful to submit themselves with all teachableness to their conduct; "Obey them that are set over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls." The word then of good pastors ought to be received with humility, their functions to be considered with veneration, and their persons to be loved and honoured, not only in respect of their charge, but because they acquit themselves faithfully in it. We do not yet further concern ourselves to know, whether one ought not to give that obedience to these ministers of the Church who preach to us the word of God, although their lives are impure and scandalous, and no ways correspond with their doctrine. We confess, that it is not allowable for personal crimes to separate ourselves from them, nor from those who adhere to them, whether they own those crimes, or whether they deny them. We ought to endeavour to reduce them to their duty, and if they are incorrigible, or if

they have committed actions which render them unworthy of their function, there are ordinary ways that one ought to take to deprive them: if they amend, the scandal is repaired; and if they do not, either because they will elude by artifices the ecclesiastical discipline, or because that depravation may become so general that there shall be no more punishment of vice; then we may pray God that he would send more faithful labourers into his harvest, nay we ought to do it, but we ought always to own those for pastors who are in that charge, and to receive the word of God from their mouths, while they preach it purely. I go yet further, and I say that we ought always in general to think well of those pastors, and not lightly to entertain suspicions of their goodness and faithfulness, especially when we speak of the whole body, and the disorder that appears to be great and very visible therein, that we are not absolutely to form a just prejudice against their ministry. This is what we acknowledge, and our fathers acknowledged as well as we.

But if they will not be contented with that, if they will have it yet farther, that the faithful are bound blindly to receive the doctrines of their pastors, without having any right to examine their nature or their quality, and that it would be a crime but to resolve upon that examination; if they would, that the authority of the pastors, after whatsoever manner we consider it, whether separately or conjointly, or altogether, or in the greater number, should be without any bounds or measures, as to matters of faith, or worship, and the general rules of manners, and that, though they cease to believe the divine faith, and to practise all that which they say, without informing ourselves any farther: this is a maxim we deny, and which we maintain is contrary to the word of God, to right reason, and the true interest of Christianity.

I. To begin with the word of God, we may say, That there never was any maxim in the world, against which it does more expressly declare itself. For, first, it absolutely forbids lordship in pastors. "The kings of the Gentiles,"

said Jesus Christ in that passage before alleged, “exercise lordship over them, and those that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But it shall not be so with you; but he that is great among you, let him be as the less, and he that is chief as he that doth serve.” Luke, 22. 25. In the same sense Saint Peter bids them “Feed the flock of Jesus Christ, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.” 1 Pet. 5. 2. St. Paul preached the same doctrine with St. Peter; “We have not,” says he to the Corinthians, “dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.” 2 Cor. 1. 24. We may observe, that on purpose to hinder the introducing that dominion into the Church under the name of instruction, as they have done in these last ages, Jesus Christ goes so far as to forbid his disciples the name of *masters*: “Be not ye,” says he, “called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ; but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” Matth. 23. 8. And therefore it is, that the Scripture gives the title of *Chief Shepherd* to none but Jesus Christ; “When the chief Shepherd shall appear,” says St. Peter, “ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” 1 Pet. 5. 4. “God has brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep,” says St. Paul. Heb. 13. 20. But as to other pastors, the Scripture is so far from giving them any character of dominion, that on the contrary they are often called ministers or servants, (1 Cor. 3. 5.) stewards of the mysteries of God, (1 Cor. 4. 1.) ambassadors, (2 Cor. 5. 20.) messengers, (Mal. 2. 7.) interpreters, (Job, 33. 23.) to teach us, that they ought not to pretend to reign over men’s souls, but to make Jesus Christ reign, who is the only Monarch of the Church. “We preach not ourselves,” saith St. Paul, “but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake;” (2 Cor. 4. 5.) and elsewhere he says, that he was made a minister of the Church of God. Col. 1. 24, 25. All these passages by themselves are

very conclusive; but taken together, make up a demonstration that will persuade all men who are not prepossessed with prejudice. For what likelihood is there that God would have filled his Scriptures with so many things contrary to this dominion, if he had had a design to invest the pastors of his Church with an authority so absolute over men's consciences, and of making them sovereign lords of their faith? Is not that authority, after the way they pretend to it, a real empire, and a much more powerful empire than the temporal ones, which they set up over the hearts and souls of men, where the others do but establish theirs over their bodies? Bellarmine \* and Du Perron † busy themselves very much in eluding the force of that passage where Jesus Christ forbids his disciples that dominion. They say, that he forbids not dominion, but the manner of that dominion; that is to say, that he would not have them affect that dominion, nor that they should rule tyrannically or with violence, but that nevertheless he would have them rule. Who sees not the absurdity of this answer? For when Jesus Christ said, "The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship, but it shall not be so with you," it is clear that the distinction that he makes between kings and pastors falls upon that dominion, and not upon the manner of that dominion. I confess that he forbids the affectation of that dominion, but I affirm that he forbids also that dominion itself, as it appears from his words; for he says not, the Kings of the Gentiles *affect* dominion, but he says, they do *exercise* that dominion, and that it shall not be so with them, which shews he would distinctly say, that they should not exercise lordship. Else it was necessary that in those words Jesus Christ should have set down some difference between the government of the Gentile nations, and that of his Church. But that difference cannot consist in this, that they ought not to affect the manner of dominion in his Church, for that would

\* Bell. de Rom. Pont. lib. 1. c. 9.

† Du Perron. Repl. Liv. 1, ch. 56.

make him say, that they ought or might lawfully affect it in the civil government, which yet is not true. And as to what they say of a tyrannical and violent domination, they evidently deceive themselves: for the contest of his disciples was no ways about that violent dominion, nor about the gentleness of that dominion, but about the dominion itself; they strove among themselves which of them should be greatest. Whence it follows that Jesus Christ, who answers to their thoughts, speaks of a dominion, whatsoever it be, and not simply of a tyrannical one. To which I add, that those other passages to which they know not how to apply those evasions, clearly determine the sense of that saying of Jesus Christ.

2. But the Scripture is not contented only to forbid that sovereign and absolute authority to the ministers of the Church, it farther gives the faithful a right to examine that which they teach, and at the same time obliges them to do it; to separate the good from the bad. Hence it is that Jesus Christ, who would have his disciples do all that which the Scribes and Pharisees who sat in the chair of Moses commanded them to do, (Matth. 23. 3, 4.) yet would have them discern also their false doctrines, and to take heed of them: "Take heed to yourselves," says he, "of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees," (Matth. 16. 6.) which in the close he explains of the leaven of their doctrine. In the sight of that, Saint John gives this lesson to the faithful, "Not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God;" (1 John 4. 1.) and Saint Paul, "To prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good." 1 Thess. 5. 21. The same apostle elsewhere prays that they might have an abundant measure of all judgment and knowledge; that they might try things that differ; that they might be sincere and without offence until the day of Jesus Christ. Phil. 1. 9, 10. And there where he lets us understand that the pastors, in building upon the foundation, might heap up wood, hay, stubble, as well as gold, silver, and precious stones, (1 Cor. 3. 12.) it is evident from that statement that he engages them to make a



just discerning of those things. It is not less clear, that he supposes in the faithful an examination and a judgment in respect of those things which their pastors should teach them, when he has recourse to their testimony for the justification of his doctrine. "We have not," says he, "handled the word of God deceitfully, but have commended ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God by the manifestation of the truth." 2 Cor. 4. 2. "Ye are witnesses, and God also," says he to the Thessalonians, "how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." 1 Thess. 2. 10. But what more can be added to the force of those words which we find in his Epistle to the Galatians; "If we ourselves, or an angel from heaven, preach to you another Gospel than we have preached to you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1. 8. Who can deny that he forbids by those words that blind obedience which they would have us give at this day to the pastors of the Church, and that he does not on the contrary command us to examine their preaching by the rule of the primitive and original Gospel? Who sees not that that exaggeration which he uses, serves but to let us see the importance, the necessity, the force of that obligation which he would lay upon us, and how inviolable and indispensable it is? He commands us not only to make a sincere discernment, he does not only speak of a simple rejecting of that which shall be foreign and alien to it, and shall not agree with the Gospel; he enjoins an anathema, an execration; he would not only have us pronounce it against men indefinitely, or against those whom the Councils and the Popes shall declare heretics, he declares that it ought to be pronounced against an apostle, against himself the most famous among the apostles, against him who had had visions and revelations, who had been caught up into the third heaven, and who had laboured with such an abundant expense of his blood and of his life for Jesus Christ. This is not all yet; he enjoins the same against an angel from heaven, if he undertook to preach another Gospel than that which he has preached unto us. What can be said,

more weighty? What is there in the Church beyond an anathema? What is there upon earth among men greater than Saint Paul? What is there in heaven above an angel? And shall the ordinary pastors, the prelates, patriarchs, popes, and councils, be exempted from that rule, when the apostles and angels themselves are not?

3. But we must go yet higher, and follow the Scripture yet farther. It teaches us that God has put his sacred writings immediately into the hands of all the faithful, as well as into those of the pastors, with an obligation to read them carefully, and to build their faith and their hope upon them; whence it follows that they have right to refer the doctrines of their pastors, and to examine them by that rule, and that they are not bound to see with the eyes of the prelates, nor to divest themselves of their own guidance to rest themselves upon that of their prelates. The proof of this truth may appear from a thousand places in Scripture. When God would give his law to the Israelites, he said to Moses, "Gather me the people together, that I may make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children." Deut. 4. 10. Moses just before his death assembled all Israel together, and said to them, "O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it." v. 1, 2. "Keep the statutes and judgments of God, and do them: for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear these statutes." v. 6. And another time, having assembled the same people, he speaks to them these words; "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I pronounce this day, that hearing them ye may learn them, and keep and do them. These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou

walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. Thou shalt write them upon the post of thy house, and upon thy gates." Deut. 6. 6—9. It was in following that primitive institution, that the faithful among the Jews read the Scripture so carefully. "Blessed is the man," says David, "whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and meditates in that law day and night;" (Psalm 1. 2.) and elsewhere he would have the young men order their ways according to the word of God: (Psalm 119. 9.) Saint Paul, by the same Spirit, commends Timothy in that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures. 2 Tim. 3. 15. See then the old law, the ancient Scriptures given immediately into the hands of all the faithful, with a command to read them, and meditate upon them, and consequently, to build immediately upon them their faith, their piety, and their comfort. But because we should not imagine that that order has been changed under the New Testament, we need but to run through the first verses of the greater part of the Epistles of Saint Paul, and those of Saint Peter, of Saint James, of Saint Jude, and they will see that they are addressed to the faithful of the Churches, as well as to the pastors. "To all that be in Rome, called to be saints." Rom. 1. 7. "To the saints and faithful in Jesus Christ which are at Ephesus." Eph. 1. 1. "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi;" where he distinguishes them from the pastors, for he adds, "with the bishops and deacons." Phil. 1. 1. All this lets us see clearly that there was nothing changed in that regard. They will say it may be that it does not follow from thence that the more simple among the faithful should take to themselves that liberty of searching out by themselves the true meaning of the Scriptures, and that they ought not to refer themselves to their pastors who are the interpreters of them. But if that were so, why should he have addressed them immediately to them, why should he have put them in their hands, with commands

to read them, to learn them, and to meditate on them in their houses, in their journeys, in their rising up, and lying down? Why should he have said that it was all their wisdom, and all their understanding, if he had not supposed that they could of themselves comprehend the meaning of them, at least of so much as might be sufficient for their particular comfort, and for their salvation? Moreover, that is clearly refuted by the use that Jesus Christ and his apostles would have us make of the Scripture, that we might know him to be the true Messiah, notwithstanding the contradictions of the ordinary pastors of that church, who gave to that Scripture a quite contrary meaning. “Search the Scriptures,” said our Lord to them, “for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.” John, 5. 39. To what purpose should he have said that, if he would not have them by themselves search out the true sense of the Scripture, and that they should correct the false interpretations which their ordinary pastors gave of it? It is from this principle that Saint Peter and Saint Paul proved Jesus Christ to be the Messiah, out of the Scriptures, and converted the people, as it may appear by their sermons. And it is also upon this foundation, that the inhabitants of Berea are praised for having made use of that right, and for having by themselves had recourse to the Scripture, to know whether that which Saint Paul and Silas told them, was true: “These were,” saith St. Luke, “more noble than those Jews in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts, 17. 11. After that, how can any one affirm, that the faithful ought blindly to believe their pastors, and to strip themselves of their own conduct, to rest themselves upon that of the prelates? Is not this to condemn that which the Scripture praises? If you look on those of Berea as being yet Jews, had they not their ordinary pastors who had before condemned Jesus Christ, and all his doctrine? Wherefore then had they recourse to the Scriptures? Could they better comprehend the sense of them,

than all the Church, to which they had submitted themselves, a Church, I say, which was upheld by all the authority of Moses, by the sacred names of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, by the glory of a thousand miracles, by the sending of the prophets, by the holiness of a temple where God had placed his name for ever, and by the majesty of a succession that had been preserved for near twenty ages? And if you look upon them as new-made Christians, were not Paul and Silas their true pastors, whom their zeal, their constancy, their travels, their preaching, their knowledge, and their miracles, had made famous every where? Why did not they trust them, why did they yet farther compare their words with the Scripture?

---

---

## CHAP. VIII.

A FURTHER EXAMINATION OF THAT AUTHORITY OF THE PRELATES, AND THAT ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE WHICH THEY PRETEND OUGHT TO BE GIVEN THEM.

IT is an amazing thing to behold a prejudice and a present interest, so far to blind those who set before us this absolute obedience to the governors of the Church, and who would have the faithful strip themselves entirely of the care of their souls, to place it in their pastors' hands, that they should not have considered, that it is the most pernicious maxim in the world, the most contrary to the glory of God, to the interests of his justice and his service, to the subsistence of his true Church. They will themselves, I hope, be persuaded of it, if they will but make with me these following reflections.

The first is, That by that principle they justify the people of the Jews, when they adhered to that false worship brought

into their Church by the authority of their ordinary pastors, or practised with their consent and approbation, which fell out very often, as we have before noted, and as it appears from the history of the Old Testament. 1 Kings, 14. 22, 23. The people in that story were not in the least culpable either for sacrificing upon the high places or in the groves, as they had began to do under the reign of Rehoboam, nor for having images, or as the Scripture speaks carved idols, nor in offering up incense to the brazen serpent, as they did even down to the reign of Hezekiah, since in doing all those things they did but follow their priests, and could say that they referred themselves to them to see for them, according to what they were bound. They were not to be blamed then, when under the reign of Ahaz they offered their oblations on a strange altar, made after the manner of that of the Syrians, since it was Uriah the priest that ordered it, and set it up in the place of the altar of God, to the end that the people should there offer up their devotions. 2 Kings, 16. 11. They were not in the least to be blamed in those days wherein their prophets charged their priests and ordinary pastors with having sinned against God and prophesied by Baal, and saying to a stock, Thou art my father, and to a stone, Thou art my mother, and by that means to have corrupted the people of God. Jer. 2. 26, 27. For what could those people do more than follow their pastors, if it were true, that we ought to see with their eyes, and to tread always in their steps?

2. But if by establishing that principle they justify a people in their idolatry and violation of the law of their God, if they acquit them of all fault in that respect, it is not less certain, that at the same time they condemn God for injustice, in having sent his chastisements upon an innocent people, who had done nothing but what they were bound to do, in following their guides, in that he was not satisfied with punishing only the authors of those crimes, I mean, those guides who only were culpable. For why should he punish those who submitted themselves to their guides, whom they could do no

otherwise than obey? They condemn all the complaints of the prophets, which they addressed immediately to the people, and all the threatenings and stinging censures with which their writings are full. For to what purpose should they complain, censure and threaten with so much exaggeration and vehemency, if the people ought not by themselves to examine the points of religion, and that they ought on the contrary to commit themselves only into their pastors' hands? They condemn all those holy men, who did not adhere to their errors and profanations; and they must see themselves reduced to the necessity of condemning them of rashness and presumption, for having been willing to make use of their own eyes, and not to refer themselves wholly to the conduct of their church. They condemn all those in that church who have first spoke of a reformation, and all those who have followed them in it. For those who would not see but by the eyes of the Church, would never have a tongue to speak any thing against its present state, nor ears to hear any thing that could be said upon that subject. So those good kings, as Hezekiah and Josiah, who set up the true worship of God, and did pull down idolatry, would have been no other but rash persons, who had executed that which they should not have so much as undertaken.

What can they answer to that? Will they say that all those reformers wrought miracles, to authorize their calls? But that is not true. For neither Hezekiah nor Josiah, nor those other kings who abolished those superstitions and errors, did any miracle; for that, they had recourse to nothing but the law of God. Will they say, that they were the ecclesiastics themselves who laboured in those reformations? I confess it. But that alone lets us see, that they had done ill in referring themselves merely to their authority, since they themselves had condemned what they had before approved of, and by their change and their repentance they acknowledged they had done ill, whence it may follow, that the people had done ill also in reposing their trust in them. Will they say,

that the true worship of God having been of primitive institution, and by consequence the first church having been pure, the people would have done ill, if when a change should have happened, they had not abode with and adhered to their first pastors; and that by that means of rendering to the Church that submission which they owed to it, they would have hindered its corruption. But to assert that, is but to affirm well nigh what we would have. When the Latin Church began to corrupt itself, the people ought to have set themselves in opposition to it, in adhering inviolably to their first guides; and if they had done so, they had not needed ever to have spoke of a reformation. Notwithstanding, they have not done so, and the Jews likewise had not done so, they have not failed of walking after that inclination which all men have to do ill. "How is the faithful city become an harlot! Thy silver is become dross, and thy wine is mixed with water," as one prophet reproaches them. Isaiah, 1. 21, 22. What ought they to have done in that misery? Must they have remained in that state, under pretence of no more seeing than by the eyes of the Church, of walking only in its steps, and of divesting themselves of their own conduct to rest upon that of the Church? No certainly, whatsoever the author of those Prejudices says. They ought on the contrary to have re-ascended up to the primitive Church, to the first institution of their religion, to have ruled themselves by that, and to have laboured to save the present Church from that ruin whereinto its corrupters would have precipitated her. That had been the duty of all good men, and a contrary sentiment would have been criminal. But all that lets us distinctly see how false and pernicious that maxim of the author of the Prejudices is.

Will they say, to defend themselves, that there is a very great difference between the Jewish visible Church, and the Christian, that this has its rights, privileges, and promises, which the other had not. For she has a sovereign authority over the faith of her children, a privilege that she can never



err, and promises of a perpetual visibility? But to come to that, they ought first to renounce all those general proofs upon which they found that absolute obedience to the Latin Church. They need say no more, as the author of the *Prejudices* has done, that “the darkness of our minds, our personal prejudices, the uncertainty wherein we are of being deceived in our judgments, the being overwhelmed with a thousand cares, and a thousand temporal necessities which almost wholly take us up, and which will not allow us to give more than a very little time to the examining the truths of religion, the want of necessary helps, the ignorance, narrow and limited understandings of the greatest part of mankind, constrain us to refer ourselves to the Church.”\* All that would be to no purpose, if they restrain it to a privilege of the Christian Church. For these very same general reasons had place in the time of the Jewish Church, men saw not then more clearly than they do in these days, they were not more assured in their judgments, they were not less cumbered with worldly affairs, they were not less unprovided of necessary helps for the examination of the truths of religion, they were not then less ignorant, and their minds less narrow, than men are now in these days, and yet notwithstanding, all that did not make it their duty blindly to follow their pastors, or ordinary guides. These are then nothing but shadows and frivolous pretences, which having been of no force then, cannot have any weight now. We need not further say, as the author of *Prejudices* has done, “That it is certain that God can save men, and even the most ignorant and simple. That yet he does not offer them any other way to salvation, than that of the true religion. That it is therefore necessary that that should be not only possible, but easy to be known; that yet notwithstanding it is clear that there is no way more difficult, more dangerous, and less fitted to all capacities than that of examining all its tenets.”† One may equally apply all those propositions to

\* In the Preface.

† In the Preface.

the times of the Old Testament, as well as to those of the New. God could save men there. He made no other way to salvation than that of the true religion. That ought then to have been easily known, and that way of examination was not less dangerous, nor more fitted to all sorts of capacities, than it is now. Notwithstanding all that had not any force to hinder the faithful from examining it. They cannot then in these days draw any consequence from what they so propose. I affirm the same thing of all those other inconveniences which they invent to take away from every one that right of examining the state of religion by the Scripture, and not wholly to believe their pastors, as, that it would be to introduce a principle of schism and division, that every one might make himself a judge of the Church, that every one might make a religion according to his fancy, that it is a great rashness for private persons to imagine that they have more understanding and more wisdom than the whole Church, and other such like things. They may see that all those arguings are brought in vainly and to no purpose; for if they were good and solid, being so general as they are, they would serve for all times and all places, and would have their force in favour of the Jewish Church, as well as they would have them conclude in favour of the Latin.

In the second place, those rights, privileges, and promises, which they would ascribe to the Christian visible Church, in exclusion of the Jewish, are evidently null, if they would make them depend precisely on Christianity. For as I have before noted, the Greek Church, the Armenian, the Nestorian, and Ethiopian, might pretend to them as justly as the Latin, and yet, the Latin applies them to herself in particular, to the prejudice of all the others. They ought then either to shew us what reason she has to appropriate those rights, privileges, and general promises, and to make that which regards the body of the universal Church become particular to her; or it is necessary they shew us that indeed they are not those rights, privileges, and promises, that are common to all Christian

societies, and that they are peculiar to the Latin Church. But they know not how to do either the one or the other. For neither nature nor grace have given any of those privileges or rights to the Latins, in exclusion from all other Christians. They are neither more lords of our consciences, nor more infallible than others. Christianity is uniform throughout. The Scripture also does not contain any one particular promise for them. On the contrary, Saint Paul says, "That in Jesus Christ there is neither Jew, nor Greek, nor Barbarian, nor Scythian, nor bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." Col. 3. 11. So that the Latin Church has no reason to draw that to herself which is a common right, nor to pretend any peculiar privileges.

But, in the sum of all, we have made it appear in the foregoing chapters that those pretended privileges of infallibility which they ascribe to the Christian Church visible, and those promises of perpetual visibility, in that sense of visibility wherein they understand it, are chimeras which have not any foundation either in Scripture or reason. And as to that right of sovereign authority, it cannot here be alleged but to very ill purpose. For it is that which is yet in dispute, and whereof we have shewn the falsity from the example of the Jewish Church. But they may draw from that example a consequence against the Latin one, because that if that pretence would have been heretofore pernicious and destructive to religion and the true Church, as they may see it would have been, it follows that it will be so yet in these days. If then they cannot set before us any other difference between those two terms, and those two churches, which hinders my conclusion, the argument will hold entire; for it will not be enough to overthrow it, merely to say, that the Christian Church has that authority, and that the Jewish had it not, but they ought to give us a reason for it.

3. But to proceed with our reflections, If that maxim whereof we treat, were true, that is to say, if men were bound to give to their ordinary pastors a blind obedience in the mat-

ters of religion, to see with their eyes, to tread in their steps. and to divest themselves of their own conduct to rest upon theirs, the Jews who rejected Jesus Christ and his doctrine, during the time of his preaching, those who demanded of Pilate his death by crying against him, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him," and those in fine who rejected the word of his apostles, and who instead of being converted by them, persecuted them, would be sufficiently justified in their bold unbelief, and that detestable parricide which they committed on the person of the Son of God. For what were all those things but just consequences of that principle? They would not hearken to the censures that Jesus Christ made of the traditions and doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees; their church admitted those traditions. They would not believe that Jesus was the true Messiah: their church had determined that whosoever did believe it should be cast out of their synagogues. They rejected the proofs that he gave them from the Scripture; it was not for them to judge of the true meaning of the Scripture, and the Church understood it otherwise. They demanded that he might be crucified; the Church had condemned him for a seducer, as an enemy to Moses and the law; it was not for them to inform themselves any farther. They rejected his miracles; the Church did so too, and said, that he cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub. They would not hearken to his apostles, the authority of the Church forbade them. Hitherto their conduct is within due rules, supposing that the principle of the author of *Prejudices* might be just and lawful, and those miserable people are very much obliged to him for furnishing them with arms wherewith to defend themselves.

4. That maxim of the author of those *Prejudices* draws yet far greater absurdities after it. It ministers accusations against Jesus Christ himself, against his apostles and all those who were converted by their words. If the faithful, by those laws of their submission to the Church, ought not to have any other eyes than hers, why did Jesus Christ pre-

sent himself immediately to the people, when he should first of all have made known his call from heaven, the glory of his person, and the dignity of his office to the Church, to have made them own it by proving it to them before he preached to the people? He was, they will say, her Lord, and the Church herself would have had no authority but by him; that is true: but if the people owed the Church an absolute obedience, they would have owed it all that time that the Lord would have remained unknown. He ought then to have began to make himself known to her, and to have opened her eyes, that he might at the same time have opened those of all the people. If Jesus Christ had been known to have been indeed what he was, there is no doubt to be made, but that he would alone have been heard without any dependence on the Church, of which he is the sovereign Lord; but as yet he was not, and till that knowledge had obtained, the people would have been always bound, according to the principle of the author of Prejudices, not to have seen but by the eyes of the Church, to which God had subjected them. To speak then home to this question, whether Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the promised Messiah, or whether he was not, the faithful being bound to believe nothing but what the Church should tell them, he could not but have addressed himself to her, and not to the faithful people immediately. Nevertheless, it is most true that he addressed himself neither to the priests, nor to the Scribes, nor to the Pharisees, nor to the doctors; he preached his Gospel to the simple people, out of them he took his disciples, and it was among them that he did almost all his miracles; in fine, he himself gives thanks to his Father for that he had hid his mysteries from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes. Matth. 11. 25. Whence could such a conduct proceed, so contrary to that sovereign authority, wherewith at this day they would invest the Church, that is the pastors, in respect of the lay-men? It is not difficult to understand, that it was because Jesus Christ did no ways act from that principle, nor owned it for a good one; for if he

had owned it, he had never suffered the people to have violated it, he had made use of another way to make himself known to them, and he would have employed the ministry of the Church for that end.

5. One may see the same thing of the Apostles, if the people ought entirely to refer themselves to the Church, in matters of faith and religion. Why did the Apostles solicit the Jews to embrace their doctrine, when they could not so much as hear them without being criminal? They will say they had a commandment from their Master to preach this Gospel; I confess it, but the Jews lived under a church that had openly declared itself against their preaching, and they might tell them, according to the maxim of those gentlemen, It is vain that you preach to us, that you work miracles, that you allege the Scriptures; we see by the eyes of the Church, we hear by her ears, we march after her steps, and we divest ourselves of our own guidance to rest ourselves upon hers; this is our duty, and the law that is imposed on us—why do you go about to tempt us to violate it? Suppose we that a Jew after having heard one of those divine and admirable sermons of St. Paul should have addressed himself to him, and have demanded of him what authority he pretended to give to that new Christian Church which he took such care to establish, whether he did not mean that its children should render a blind obedience to it, and that they should refer themselves wholly to their pastors for deciding matters of faith, without intermeddling themselves to search out the true sense of the Scripture? Suppose yet, that that great apostle should have answered him according to that maxim of the author of Prejudices; “That it was true that the darkness of our understandings, and our prejudices, might be able to hinder us from seeing in the Scriptures those truths that are clearly contained in them. That a man could not assure himself that he was not of the number of those who deceived themselves. That that doubt is terrible, but that which yet infinitely heightens that dread which it must needs cause, is, that men are neces-

sarily bound to choose their party, and to make so weighty a choice (to wit of that religion that they ought to follow) amidst the cumbrances of a thousand cares, and a thousand worldly necessities that almost wholly take them up, and that will allow them but a very little time to examine the truths of that religion. That the greatest part of mankind wanted necessary helps; that the half of Christians could not tell how to read, that others did not understand any language but their own, that others had so narrow and limited a capacity, that it was with difficulty they could conceive the most easy things. In fine, that there was no way more dangerous, more difficult, and less fitted to all sorts of capacities, than that of a particular examination of its tenets. That the cutting off of that way, led of itself to that of the authority of the Church, since every man is bound to know the truth of something, and he that could not learn by himself, must necessarily learn it of another. They will then have no reason to doubt whether they shall take the Catholic Church for their guide, and borrow its eyes to discern the truths of the faith, and they will believe themselves a thousand times more assured in following that, than if they were left to the weak efforts of their own reason."\* Tell me, I pray, whether that discourse would have been very proper for the conversion of that Jew? and whether he might not justly have answered, That he was also uncertain whether he should not deceive himself, and take the wrong side, from the very same reasons that he had alleged; from whence he might as well conclude that he was bound to yield himself to the authority of the Jewish Church, which had been the most eminent one that was ever in the world; because that although it had sects within it who disputed the truth of its tenets, yet it had nothing that could make that high authority which arose from external signs, to be opposed with any colourable pretence. To speak in the same language that the author of *Prejudices*

\* In the Preface of the *Prejudices*.

uses, "That he sought then to take her for his guide, and to believe himself a thousand times more assured in following her, than if he had been left to the weak efforts of his own reason." Furthermore, he might think it very strange that the apostles of Jesus Christ should go about to violate, in respect of the Jewish Church, a principle, which in the end they had a design to establish for the preservation of their own, that they should then plead for that maxim, that every one ought to examine the tenets of the faith, and search out the true religion by himself, without absolutely trusting to his ordinary pastors, since that they would have them to hear them, notwithstanding the condemnation that their Church had pronounced against them. But that afterwards they should quickly change that maxim towards those whom they should have converted, and have bound them to have depended blindly on their guides. That inequality would not have appeared fair. Tell me, I pray, yet once more, whether the Jew had not had some reason of his side? and whether that maxim of the author of *Prejudices* is not far more destructive of the interests of Christianity than can be easily conceived? It opens a gate to the Jews to defend their unbelief, to justify all their bold attempts, and to calumniate Jesus Christ himself and his blessed apostles.

6. What might not those unbelievers have said against those who were converted? They might have treated them as rash and presumptuous, as rebels and schismatics, as disturbers of order, as a sort of men of a private spirit, who would make themselves judges of the Church, and despoil it of its lawful authority, to invest themselves in it. But that which is most scandalous, is, that as that principle which we oppose opens the mouths of the enemies of the Gospel, so it shuts up those of the new Christians, and deprives them of the means of justifying themselves. For what could they have said, to which those others might not immediately have replied by the mere application of that principle? Could they have said that they had known out of the Scripture, out of Moses and the



Prophets, that Jesus was the true Messiah? But they might have answered them, That it belonged to the Church and not to them to judge of the true meaning of the Scripture. Could they have said that Jesus Christ and his apostles had an extraordinary call? But they might have told them also, That it was not for private men to judge whether those who said they were extraordinarily sent, were so indeed, that that would be to give way to impostors, that the Church ought to make that discernment, and that she had loudly declared that they were no other than such. Could they have alleged the miracles of Jesus and his apostles? But they might have given them the very same for an answer, That seeing there were true and false miracles, it was not for the common people, who owed an absolute obedience to their guides, to undertake to discern between them, but for the Church, which had then explained them, when she said that Jesus cast out devils by the prince of devils. Mark, 3. 22. Could they have complained of the disorders and corruptions that then reigned in the Jewish Church? But they might have told them, That they were ungrateful and unnatural children, who lifted themselves up against their mother, and thought of nothing else but dishonouring her, and that whatsoever they might say, they ought to borrow her eyes, for the discerning the truths of the faith, and to rest assured in following of her. In fine, that principle seems to do nothing else but to give a complete victory to Judaism over Christianity.

7. But there is more in it yet; for the Heathens might so have prevailed against the first preachers of the Gospel, and have stopped its progress. I confess that the Heathens did not call their religious society by the name of *the Church*. But what does the name signify? Were they not all united in one religious society? Had they not all their guides, their priests, those that offered up their sacrifices, and their high priests? Put into their hands then that maxim of the author of *Prejudices*, with the grounds upon which it is established, the obscurity of men's understandings, that doubt of being

deceived, the cumbrance of worldly affairs, the want of necessary helps, and all those other pretences which they propose to us to make us blindly follow their conduct, and it will work the same effect as it did in the hands of the Jews. The Heathens would not have failed to have made use of it, for the hindering of their hearkening to those preachers, to justify that obstinacy with which they resisted the Gospel, to elude those miracles, to condemn the Apostles themselves and those who had been converted by hearing them, as a sort of men who had broken that order, which they themselves acknowledged so necessary to be kept. They might very well have told them, You have not the true religion, you are not that church to which we ought to give an absolute submission, we have a heavenly and an extraordinary call, and we prove it by miracles. The Heathens might have answered them, out of the instructions of the author of these Prejudices, All those things are in question between our guides and yours, we cannot of ourselves decide them; “the darkness of our understandings, the little assurance we can have that we are not deceived, the just fear that that doubt must infer, the cumbrance of a thousand cares, will not allow us to give more than a very little time for the examining the truths of religion; all that hinders us from hearkening to you, and makes us to cleave inviolably to the highest authority that can be in the world, and that we discover without any difficulty in our society, because that though there are sects among us who dispute the truth of its tenets, yet there is nothing in it that can make that height of authority which has so many external marks to be opposed with any colourable pretence.” In effect, setting aside their opinions, their worship, and their religion itself in the foundation of it, they cannot dispute with that Heathen society from those external marks upon which they would found that authority. And the Christians would not have been in a condition to have equalled themselves with them in that regard. Would you have the consent of many people? They had all the world of their side. Would you seek

for antiquity? They had been almost throughout all ages. Do you require temporal prosperity? It was, say they, their religion that gave them their empire. Would you have magnificence? Where was there any thing more magnificent than their temples, and more splendid than their solemnities? Would you have unity? In the plurality of their gods, and varieties of their ceremonies, they kept peace among themselves, and adopted the gods of one another. Do you demand miracles? They boasted that they had them, and the most illustrious ones, as those oracles which foretold things to come, those apparitions of their gods, their recoveries and resurrections from the dead. There was nothing then that could justify the Apostles, but the falseness of the Pagans' religion, and the truth of the Christian. But for that they must of necessity enter upon that way of examination, and make those people to set about it whom they desired to convert. But this is plainly that which that principle of the author of those Prejudices would have hindered, as we have shown. Whence it follows that it is a pernicious principle, contrary to Jesus Christ, to his apostles, and to the true interests of the Gospel.

But can they answer nothing to these last reflections that I have made? It seems to me that they can possibly say but two things; the one, That those who were converted by the word of the Apostles and the other preachers of the Gospel, were constrained to hear them, against that order, by a secret inspiration which dictated to them to make use of it also. The other thing is, That Jesus Christ and his apostles proved their call to be extraordinary, from heaven, and more eminent than that of their ordinary pastors, by miracles, and that in that case, the faithful are bound to go beyond that rule, and to hear those that shall be so sent to them against that very authority of the Church.

As to the first, I do not believe that wise persons ought to admit of it: for if they take those secret inspirations, to be inward motions that form within a man frequent and strong

desires to do a thing, without suggesting any reason; the Spirit of God does not work so in the conversion of men. It works, according to the testimony of St. Paul, as a light, that enlightens the understanding, to the end we may know what is the hope of our calling. Eph. 1. 18. Then when those desires and inward motions are contrary to that duty to which we are all naturally engaged, they ought rather to pass for temptations than for inspirations, and a man would be very much bound to repress them under that quality, instead of following and obeying them. Those pretended inspirations then which tended to make the first preachers of the Gospel be heard, would have been so far from having had that effect, that, on the contrary, they would have gone farther against their consciences, because they would have been found to have been contrary to a duty, supposing that entire obedience to the Church in matters of faith a duty. They would have been troubled to know whether they ought to examine religion or not: That rule, might they say, would have me not do it; a blind inspiration which is not supported by any reason, and which cannot have any certain mark of divinity, can never be strong enough to authorize the breaking of that rule. But it cannot be yet alleged to serve for an excuse towards that religious communion to which they had submitted themselves, for if that communion had a right of sovereignty over them, she would not be bound to strip herself of it when an inspiration should speak to them, and we can but very ill defend the cause of the first Christians, by that way. If they would understand it so as those inward motions should be supported by some reason, that they should not be entirely blind, it is necessary that they produce that reason, and not speak any more of inspiration.

That reason then, in my judgment, can be no other, than those miracles that Jesus Christ and his apostles wrought, and by which they proved their call to be divine and extraordinary. I confess, that if we suppose that all men have a right to make clear the truth of things by themselves, there is

nothing more true than to say, that Jesus Christ and his apostles made themselves to be heard by their miracles, and that their miracles were made use of to prove their heavenly call. For their miracles were plainly applied to the minds of men, to make them consider that which they taught; and in the end joining their miracles to their doctrine, they saw that they both mutually upheld one another, that neither of them were false, and that both the one and the other had the characters of divinity; they did then conclude from thence that their call was divine and extraordinary. But if we suppose that principle of the author of Prejudices, there is nothing more false, than to say that their miracles bound men to hear them, and proved their call to be extraordinary. For that principle being, as it is, founded upon the darkness of our understanding, upon the uncertainty of our judgments, and the easiness wherewith we are liable to deceive ourselves, it is manifest that it ought to be extended even unto miracles, because that there are true and false miracles, good and bad, and that those false prophets work as well as they that are sent from God. We ought then to make a distinction, and a distinction that is not easy to be made, the angels of darkness so transforming themselves into angels of light. But that reason of the darkness of the understanding, the uncertainty of our judgments, and that readiness we have to deceive ourselves, has (if you please) more place in that distinction, than in that of that doctrine. We may be easily surprised, and by consequence we ought to give over that discerning to the Church, and yet follow in that its light and its decisions. And if you would give to the simpler sort, to those babes for example whereof Jesus Christ speaks, that his mysteries have been revealed unto them, if you give them I say that right and liberty to judge of that important and fundamental question, to wit, Whether the call of a man be extraordinary and divine, or whether it be not so, whether his miracles are those of a true minister of God, or of a false prophet, whether it be a true angel of light, or a disguised angel of darkness, and to judge of

all those things after the Church and against the Church, I see no reason why they should refuse them the right and liberty of judging also of its doctrine and the points of religion, whereof the true knowledge is by nothing near so difficult.

God had forewarned his people that they should not give themselves over to be deceived by the first appearances of miracles, and he had appointed that they should judge of them by the doctrine they accompanied. Whence it follows, that the discerning of miracles, and judging of that doctrine, are two inseparable things, and that their right belongs to the same persons. "If there arise," saith God, "among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, (which thou hast not known,) and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart." Deut. 13. 1—3. It appears from thence, that the way for men to judge well of miracles, is to examine the doctrine of him that works them. So that if they will agree to give the people a right to discern miracles, they cannot take away from them that of discerning that doctrine they uphold. Jesus Christ supposes the same thing when he says that there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and that they shall work great signs and wonders, to seduce if it were possible the very elect. Matth. 24. 24. For how could they otherwise discern those miracles of the false prophets, but by examining their words?

So a famous man of the Roman communion has not scrupled to write, that we are bound to reject miracles, and those men who make use of them, then, when they are joined with a doctrine which the Church has condemned. His words are considerable, and very well deserve to be transcribed. "The application," says he, "and direction of a miracle to prove the truth of a doctrine, is an enterprise so rash, and so scan-

dalous, that it deserves to be punished. There is not any Catholic in the world, who knows his creed and understands it, that can be capable of such a persuasion. What if the appearance of a miracle is contrary to the definitions of the Church, can any one hesitate or doubt, whether it would be better to adhere to the Church supported by the truth of a miracle, or to deny the truth of a miracle founded upon the authority of the Church? Saint Peter has taught us a great while since what we are to do on that occasion. He had been an eye witness of the transfiguration of our Saviour, and of that glory that lay hid under the veil of a suffering and mortal state, and yet nevertheless he trusts more in the obscurity of prophets, than to the clear and manifest experience of his eyes; "We have a more sure word of prophesy." 2 Pet. 1. 19. The authority of the Church, which is in nothing less than that of the prophets, breaks in pieces all those reasons that oppose it, and we ought to take to ourselves in regard of the Church that which Saint Peter says with respect to the prophets, To which we do well that we take heed, gathering together all our attention to know the true sense of the Church, and turning aside from all the miracles, and all those reasons the men propound to us to make us call into question that which we know the Church to have determined."\* We may see clearly, by that passage, how far one may carry that principle of the authority of the Church, in the thoughts of those that admit of it, that is to say, even to make miracles themselves submit to it. He says, that we ought to collect all our attention to know the true sentiments of the Church, and to turn aside from all those miracles which would make us call into question that which the Church has determined. He says, that to go about to make use of miracles for the proving of a doctrine that is condemned by the Church, is a rash and scandalous enterprise, and such as deserves to be punished. In

\* Le P. Annat dans un Ecrit centre le pretendu miracle du Port-Royal.

effect, if they suppose that maxim that we ought to give to the Church an absolute obedience, to see with her eyes, and to rest upon her conduct, those miracles could not make them be heard, whom the Church should have condemned, and by which they should have been looked on as false miracles: the consequence is good and just. But because that very thing applied to the times of the first rise of Christianity, justifies the unbelievers, condemns the proceedings of Jesus Christ and his apostles, accuses those of rashness who have believed on their preaching, destroys the Gospel, and overthrows the Christian Church, it is a manifest proof that that maxim itself is false and rash, since those consequences that arise from it are so detestable, that they leave neither to Jesus Christ nor to the Apostles any way to make their Gospel to be heard by men, with a good conscience, and the care of their salvation.

8. They must give me leave to speak a little earnestly for the interest of our Lord Jesus Christ. The more I consider these inevitable consequences of that maxim, the more I am astonished. If those first Christians, who had been Jews, could not hear the doctrine of the Son of God, nor receive his miracles, without violating of their duty toward the church that had condemned them, what scruples might not all that cast into all the Christians who are at this day in the world? For in fine we are the successors of that people, our fathers were not converted but by their ministry. If then we cannot see clearly that they themselves had a right to be converted; if they laid down on the contrary a principle, which of right ought to have hindered their conversion, where then are all we, numerous as we are? The reasons that the author of those *Prejudices* produces to make us divest ourselves of our own guidance in favour of the Church, that we should see with her eyes and tread in her steps, had as much place with the Jews as they have with us, they could not doubt but that their church was the Church of God, none can dispute with them that eminent authority which had so many external marks. To her belonged the adoption, the glory, and the covenants,



and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; of whom were the fathers, and who had the oracles of God committed unto them, and in whose bosom Christ according to the flesh was born. Rom. 9. 4, 5. If that maxim of the author of *Prejudices* were good, it must necessarily have been good for that church which had condemned Jesus Christ, his person, his call, his miracles, his doctrine, and what right then had his disciples to hear and follow him? We have seen then from reason, and from the testimony of a very considerable person of our age, and to whom one of the greatest kings has given the honour of committing to him the concerns of his conscience, that if that maxim had place, that we ought entirely to refer ourselves to the authority of the Church, we could not any more regard those miracles when they were opposite to that authority. Let them tell us then what right the disciples had to follow Jesus Christ, by what right did the first converts, and those who were afterwards converted by others, embrace the Gospel? And if they did it without any right, and against their duty, into what labyrinths we cast you? What would become of the Christian Church, what would become of you yourselves? You form prejudices against us, drawn from the faults that have, say you, appeared in the persons of our first reformers. You tell us of a pretended precipitancy, by which the magistrates of Zurich reformed themselves; you conclude from thence without entering upon the points in dispute, that we ought to renounce the reformation of our fathers. Answer then yourselves to the objections, that, according to your maxim, the Jews may form against the first disciples of Jesus Christ, and to the consequence that they may draw from thence, that without entering any further into a discussion of the points of that religion, without examining either the miracles or the ancient prophecies, or the success of the preaching of the Gospel, or all the other things that we could allege in our favour, we ought to renounce our Christianity. You yourselves authorize their principle, by one that is altogether like it, which you lay

down, and which you know not how to make use of against them, without overthrowing yourselves; in a word, you draw the same consequence from it with them, shew us then by what secret art both you and we may get out of that abyss whereinto you have plunged us. If your fathers, say you, have reformed themselves with an ill design, you ought without further examination to renounce their reformation. If the chief authors of your religion, a Jew will say, have adhered to Jesus with an ill design, against the obligation which they had to cleave to the Church, you ought to renounce their Christianity. Answer if you can to those arguments, and set our consciences in quiet. As for us indeed, we are not in pain: for we know that that principle which you urge to those unbelievers is false. There is not any person who has not right to examine the points of that religion, and to discern by himself the true from the false, the good from the bad, that which is from God, from that which is from men. The authority of the Church never goes so far as to hinder us with any justice from it, and so there is nothing to reproach the first Christians.

9. But we ought not to give over these reflections, without making one upon the state of the Church in the times of the Councils of Sirmium, of Milan, and of Ariminum, whereof I have spoken before. There is no person who knows not that the Arians were then masters of the ecclesiastical ministry, which they called the Catholic Church, treating the orthodox as heretics and disturbers of its peace, deposing them and sending them into banishment. "The poison of the Arians," says Vincentius Lirinensis, "had not only infected one part, but almost all the world, and almost all the Latin bishops, some by force, others by simplicity giving themselves over to be deceived, found themselves engaged in the darkness of error."\* "We are in that condition," said Phæbadius, "that if we would be called

\* Vincent. Lirinens. Com. 1. cap. 6.

Catholics, it is necessary that we embrace heresy; and yet nevertheless if we do not reject heresy, we cannot be truly Catholics.\* God did yet keep to himself notwithstanding some bishops, few in number, but great in courage, and that small remnant in the end served for a spark to rekindle the fire of the faith in the Church. Apply then to them that maxim which we have before opposed, and weigh those consequences that may be drawn from it, against those and against the faithful who heard them and read their writings. The least is, that they were schismatics, and corruptors of the people, who after having themselves broken off that obedience which they owed to the Church, solicited others to do the like. They might have very well urged, that they had the Scriptures on their side, that they had the Council of Nice for them; but they would have answered them, That it was no longer time to dispute, that they ought to submit themselves to, and acquiesce in the definitions of the Church. Since it was the duty of the faithful to strip themselves of their own conduct, to rest upon that of the Church. Nevertheless, they did not fail generously to maintain the truth, to dispute and write for it, to address themselves not only to the bishops, but to the people, and to defend it against that specious name of a church, which they set before them, and the words of Saint Hilary upon this subject are worthy of a particular consideration. “The Church,” says he, “terrified men by banishments and prisons, and constrained them to believe what she tells them, she that herself had never been believed, but by the exile and prisons which she suffered. She which had been only consecrated by the persecution of men, *Bene & a dignatione Communicantium*. She drives away the priests, forgetting that by the banishment of her priests she increased. She boasts that she is beloved by the world, but she could not belong to Jesus Christ unless the world hated her. *Hæc*

\* Phæbad. contra Arrianos Statim ab enitio.

*de comparatione traditæ nobis olim Ecclesiæ, nunc quam de perditæ res ipsa que in oculus omnium est at que ore clamavit.*"\* Can any one be rash enough to maintain, that he was bound then to refer himself to the authority of that church, to see with its eyes, to tread in its steps, and to rest himself upon its conduct? Will any say that that handful of good men who have since re-established Christianity, was nothing else but a company of rebels, and of presumptuous minds? Will they charge their writings and their letters to the people with forgeries and subornations? Will they justify their being deposed, their banishments, the persecutions which they so constantly suffered? Will they say that the faithful that heard them were rash and sacrilegious, and that those on the contrary who submitted themselves to the decisions of the Church, were those good men, who did nothing but their duty; and that we ourselves at this day, who have received our Christianity from the hands of that small number, are but the followers of rebels and schismatics? Yet all that they must say, if they lay down that principle of absolute obedience. It appears then that that principle is false and unjust, and invented for the ruin of religion.

10. In effect, an absolute obedience, and an entire resigning of one's self to the conduct of another, as to those matters that regard the faith and the conscience, is a duty that we can render lawfully to none but God, who is the first truth, the first principle of all justice. A man cannot submit his understanding and his heart to the word of any one, so as to believe blindly that which he says, without giving him a kind of adoration, for there can be no homage greater than that of an inward blind submission. It is an infinite act, according as a creature may be said to act infinitely, that is to say without bounds, without reserve, without measure. It is then an act that can belong to none

\* Hilar. adv. Arrianos.

but God immediately, that we ought not to transfer to the Church, if we would not adore the Church; and to which by consequence a church can never pretend without usurping the just rights of God.

11. God himself has so far forborne his right, that he does not very often absolutely make use of it, but leaves it to our minds to judge of the truths that he propounds to us. For there are often in those things that he teaches us, characters that equally note their truth and their divinity, so that at all times we may draw these two conclusions from them, This doctrine is true, this doctrine is of God, without their depending one upon the other. We may say the same of his commandments, they bear most frequently characters of their natural justice, as well as those of their divinity; and they give us leave to receive them, not only by an act of obedience, but by an act of judgment also. As it is from him that we hold that admirable faculty of distinguishing the true from the false, the good from the bad, by characters impressed in those things themselves, so he would not take away the use of it in matters of religion. On the contrary, it is ordinarily by the using of that, that he draws us, that he convinces us first of all of the truth of some doctrines, that he makes us afterwards acknowledge the necessary connexion that they have with others which he has revealed to us, the truth whereof appears not so clearly, abstractly considered at first, and by that connexion he makes us receive them. He shews us the equity of his precepts, the horror of those vices that are contrary to them, and in that manner he gains our hearts, by making use of our own reason. Not that we may lawfully reject any of those things which he teaches us; we have no right for that without doubt, because where our understandings are wanting to discover those characters of truth or of equity in those things which he teaches us, there he has ordained that his authority shall help us. It is God that says it, it is God that commands it: but it is not the same with respect to

the Church; the Church is not God, she is but an interpreter and servant of God: she ought then to shew us in all that she teaches us as matter of faith, or that she commands the conscience to submit to, those characters of truth and equity in the things themselves, or else those of their divinity; when she fails in that, she cannot supply that defect by her authority; for in that case her authority is purely no other than human, and human authority is not sufficient either for the faith, or for the conscience: so that every man has a right to examine that which she teaches, and to reject that that is beyond the word of God.

12. In fine, let those gentlemen tell us, if they please, whether in this same question concerning the sovereign authority of the Latin Church, and the obligation that lies upon every one to hold himself to its decisions, they mean, that every one should refer himself to the Latin Church, and believe also merely because that she says so, without any other examination; or whether they would grant that every one may have right to examine of what nature, of what extent, and of what force that authority is, and how far that obedience goes which he ought to render to it. There is no likelihood they will say the former; for that authority cannot establish itself; when it shall be established, a man may refer himself to it for other things, but while her own establishment is disputed, it is requisite it should come from somewhat else, and that there should be for that proofs capable of persuading us. To what purpose do they tell us of its "external marks, which make us," says the author of the *Prejudices*, "discover without any difficulty that height of authority which is in the Catholic Church," if they would not leave the faithful a right to see those external marks, and to examine them not any farther by the eyes of the Church, but by their own? That being so, they may see that they ought always to give men a right of making a judgment by their own light, and to give them in that question the most important matter of all, to wit, that

of choosing a rule and a settled principle for their guidance and their faith, an authority upon which their minds and consciences may rest, and lie down in perfect peace. They must give them that in that question which it is no ways easy for them to decide; for besides that they ought to see those external marks of the Latin Church, which, say they, gain her so great an authority, they ought also to see whether there are not others which they take away more reasonably from her than those which they give her; they ought to see whether those marks are not common to other religious societies, that may by that means dispute with the Latin Church that authority; they ought to see whether those marks, when they shall become peculiar to the Latin Church, may be capable of giving her so sovereign an authority over men's faith and consciences, which seems naturally to belong to none but God. And because in that question we treat not of the whole body of the church, but only of the prelates, and those who take up the ecclesiastical function, they ought to know whether those external marks can hinder them from believing that those prelates have abused their charges, and brought in, or suffered to be brought in, divers corruptions into the church. All that is not so easy as the author of the *Prejudices* tells us it is. There is some difficulty to get thither; and yet that belonging of right to the examination of all men, the darkness of the understanding, the easiness wherewith men may deceive themselves, the want of necessary helps, the ignorance and simplicity of the greatest part of men, would not hinder it. Those are then no other than frivolous reasons, which cannot take away from men that right that God and nature have given them. They ought therefore to enjoy it, at least in some respect, to wit, for the deciding of the question, whether they ought to lose it or no.

13. But it is certain they can never so enjoy it in that regard, nor decide that question without entering upon an examination of all their doctrines, which lets us see yet more

and more the absurdity of our adversaries' principle. For there is not any principle more absurd, than that which destroys itself, which cannot be established but by making use of a contrary principle, and which precisely can have no place, but there where it cannot be of any use. But all that may be said of that principle of those gentlemen, since it is most true that to establish it, one must necessarily proceed to examine their doctrines, and that they can never know whether they ought to refer themselves to the Latin Church, or examine that doctrine by themselves, till they have made that examination, that is to say, till there shall be no farther occasion to refer themselves to that authority of the Latin Church, which makes pleasant sport enough. This is that which is evidently manifest, if one consider it, that before one can acknowledge the authority of the Latin Church, it must be supposed, that one is assured that among all the religious societies that are in the world, the Christian is the only one in which one ought to place himself; and that can never be known but by one way only, which is that of examining its doctrine and its worship. In effect, there is not any one of those external marks that can make that difference. The Jews had their miracles, antiquity, succession, an uninterrupted duration, the holiness of their patriarchs, the light of their prophecies, the majesty of their ceremonies; we do not dispute these marks with them, and as to temporal prosperity, they had it heretofore, and we are not assured that we have always had that, whereof we make such boasting, which nevertheless is not very great. The Mahometans glory that they have the same things, with the consent of the people, and the admirable success of their arms; and as for antiquity, which they fail in, they say, that as Jesus Christ did but succeed Moses, so Mahomet also has succeeded Jesus Christ. As for the Heathens, they had, as I have said, their miracles, their saints, their prophets, their ceremonies, their succession, their uninterrupted duration, their temporal prosperities; and if we strive with them about antiquity and multitude, the advantage



will not lie on our side. There is then nothing more deceitful than those external appearances, separated from their doctrines; they are as proper to make a Jew remain a Jew, a Heathen a Heathen, and a Mahometan to remain a Mahometan, as to make a Christian to remain a Christian: whence it follows, that to form well that difference, and to be assured that the Christian communion is the only good one, one ought to examine its worship and its doctrines.

Moreover, before they could acknowledge the authority of the Latin Church, they must suppose, that a man is sure that among all the Christian sects, the Latin only is the true Church, and that cannot be known but by the examination of its doctrines. Those external marks can be no ways proper for it. The Greeks, the Abyssines, the Nestorians, ascribe to themselves antiquity, succession, miracles, an uninterrupted duration, as well as the Latins. They have their saints, their prophets, their ceremonies, and their multitude, which is not less considerable; and as to worldly prosperity, the Abyssines may boast of it, and the Muscovites also, who make a part of the Greek Church, and who knows whether that of the Latin Church shall never change? It is then manifest, that they can conclude nothing from those marks separated from their doctrine; they are so ambiguous and uncertain, that they cannot fix any settled judgment upon them, concerning the truth of the Latin Church.

But, supposing that they could by those external marks, or by any other ways which they would take, be assured that the Latin Church was the true Church, I say, it must necessarily be understood in this sense, to wit, that in that visible communion God brings up and preserves his truly faithful ones; for it is in those only that that name of the visible Church is verified, and not in the profane, the wicked, and the worldly, who are mingled with them, and who are none of that body that is the spouse of Jesus Christ. They must then be assured, before they can know whether they ought to refer themselves absolutely to that body of pastors that governs

the Latin Church, that the profane and the worldly do not prevail in that body, and that they never have prevailed; for if they do prevail, or if they ever have prevailed, they may introduce errors into the public ministry, and false worship, or suffer them to come in through their negligence or otherwise, or scatter abroad the ill doctrines of the schools amongst the people, favour ill customs, and, in a word, corrupt that communion, as it appears that that did come to pass in the Jewish Church, and sometimes in the Christian. But how can any be fully assured that it may not be so at present, otherwise than by the examining of her doctrine? They ought then to give up that point of external marks; our fathers have gained their cause without going any farther, by the prejudices of corruption which I have set down in the second and third chapters. But if you take them only as mere conjectures, and if you will reckon them to be nothing, it is certain, that to be assured that there is nothing corrupted in a communion where God brings up and preserves his true faithful people, that the public ministry is pure in all its doctrines and in its worship, one must of necessity take that way of examination, and that examination must be very exact. So that before we can enter only upon that question, Whether we ought to give to the Latin Church a sovereign authority over our faith and consciences, the discussing of which they know not how to avoid, all must be examined: from whence it follows that that principle which I have opposed is absurd, because it destroys itself, and none can ever practise it, till it cannot be any more of any use; and more absurd yet, in that when it would hinder us from examining, it constrains us to make an examination as exact as can be thought of,

## CHAP. IX.

AN EXAMINATION OF THOSE REASONS THEY ALLEGE  
TO ESTABLISH THAT SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY OF THE  
PRELATES IN THE LATIN' CHURCH.

TO defend in some manner a principle that Scripture, reason, the interest of the ancient Jewish Church, and the Christians, do so loudly condemn, they propound some inconveniences, which arise, they pretend, from that of the contrary principle. But it is certain, that if it were enough to allege those inconveniences to overthrow those rights which are found to be so solidly established, there is nothing in the world sure, since there is nothing so just, so reasonable, or so necessary, which the weakness or the malice of men may not abuse. It is necessary to yield to men the right of eating and drinking, of clothing and marrying themselves, of selling and buying, of holding commerce between themselves, of building houses and towns, and to distinguish themselves by their several arts and professions. And yet how many inconveniences are there that arise from all those things? It is the same in the usage of the most holy and inviolable things, as of religion itself, of which a libertine says in general, because of the abuses that were made of it,

*Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.*

If all must be abolished that is subject to inconveniences, one must abolish every thing: gold and iron, night and day, fire and water, would be criminal; and the very air itself, which makes us live, causes sometimes our death. They cannot then take a worse way than that of those inconveniences to cry down a right, founded upon nature, and upon grace, and authorized by Jesus Christ, by the Prophets and Apostles.

Let us see nevertheless of what nature those inconveniences are.

One of the most considerable is, That if they allow those who are subject to the Church, to examine the matters of religion, there will be no more any way to keep men in the unity of the faith, that every one will have a religion by himself, and that by this means they should open a way for extravagances and heresies, and by consequence for the entire ruin of the Church, since the minds of men are so different and confused, that that which pleases one, will not please another.

To answer to that objection, I would demand of those gentlemen whether they propose to themselves to find out any human and efficacious way, which shall go so far as actually and effectually to hinder those extravagances and heresies; or whether they would only establish a maxim, which supposing that it should be followed, and that all men would receive it, should contain all in the unity of the faith? Let them take which of those two sides they please, they cannot rationally say any thing. The first contains a rash and absurd pretence, for to go about to seek a human means that shall actually hinder all errors and heresies, is to seek for that which they can never be able to find. To retain men in the unity of the faith and of true piety, two things are necessary, the one, That they teach all the pure truths of God; and the other, That they give them all a right understanding, to the end they should follow it. Their pastors might very well do the first, but the second, which does not depend on them, none but God alone can do. And that also he does in regard of all his elect and truly faithful, for whose sake only there is a church and pastors in the world. For he bestows on all those his Holy Spirit, in that measure that shall suffice to unite them in the same faith, and to hinder them from falling into errors wholly inconsistent with their salvation. As for the others, as he has not ordained their salvation, so he would not actually hinder them from casting themselves into heresies,

or into errors. On the contrary, he has resolved to permit those strayings, the better to distinguish them from his true children. "There must be also," saith St. Paul, "heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." 1 Cor. 11. 19. And elsewhere he says, "That God should send strong delusions to them that perish, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thes. 2. 11. So that God, who alone is Lord of the hearts and minds of men, not having proposed that end to himself in establishing his visible church, to hinder any heresies from being in the world, nor that they should not arise within that very church itself, but only that his elect and truly faithful ones should not be infected with them, it is a great rashness, for those men who cannot dispose hearts as he does, to extend not only their desires but their pretensions also farther, and to search out a way by which there should not be in effect any heresy. I confess that we ought to desire the destruction of all heresies, that we ought to labour for their extirpation, and that as the elect and true children of God are not distinctly known, the cares that we should take for them ought to be extended indifferently to all. But I say, that we cannot make use of any thing for so great a work, but those external means, which are the pure preaching of the truth, and confuting the contrary errors. When their pastors shall acquit themselves well in that duty, they may rest assured that God will bless their conduct and their word, not to all men, but to the persons of his true children. If their pastors would urge their pretensions from thence, and would find a human expedient that might absolutely hinder those heresies from touching them, and from actually and effectually springing up as well among the good, as the wicked; I affirm, that they would be wiser than God, that they would encroach upon his rights, that they would hunt for a chimera, and that by that very means they would change the ministry into a tyranny; for under that pretence of rooting out those heresies, they would come to be sovereign lords over men's souls and consciences, which

cannot nor ought to be suffered, and which is so far from being a means to avoid them, that it would fill the Church with heresies.

If they say, they intend only to establish a maxim, which supposing that it would be followed, and that all men would receive it, would contain all in the unity of the faith, and that maxim is, That they ought to refer themselves absolutely to their pastors: I say, in the first place, that that maxim is as proper to contain men in the unity of heresy and of schism, as in the unity of faith. For the heretics and schismatics have their church and their pastors, to whom they should absolutely refer themselves. So that they could never discern whether they are in unity of the faith, or in that of error and wandering from the truth, if they were not before all things, assured that they were in the true Church. But who shall warrant us, that when they would be so assured of the true Church, that men would not divide themselves by different sentiments, and that that which pleases one, should not displease another? What principle of unity would they give us, to settle all in the same thoughts, in that search which they should make of the true Church? The Jews would say, We are the true Church of God, the mother Church, from which the Christians have separated themselves. The Pagans will say, We are that mother communion; for as well the Jews as the Christians came out of the midst of us. The Mahometans will say, that as Christianity was the perfection of the Law, so their religion is the perfection of the Gospel. The Greeks would come forth and maintain, That they are the true Catholic Church, and not the Latins; the Copticks, the Abyssines, the Jacobites, and Armenians maintain, That as well the Latins as the Greeks departed from the Church, when their Council of Chalcedon had made void the Council of Ephesus. The Arians will say, That if one latter council could abrogate what had been done by a former, as it appears from the example of the Council of Chalcedon, then that of Ariminum might very well correct and repair the errors of

that of Nice. In fine, every one would allege his reasons, and concern himself to know which of all those communions was the true and good one, and which had the true faith. Tell us what means of unity would you have beyond that, to hinder men from dividing themselves? For if it be true that in yielding men a right to examine the matters of religion, they open a gate to let in divisions and heresies, by reason of the confusion of men's minds, it is not less true that in leaving them a liberty to examine those churches and religious societies, to come to know which is the true, you open the same gate to errors and apostasies. If you would further take from them that liberty of searching out the true Church, and if you say that they ought to suppose the Latin to be it, without other reason; besides that that is very absurd, you introduce a maxim that under a pretence of shutting the door to all divisions, shuts it also to all conversions. For why should not every society have right to say the same thing? So the Jew, without any other reason, would presume for the Jewish communion; the Heathen for the Heathen; the Greek for the Greek; and every one for that wherein he finds himself set. That then would not be so much a principle of unity in the true faith, as a principle of confusion and obstinacy, a principle that would be not so proper to keep men in the unity of the true faith, as in that of any religion whatsoever it might be, without coming to know whether it were good or bad.

In the second place, I say, That with all that, they do not yet make any thing of that which they would lay down, if they would avoid those heresies, and those divisions which may arise from the inequality of human understandings, when men are left to be masters of their own sentiments. For to obtain that effect, they must suppose that that maxim of referring one's self absolutely to the pastors of the true Church, when they shall be so assured, will be received and followed by all men. But who can tell them that men will not divide upon that very principle, and that when they endeavour to make them receive it, they can make them agree? If they

apprehend so much those divisions and errors in the matters of religion, what assurance can they have that there shall not be any upon that point of the authority of the Church? Is it because men's minds will less differ about that subject than about others, or that that same authority proves itself, as the first principles do? Who has told them, that those who shall once have received this maxim, will not be unblinded in the end, and that they will not be weary in fine of remaining slaves to men in respect of their consciences, which is the most considerable part of themselves, and that which should give them the greatest jealousy? So that that pretended remedy of schisms and divisions is null, for you must always run upon that rock you would avoid, to wit of the human understanding, and wipe off its differences, its inequalities, its humours, at the same time that you would have them give away that liberty of judging the points of the faith. Let us suppose, since our adversaries would have us, that that principle of absolute obedience to the guides of the Church had had place from the birth of Christianity, would it have hindered the heresies of the Valentinians, of the Gnostics, of the Marcionites, of the Montanists, and the Manichees? Would it have hindered the Arians, the Samosatences, the Eutychi-ans, the Nestorians, and so many others, that in the first ages of Christianity troubled the state of religion? To say that those men were presumptuous and rash, is but to say what we would have, which is, that there can be no human means that can stop that rashness and presumptuousness of men, and that it is a folly to go about to do it. They may by the force of torments and prisons, by their threats or their promises, hinder the external effects, but that is not to contain men in the unity of the faith, but it is to contain them in that of hypocrisy and of treachery.

A second inconvenience is, that they cannot give to the church, that is to say, to the body of the pastors, that respect which is due to them; for where they should be set up to be judges of controversies, private men would rise up against



them, and those private men would on the contrary become their judges. But that inconvenience is not so great, as that it should make us hazard our own salvation. How many judges have we in our civil society, to whom we yet give that respect that is due to them, though still we are not bound to believe that all that they have judged, is well judged? The respect which men owe to their pastors is not unlimited, it has its bounds and its measures: while they act as true pastors, in teaching the pure truth, and acquitting themselves of their duty, they are worthy to be heard, to be followed, to be respected; but when they come to be deceivers, if, that instead of teaching the truth they oppose it, if they mix with gold and silver, wood, hay, and stubble, (to make use of the words of the Apostle,) they deserve in that regard, neither the hearing, nor respect. For they are neither pastors, nor the church, but only as they teach the truth and follow righteousness; and when they withdraw themselves from it, give us their own fancies, or when they follow their passions, then they are but private men, who belie their character, and they can owe them nothing for those kind of things, but repulses and contempt, or at the most but indulgence, if the evil be yet tolerable; that is to say, if their word and their conduct do not destroy the Gospel, or hinder a saving efficacy. But if they should see their ministry to become so corrupted that there is an imminent danger of losing their salvation, who can doubt that they ought not to be looked on only as the enemies of God and the Church, rather than ministers and pastors, and that they should not fail to take heed of them and their doctrine, as pernicious leaven, instead of blindly following them? The duties are then reciprocal between the pastors and the people: the pastors ought to guide their flock well, to give them good pasture; and the people owe them respect, obedience, teachableness, and love: on supposition that the pastors well acquit themselves of their duty, those who are under them will become guilty before God and men, of the crimes of rebellion, profaneness, and ingratitude, if they do

not acquit themselves of theirs. But if the pastors abuse their charges, if they overturn the Gospel, or if they do any thing coming near to it, if they abuse their titles, their sees, their dignities, their sacerdotal ornaments; all that will signify nothing, they owe them no more in that regard, either that respect or that obedience. The reason is manifest, because they ought to respect nothing but the cause of God, and upon the consideration of its saving truth; when then they see that they withdraw themselves from God, and the truth, that respect also which ought to be given to God and his truth, should be withdrawn from them.

And as to what they say, that private men would become judges of their pastors, where of right those pastors ought to judge of controversies, who are above private men; this is nothing but a playing with words. How many of our judges are there, who judge us every day, without our finding any inconvenience or ill in it? They judge us with a judgment of indictment,\* which is a public judgment, and they judge us with a judgment of distinction, which is a private judgment. For they do not bind us blindly to believe that all that they declare is equitable, because they so declare it; we have in that respect a full liberty to examine those things as they are in themselves, though we fail of always presuming in their favour. But say they, Whatsoever liberty we have to examine their judgments, their judgments must be executed notwithstanding, when we ourselves believe them unjust; I confess it, but it is because their execution consists only in those things, or in those external actions, which leave the thoughts of the mind always free, and not in an inward acquiescence. And this is that which puts a difference between their sentences, and the decisions of pastors, concerning the matters of religion; for the execution of these latter consists in an acquiescence of the soul and the conscience, which cannot but examine them in the end, and be decided but by the

\* Imputation, by laying things to our charge.

knowledge we have of the equity and truth of those doctrines. The same thing may sometimes happen in civil society, where instead of putting in execution the commands of superiors, one shall be bound formally to oppose and resist them; as when the Sates of a province, or a governor, shall command things prejudicial to the obedience that one owes to one's sovereign, and which would engage the people in a rebellion; then, we may not only judge our judges by a private judgment, but our private judgment is a thousand times more general and public than that of those judges, yea though it shall not be accompanied with any formality. For those formalities signify nothing, when the fidelity which we owe to our prince is concerned. Then neither respect of magistrates, nor consideration of order, nor the authority of our governors, ought to turn us aside, but they must all give place to that great and fundamental duty. It is the same thing in a religious society; God and our salvation are to be preferred before all things: and if it fall out that the pastors, either in their pulpits, or in their writings, or in their councils, would plunge us into errors, and into a worship that dishonours God, and corrupts Christianity, we may not only judge them by a private judgment, but we ought also at the same time to labour to make that private judgment to become public, and as general as it can be made; and howsoever we do it, we do not in any thing withdraw ourselves from that fidelity which we all owe to God. The inconveniences that arise from that conduct, ought to be imputed not to private men, who do but what they are obliged to do, but to the pastors who abuse their charge, and pervert the rule and natural design of their ministry.

But, say they, Is not this to introduce a private spirit into the Church, where we all ought to have but one spirit, which is that of the Church? "There is," saith St. Paul, "but one body and but one spirit," and therefore it is that he himself exhorts us "to abide all in the same spirit, and to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Ephes. 4. 4.

I answer, that there ought to be in the Church in effect but one and the same spirit; but that ought to be the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of wisdom: not the spirit of the world, nor the spirit of error. God gives his Holy Spirit immediately to all his truly faithful ones, whether they be pastors, or whether they be laymen, which is in all but one Spirit, though the measure according to which each receives may be different: "Grace," says the Apostle, "is given unto every one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Ephes. 4. 7. And in that description of the state of the Church under the New Testament, which is set down by the Prophet Joel, God says, "that he will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, that their sons and their daughters shall prophesy, and that he will give this Spirit to his servants and to his handmaids." *ch.* 2. 28. Elsewhere, God promises his children, "that he will give them a new heart and a new spirit, and that he will put his Spirit within them." Ezek. 36. 26, 27. Saint Paul teaches the same thing: "By one Spirit," says he, "we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit." 1 Cor. 12. 13. "Because ye are children," says he to the Galatians, "God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts;" (Gal. 4. 6.) and in the Epistle which he addresses to the saints and faithful of Ephesus, he tells them, "that they were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise;" (Eph. 1. 13.) and desiring that they might receive a more abundant measure of it, he prayed God to give them "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation." *ibid.* St. Peter tells the faithful of his age, who were persecuted for the name of Jesus Christ, "that the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rested upon them." 1 Pet. 4. 14. In fine, the whole Scripture is full of this doctrine, that the Spirit of God is immediately given to every believer, even down to that place where St. John tells them, "that they had an unction from the Holy Spirit, and that they knew all things; that the anointing

which they had received of Jesus Christ abode in them, and that they needed not that any man should teach them, but that that anointing taught them all things." 1 John 2. 27. From whence these two truths result, the one, That every faithful one in particular has fellowship with the Holy Spirit, which animates and governs him immediately; and the other, That that Spirit is not a mere Spirit of docility, and resting in what is taught them, to make the faithful receive the words of their pastors; but a Spirit of discerning, which makes them capable of knowing things by themselves, and to judge of them. For this is what St. Paul means by that "Spirit of wisdom and of revelation," and St. John by that "Unction which teaches all things," and frees us from the necessity of being taught by men; that is to say, of depending absolutely on their authority, as those men would do who should not be capable of discerning by themselves; and there is this thing very remarkable in that discourse of St. John, that he makes the subjects of it, those false teachers who laboured to seduce the faithful. "I have," says he, "wrote these things concerning those who seduce you; but the anointing which you have received abideth in you, and you have no need that any man should teach you," &c. Which lets us plainly see that he meant, that that unction was sufficient to secure them from that seducing, and by consequence to make them discern by themselves the true from the false. As to all the rest, they do but mock when they call that Spirit a private spirit, under a pretence that it is given to each believer: for it is the same Spirit that animates the whole mystical body of our Saviour, that regenerates and sanctifies them; it is, in one word, the Spirit of the whole Church. It may with far greater reason be said, that they introduce a private spirit, who restrain to the pastors alone the right of discerning the good from the bad, and who would not that any laymen should interpose. For if the whole body be animated but by one and the same spirit, why should not all the faithful have the same right with the pastors, since they all partake of the same light, though in a different

measure? In fine, if they would have it, that to yield to every one a right to examine the matters of religion, would be to bring in a private spirit, let them tell us, by what spirit they would have one examine the question of the Church? by what spirit they would have every one know and rest assured that the Latin Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ? by what spirit they would have the faithful choose that side where they should refer themselves to their pastors? for in all those points, they cannot deny that men ought to follow their own light, since they cannot in the least make those judgments by the eyes of their prelates, as we have noted before. Behold then that private spirit, since it pleases these gentlemen to call it so, which they themselves are constrained to admit, which shews us the nullity of that inconvenience that they would pretend to remedy.

We ought then to go higher yet, and to examine that great argument which the author of those Prejudices has chosen above all others, as being alone sufficient to make us acknowledge the necessity of referring one's self blindly to the Church. It consists in letting us know, "That all the men in the world may deceive themselves, that the darkness of our understandings, our prejudices, and our passions, engage us to that. And if M. Claude," says he, "can propose evident falsehoods as proofs of the highest certainty, who can assure us that we are not in the number of those who deceive themselves, and make an ill choice in the matters of religion, and that the persuasion that we have well chosen is not any effect of our prejudices and our passions, and other secret obstinacy in our opinions; from whence he concludes, that it must be a thing to be despaired of ever to be able to distinguish the true religion, amidst so many sects who all lay claim to it, or to choose among so many opinions which they propose as authorized by the Scripture, those which one ought to believe, from those that one ought to reject, unless that same impotence that lies upon us to discern the truth by our own light, and which would not open a way to find it, should make us go

from the way of reason, wherein we should see nothing but uncertainty, to that of authority, which would draw us out of that confusion;”\* and in the end he advertizes us, that that authority is that of the Catholic Church, that is to say, the Latin prelates.

We see then, thanks to the philosophy of this author, that all must be good Pyrrhonists, to become good Catholics; we ought to doubt of every thing if we would be assured of any thing. But to speak what appears to me, that argument cannot make any impression on the mind, because it destroys itself, as usually those false subtleties do. For if we cannot be assured in those judgments that we make by our own light, because that may deceive us, who can assure us that that author’s argument will be good and conclusive, since we cannot judge of it but by that same light, which will not give, according to him, any certainty? If the use of our reason produces nothing but doubts, why would he yet give us a reason, the consequence whereof can be no other than doubtful, and by which he cannot also gain any thing over us? It may be it is good, it may be it is not so; our light deceives us in other things, it may very well deceive us in that. What likelihood then is there that we should be persuaded by an argument that combats itself, and which takes away from itself the force of persuading?

Moreover, that argument destroys the design of the author of those Prejudices, and overthrows the cause it would establish. For if there be no certainty in the judgments that we make by our own light, who shall secure us that we do not deceive ourselves in choosing the way of authority, since we cannot make choice of that, but by that same light, which is, says he, so deceitful? We cannot less fear in that very thing, the obscurity of our understandings, our prejudices and passions, the inclination that we have to error, and who shall assure that author, who shall assure us ourselves, that that per-

\* In his Preface.

suasion where it is, and which he would communicate to us, is not an effect “of his prejudices, of his passions, or of some obstinacy in his opinions?” Who shall warrant us that we do not deceive ourselves in that particular choice that we make of the authority of the Latin Church, to refer ourselves to her? For we must in that choice rely on our own reason. Who shall secure us that the Latin Church herself does not deceive herself in the judgment that she forms of the tenets of religion? That church is composed of the people and prelates, those people have not more light than other men, and those prelates are not less subject than the others to that darkness of understanding, to negligence, to prejudices, to passions, to a secret obstinacy in their opinions, and beyond all, that they have not a peculiar interest to favour men’s errors and superstitions, to retain them the more easily in their obedience. But those people and those prelates are a very great number. What does that signify? The Heathens and their guides are yet a far greater number than they, and yet they fail not to deceive themselves. They are, say they, rich and powerful, and raised in dignity. The Heathens and the Mahometans are not less. They have external marks, but who knows whether those marks are good, and whether they do not abuse themselves in the consequence they pretend to draw from them? They assure you that they do not deceive themselves, they condemn you if you do not believe that which they believe; and they live, as to themselves, in a perfect peace of mind. But the author of those Prejudices has taught us to answer, “That all those who compose other societies, appear to have the same assurance with us that they are in the truth, they do not condemn the Latins with less confidence, than the Latins condemn them with, they are not less exempt from the fear of deceiving themselves; they live also in as great a peace and tranquillity. That assurance also, and that confidence, that freedom from trouble and fear, that peace and that tranquillity grounded upon the belief that they are in the right way, and that they walk after their light, are marks so



ambiguous and so deceitful, that they may be found most frequently to be joined infinitely more frequently with error, and the way of hell, than with truth and the way of salvation."\* These are the very words of the author of those Prejudices, whereof we change only the application. But, say they, yet farther, Do you not believe that the Latin prelates have a more clear light than you? We cannot know any thing by that, and they do not know any thing themselves from thence, since no person can make himself certain by his own light, according to the author of Prejudices.

They may from thence methinks see of what nature that argument is, but they will be more apt to be disgusted with it, if they will but consider that their principle tends to confound all religion, and to render the very existence of a Deity suspected. For if there be nothing of certainty in those judgments that we make by our own light, why do we follow the Christian religion, more than the Pagan or the Mahometan? Is it because that the Church has bid us do so? This is a very bad reason, for the Church would never tell us that its religion was bad, when it would be so in effect; there is no society whatsoever, but would say that its religion was good, and better than all others. Is it because our birth, our education, interest, reputation, or the friendship that we have with some persons, or the laws of the country wherein we are, will not suffer us to embrace any other religion, and such-like motives that engage us? These are the very worst reasons, and those who are not Christians but from thence, though possibly they may not be a small number, may say, that they are not at all such: for if those very ties had been applied to Paganism, they would have been Pagans, as they are now Christians. How then ought we to be Christians? It is necessary that we should be so from love, and approbation of that religion itself. But that love and that approbation ought to be the effects of our own light, and not of that of other men, and our own light

\* Chap. 1.

ought to dictate to us what is the religion of God, and to make us approve of, and love it, under that quality. Should we then have nothing of certainty in that matter? should we be always in doubt, under a pretence that our light might deceive us? and those admirable effects that religion produces in our souls, “that confidence, quiet, joy, that tranquillity, hope, freedom from trouble and from fear, would they be nothing but ambiguous and deceitful marks, which are most frequently to be found more joined with error and the way of hell, than with the truth and way of salvation?” Thither it is that that principle of the author of those Prejudices leads us. Besides, how do we come to believe there is a God? Is it because the Church tells us so? That would be a very ill reason, for we believe on the contrary, that there is a Church, but by the belief that we have that there is a God; we believe it without doubt by the impression of a thousand characters of the Deity in our minds and on our hearts, that appear in the fabric of the world, in his government, or his ordering the affairs of it, and particularly in man himself, and in his most pure and most natural inclinations. Our reason itself is a lively image of it. But that impression is wrought but by our own eyes, which make us see a deity in things; it is not by others’ eyes that we see it, but by our own. Is it necessary then that we should doubt whether there be a God or not? Must we never be certain, because our eyes deceive us sometimes, and because we are not infallible?

The author of the Prejudices will say, without doubt, that we urge his principle too far; that he never pretended to shew that we could not be assured by our own light, without the authority of the Church, that there was a God, and that the Christian religion, in opposition to that religion which the Jews now profess, or to all those fantastic religions that reign in the world, and are the mere effects of the impostures and humours of men, cannot but be the true religion; “that that discernment is not hard to be made, the advantage of the Christian religion, above all those others, being most clear

and manifest." Indeed so he has explained himself from the very beginning of his Preface: whence it appears, that he would not hinder the examination of the matters of religion, but when particular controversies that divide the divers sects of Christians shall be treated of.

I may say then, if I am not mistaken, that there are two parts in his hypothesis; that in the first, he yields to every one a liberty to judge by his own light of the truth of the Christian religion, and that he does not take away from them in that respect the certainty of their judgments; but that in the second, he takes it from them over other particular matters: but all that is but an artifice whereby he would prevent and elude, if he could, those just and natural consequences which he foresaw might be drawn from his principle. For the very same reasons which he proposes to hinder us from the examining the particular points of religion, and the very same grounds upon which he builds his conclusion, have place also in the comparing the Christian religion with other religions. So that one may say, that the second part of his design destroys the first, and that he himself overthrows that that he had established. For, tell me, if the uncertainty of our judgments founded upon this, that we see that others deceive themselves by the darkness of our understanding, by our prejudices, by our passions, and by those secret attacks that we have of our thoughts, tell me, if that has not place as well in the judgment that *they* make, That there is a God, and that the Christian religion is alone from God, and the only true one, as in that that *we* make, That their purgatory is but an imaginary fire, that their transubstantiation is but a human invention, and that the sacrifice of the mass is no where to be found in the Scripture? Are there no profane or atheistical persons in the world? Are there no Jews, nor Pagans, nor Mahometans? As we are persuaded that they deceive themselves, so are they persuaded that we deceive ourselves: but may not they demand of us, what assurance we have that the darkness of our understandings, our prejudices, our passions,

or some other secret tie that lies upon our thoughts, have no part in our persuasion? What will the author of the Prejudices answer to them? Will he say, “that the advantage that the Christian religion has over all other religions is most clear and manifest?” I may say to him the same, that the advantage that the Protestant religion has above the Roman, is most clear and manifest; and in saying so, I shall affirm nothing whereof I am not well convinced. If he replies to me, that I ought not to be so confident of my own light, that that which appears to me to be most clear and manifest, does not appear so to others, that the darkness of the mind, prejudices, passions, &c. make men deceive themselves, and that I have no assurance, that I am not of that number; the Jew, the Mahometan, the Pagan, the Libertine, the Atheist, who shall come behind him, will exclaim, as often as they shall have occasion, after the same manner. This is justly what we have to say, this author pleads our cause admirably well.

After all, that principle of the author of those Prejudices was so far from turning aside our fathers from examining by themselves the matters of religion, that on the contrary it bound them to do it the more. For being concerned for their own salvation, there was no person more interested than themselves, and being so easily apt to deceive themselves in the choice of those opinions that they were enjoined to believe, and of that worship which they were to practise, they ought not naturally to have trusted any but themselves. They might, it is true, deceive themselves, but their prelates might deceive themselves as well as they; and if in the Church the people must refer themselves to their prelates, and each of those prelates in particular must refer themselves to the whole body of the Church, they will find that neither the one nor the other will be cured, and that that Church to which they should all refer themselves, would be but an *Ens Rationis*, as they speak in the schools, and a Platonic idea. Prudence then bound our fathers to examine that which they should know, both from the imperfections of the minds or the hearts of men.

and from the examples of those before them who fell into error, together with the danger which men are in, on the account of their prejudices, their passions, and their interests; all that could produce no other effect in them than to excite them to make an examination the most exact and diligent that it was possible for them to do, cleansing their hearts from every evil thought, and imploring the grace and blessing of God upon them: for they were assured, (John 7. 17.) that if they did the will of the Father, they should know his true doctrine, and that if any did lack wisdom, and asked of God, that he would give it them, since he gives to all liberally and upbraideth not. James 1. 5. These are the promises of the Gospel.

Those to whom God grants that grace which enlightens the mind and opens the heart, do not only not deceive themselves in the choice of saving doctrines, and in the rejecting of those that are damnable; but they have for that all the assurance that they can reasonably wish for: for the truth makes itself to be perceived by far other characters than those of a disguised falsehood. The invocation of saints, the worshipping of images, the adoration of the host, the conceit of purgatory, have never produced in the souls of the devout persons of the Church of Rome, that sweet joy, that peace, and that contentment of the soul, which the Protestant rejoices in, when he calls upon God alone, when he worships him without images, as he has commanded him, when he adores Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of his Father, and when he places his only confidence in his satisfaction, and in his merit: a deceived conscience may be sometimes in security; but that security is never enjoyed like a true quiet. It is the rest of a lethargy where a man feels no pain, because he has no feeling, which is very different from that rest that gives a perfect health: besides that, the security of a deceived conscience is not long continued, inquietudes return from time to time, chiefly in the affections, and at the time of death, whereas that tranquillity which the true religion gives, is solid and well grounded, and

displays its virtue peculiarly in the most grievous accidents of our life, and in the very agonies of death itself. Such are those divine impressions that David felt, when he said, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; his judgments are more desirable than gold, and sweeter than honey." Psal. 19. 7—10. And elsewhere, "Thy word has been sweet unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth." Psal. 119. 103. And yet further in another place, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant." Psal. 25. 14. The disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ felt them when they said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Luke 24. 32. And upon another occasion, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God." John 6. 68, 69. If those of the Church of Rome were accustomed to the reading of the holy Scripture, they would find the proofs of this truth in a thousand places; but the far greatest part of our controversies come from the neglect they have of that divine book; and that neglect itself is one fruit of that excessive confidence they have in their guides.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

---

A DEFENCE  
OF  
*THE REFORMATION,*  
§c. §c.



**The Second Part :**  
OF THE JUSTICE OF THE REFORMATION.

---





# A DEFENCE OF THE REFORMATION,

&c. &c.

---

---

## THE SECOND PART.

---

---

### CHAP. I.

THAT OUR FATHERS COULD NOT EXPECT A REFORMATION EITHER FROM THE HANDS OF THE POPES, OR FROM THOSE OF THE PRELATES.

WE may now, methinks, suppose it evident and proved, that our fathers had a right and were bound to examine by themselves the matters of religion, and not to refer themselves absolutely to the conduct and authority of their prelates. But from thence it manifestly follows, that they had a right to reform themselves. For since they could examine only in order to discern the good from the bad, and the true from the false, who can doubt, that they having a right to make that discernment would not also have had a right to reject that which they should have found to have been contrary to, or alienated from Christianity, which is precisely that which is called *reformation*. I acknowledge that it yet remains to be inquired into, whether those things which they have rejected are indeed errors and superstitions, as they are pretended to be, and whether they did not deceive themselves in the judgment that they made. But who sees it not necessary, for the deciding of that question, to go to the bottom, and to en-

ter upon that discussion which our adversaries would avoid? From whence it may appear, as I have said in the beginning, that all that controversy which they raise against us about the call of our reformers, is nothing else but a vain amusement; and that to make a good judgment of that action of our fathers, and to know whether it be just or unjust, we ought always to come to the bottom of the cause, and to those things themselves which are reformed; for upon that the question doth wholly depend, whether they did well or ill.

Notwithstanding, to shew that we would forget nothing that may serve for our justification, and that after the desire to please God, we have not a greater than that of approving ourselves to our countrymen, and in general to all men, we shall not fail to make yet some particular reflections upon the circumstances of the Reformation, which will more and more confirm the right of our fathers, and manifest the justice of their conduct, and at the same time we shall answer to some objections of the author of the Prejudices. That shall be the business of this Second Part.

Our first reflection shall be, on that deplorable state of the Latin Church in the days of our fathers, in respect of its prelates; for its condition was such, that there was no more hope of ever seeing a good reformation to spring up by their ministry. In effect, what could be expected from a body that had almost wholly abandoned the care of religion, and of the salvation of souls, (which was plunged in the intrigues and interests of the world,) which kept the people in ignorance of the mysteries of the Gospel, and in the most gross superstitions, and with which the whole body itself did entertain itself, and was found to be possessed by ambition, by luxury, and by covetousness, and engaged in the vilest manners, and living in a way nearly subversive of all discipline? They will say, it may be, that I suffer myself to be carried away by my passion, and that all these clamorous accusations are but the effect of that engagement in which we all are set against the Church of Rome. But to leave no ground for that suspicion,

besides what I have set down in general in the Second Chapter of my First Part, I will further produce here more particular testimonies of that truth, by applying them to the ages of our fathers. I shall say nothing of my own head, I will make their authors that are not suspected by them, to speak, whose passages I will faithfully relate, which they may see in the originals if they will take the pains. And as I hope that they will not lay to my charge what may appear to be too vehement in their expressions, so also I do not pretend to impute to the prelates of these days, that which those authors censured in those of the former times.

See then what a German bishop says in a book entitled *Onus Ecclesie*, who lived and wrote in the year 1519, that is to say, near the very time of the Reformation, but one who was no ways Luther's friend, as it appears by his writings. "I am afraid," says he, "that the doctrine of the Apostle touching the qualifications of a bishop is but very ill observed in these days, or rather that we are fallen into those times which he noted, when he said, 'I know that after my departure, ravenous wolves will come among you, not sparing the flock.' Acts 20. 29. Where may one see a good man chosen to be a bishop? one approved by his works and his learning, and any one who is not either a child, or worldly, or ignorant of spiritual things? The far greater number come to the prelateship more by underhand canvassings, and ill ways, than by election and lawful ways. That disorder which may be seen in the ecclesiastical dignities, sets the Church in danger of perishing; for Solomon says, 'There is one evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler, when a fool is raised to high dignity.' Eccl. 10. 5, 6. It is therefore that I said, that the bishops ought to excel in learning, to the end that by their instructions and their preaching they might govern others profitably. But, alas! what bishop have we now-a-days that preaches, or has any care of the souls committed to him? There are, besides that, very few who are contented with one spouse alone, that is to

say, with one only church, and who seek not to appropriate to themselves more dignities, more prebends, and what is yet more to be condemned, more bishoprics. Our bishops are feasting at their own tables when they should be at the altar; they are unwise in the things of God, but they love the wisdom of the world; they are more intent on temporal affairs, than on the work of Jesus Christ. Their bodies are adorned with gold, and their souls defiled with filth; they are ashamed to meddle with spiritual things, and their glory lies in their scurrilous humour and carriage. Whence it was that Catherine of Sienna told them, 'That in the blindness wherein they were, they placed their glory in that which was truly their shame, and that on the contrary they held those things to be a reproach to them whereon their honour and salvation did depend; to wit, in humbling themselves under their Head, which was God. Furthermore, they have no love for any but sinners; they despise the poor; and howsoever the Canons forbid them, they keep about their persons pimps, debauchers of women, flatterers, buffoons, players, where they should have had wise and holy men.' In fine, instead of the law of truth, the law of vanity is in the mouths of the bishops, and the lips of the priests preserve knowledge, but it is that of the world, and not of the spirit." And a little after, "At present," says he, "the state and dignity of the bishops may be known by their earthly riches, by their affairs and sordid cares of the world, by their troublesome wars, and by their temporal dominion. Alas! the Lord Jesus said plainly that his kingdom was not of this world; he retired himself alone into a mountain, when he knew that they went about to make him a king. How then is it that he who holds the place of Jesus Christ, not only accepts dominion, but seeks it; and that he whom Jesus Christ has taught to be meek and lowly in heart, should reign in pleasures, in luxury, in violence, in pride, in haughtiness, in riches, and in rapines?" And again a little after, "The bishops have renounced hospitality; they neglect the poor of Jesus Christ, but they make

themselves fat, and feed their dogs and other beasts; as if with a formed design, they would be in the number of those to whom Christ shall say, ‘I was poor and you relieved me not; go ye cursed into eternal fire.’ Matth. 25. 41, 42. For generally almost all the bishops lie under the evil of covetousness; they are ravishers of others goods, and but ill dispensers of the churches; turning aside to other uses, that which they ought to employ in divine uses, or the feeding of the poor. What bishop is there,” adds he, “who does not more love to be a rich lord and honoured in the world, than to help the poor? The whole design of their lives is but for the things of the world; they love to array themselves after the fashion of that: and as for the ecclesiastical ornaments, whether they be corporal or spiritual, they scarce make any account of them: and therefore it was that St. Bridgit said, ‘That the bishops took the counsel of the devil, who said to them, Behold those honours which I offer you, the riches that are in my hand. I dispense pleasures; the delights of the world are sweet, you must enjoy them.’ That same saint says further that the covetousness of the bishops is a bottomless gulf, and that their pride and their luxurious lives was an unsavoury steam, which made them abominable before the angels of heaven, and before the friends of God upon earth.”\*

As to the other prelates and the curates, the same author represents them to us after this manner: “In these times,” says he, “there are very few elections that are canonically made, and without under-hand canvassings; on the contrary, the greatest part of the prelates and beneficed men are made by kings and princes in an unlawful manner; and what is more, being brought in by canvassings and simony, they are confirmed by the popes, against the privileges of the churches, and the statutes of Germany, and against all manner of justice. Furthermore, the bishops ordinarily promote to dignities and the cure of souls, their cooks, the collectors of their

\* Onus Eccles. Cap. 20. Sect. 2, 3, 6, 9, & 13.

tribute, their pensionaries, and the grooms of their stables: hence Ubertine said, ‘ That the ancient holiness of the prelates wasted away by degrees, and that it began to fall by canvassings, by pomp, and by simony, by unlawful elections, by covetousness, and by the abundance and superfluity of temporal things, by the promotions that the bishops made of their creatures, by neglecting the divine worship, and by other perverse works; and that by reason of those ill dispositions, the devil was let loose against the present state of the Church.’ Now, none of them who are called to the pastors’ charge and the cure of souls inform themselves either of the quality of their flock, or of their manners, or their vices. Not one prelate called to the government of a monastery will take the pains to observe either its rules, or the order of its ceremonies, or the discipline of the religious; there is not wholly any more mention made of the salvation and edification of those that are under them, but they only inform themselves very exactly of the plenty of their revenues, and what such a benefice may bring in yearly, though yet they do not reside there. It is these curates that Vincentius cried out upon, when he said, ‘ O what obduration is there in the Church of God! The prelates are proud, vain, sumptuous, simonists, covetous, luxurious men, that regard only this earth. They neglect their ecclesiastical duties. They are void of charity, intemperate, lazy; for they neither perform divine offices, nor preach, and do nothing but what creates scandal. They despise the foresight of their holy mother the Church, which ordains that when the rectors of churches shall not be able to preach, they should employ fit persons, which should in their stead edify the people by their word and their example, and that they should supply them with all needful things. But on the contrary the prelates and curates are only careful to put into their places men that are very well skilled, not to feed the sheep, but to poll them, to destroy, and flay them.’”\* He goes

\* Onus Eccles. Cap. 21.

on with that vehemency throughout a large chapter, where he relates the many complaints of the Abbot Joachim, Saint Catherine of Sienna, and of Saint Bridgit: behold this last among the others; "Those who rule the churches commit three sins; the one is that they live a beastly and luxurious life, the other that they have a covetousness as insatiable as the gulfs of the sea, and the third is, that they are prodigal to satisfy their own vanity; as the torrents that pour forth their waters impetuously, such horrible sins which they commit ascend up to heaven before the face of God, and hinders the intercession of Jesus Christ as the black clouds disturb the purity of the air. The revenues of the Church are given, not to the servants of God, but to those of the devil; to the debauchers of women, to adulterers, gamesters, hunters, flatterers, and such like men; and hence also it is that the house of God is become tributary to the devil. The abbot, who ought never to be out of his monastery, but to be the head and example to the rest of the religious, is become the head of a whole troop of lewd women, with their trains of bastards: instead of being an example to and feeder of the poor, he makes himself master of their alms, and he may be seen far oftener in the field with the soldiers, than in his cloister. He ought to be the father and the instructor of his brethren, but he is their seducer and their tyrant. For while he enjoys himself, and lives in pomp and delights, those poor miserable religious pass away all their days in murmurings and afflictions."\* That author describes in the same style the lives of the canons, monks, and other ecclesiastics, and that which he has said does not leave us any more room to doubt that there was in the Church, in those days, as great and as general a disorder as can be conceived.

He does not spare the Court of Rome, but on the contrary, he sets forth in a lively manner their excess, even to say, that "that court is the seat of the beast, that is to say, the church

\* Onus Eccles. Cap. 21.

of the wicked, that is, the kingdom of darkness. That it is a loathsome pit that devours riches, and is filled by covetousness. That the law is far from the priest, the visions of the prophet, and the counsel of the old men. That the heads of the Church serve themselves by simony and ambition; and that, in a word, the sins of those people are such, that they cannot be either concealed or denied, since Rome is become a gulf of crimes. Where the Pope ought to cry with Jesus Christ, 'Come, and you shall find rest for your souls,' he cries, 'Come and see me in a far greater pomp and pride than ever Solomon was in, come to my court, empty your purses there, and you shall find destruction for your souls.'\*\*

The disorder of that court, and that of the whole clergy of those times, was a thing so little to be contested, that Adrian the Sixth did not scruple to acknowledge it in the memoirs that he gave his nuncio for the Diet of Nuremberg, and which Raynaldus relates. For he gave him an express charge to confess, that the troubles of Germany, about the matters of religion, "had fallen out by reason of the sins of men, and particularly of the priests and prelates of the Church. That the Scripture shewed that the sins of the people came from those of their priests; for which reason it was, as Chrysostom says, that when our Saviour would heal Jerusalem, he entered first into the temple to correct the sins of the priests, doing like a wise physician, who goes to the root of the evil. That for many years past, abominable things had been committed in the holy see, that spiritual things had been abused, through the excess of its Injunctions, and that all things had been perverted there. That the evil had spread itself from the head to the members, from the popes to the inferior prelates, and that as many as they all were, that is to say, prelates and ecclesiastics, they were come to that pass that for a long time there had not been any that were good, no not so much as one."†

\* Onus Eccles. Cap. 6. Sect. 6 & 8.

† Raynald. ad Anna, 1522.



We could produce a multitude of other such testimonies if we did not hope that unbiassed persons would agree upon it, as not long since an author in these times has done in a book entitled, *Motives to a Re-union to the Catholic Church*. "The cause of the separation," says he, "was the open abuse of indulgences, and the ignorance, covetousness, and the scandalous lives of the churchmen. The superstition of the meaner sort of people who had not been well instructed; the immense riches and riotous profuseness of the prelates; their too great care in externals, in their magnificence, ornaments, and increasing of ceremonies, and little devotion in the chief worship of God; the indiscreet zeal of some brethren, who seemed to have cast off all honour for the Master, to give it to his servants; the tyranny that parents exercised over their children to imprison them in cloisters; the wickedness of those who contrived false miracles, to draw to themselves the concourse of the people: add to that, the politic and human considerations of some princes and kings, who had not received from the Pope all possible satisfaction, or who took occasion from thence to cast themselves among a party of persecuted men, the better to establish their affairs; in brief, all that which ignorance, superstition, and covetousness could contribute, served for a pretence to those who would separate themselves to reform those disorders. The ground was not only specious, but it had been in a manner accompanied with truth, if the Church in those days had been throughout in that miserable condition, which we have described, and principally so in those places wherein that detestable separation began. Those who separated were aided indirectly by the zeal of some good men, who cried out loudly against those disorders, abuses, and corruptions of manners. The people who judged no otherwise than by the appearance suffered themselves to be easily carried away with that torrent, seeing that they did not complain but of those things which they knew were but too true, and which the better sort of Catholics granted."\*

\* *Motifs de Re-union, premeir Motif. Pag. 6.*

Behold then in what a condition the Church was in those days, and we may from thence, methinks, ask all rational persons, whether they believe in good earnest, that our fathers ought to have expected a reformation from the hands of a clergy, which on the one side had so many worldly interests that bound them to oppose it, and which on the other found itself so deeply sunk into ignorance, superstition, and corruption.

But to urge that matter yet further, we need but to set down those just complaints which they had made for a long time touching those disorders, and the continual demand that all the world made for a good reformation, at least in respect of manners, of discipline, and those most gross abuses, without ever being able to obtain it. I pass by the complaints of the tenth and eleventh centuries, which would be but too great, if they were compared, with those just grounds that all honest men in those days had for them. For those two centuries were famous for wickedness, (grievous) crimes, and those who know any thing of history cannot deny it. But, not to go so far, not to say any thing either of the scandalous lives of the popes of that time, or the wars wherewith they filled all the West, or of the abuses they committed in their excommunications, or of the baptizing of bells, wherewith they increased the ecclesiastical ceremonies, or of the vices which reigned then throughout all the clergy, can they tell us what good effect those smart censures of Saint Bernard wrought, and those of Petrus Cluniensis, of Abbot Joachim, of Petrus Blesensis, of Conrard Abbot of Ursprung, of Honorius of Autun, of Bernard Monk of Cluny, of Arnoul an English Monk, of John Bishop of Salisbury, of Matthew Paris, of William Durandus Bishop of Mande, of Robert Bishop of Lincoln, of Francis Petrarch Archdeacon of Parma, of John Vitoduram of Dante, of Marsilius of Padua, and I know not how many others, who cried out as loudly against the abuses of the Court of Rome, as those of the rest of the prelates? Can they tell us what effect the complaints of

emperors, of kings, of princes, and of the people produced, who for so long a time panted after a reformation? "It is a hundred and fifty years," said Arnald du Ferrier, the ambassador of France to the Council of Trent, "since a reformation of the Church has been all along in vain demanded in divers councils, at Constance, at Basil, at Ferrara."\* Let them tell us what good change has happened since St. Bernard wrote, "That the dignities of the Church were managed by a most dishonest bartering, and with a trade of darkness. That the saving of souls was no more sought after, but the abundance of riches. That it was for this that they took their orders, that they frequented the churches, and celebrated masses, and sung psalms. Now-a-days," says he, "they strive without any shame for bishoprics, for arch-deaconries, and abbies, and other dignities, to the end they may dissipate the revenues of the Church, in superfluity and vanity. What remains but that the man of sin, the son of perdition, should be revealed? The demon not only of the day, but of the noon-day, who transforms himself into an angel of light, and lifts up himself above all that is called God, and worshipped."† 2 Thess. 2. 4, 5. What good change could they see since Cardinal Hugo, borrowing the words of Saint Bernard, had wrote, "That those words of David could not be more properly applied to any, than to the clergy, 'They are not in trouble as other men.' Psal. 73. 5. For every order of men has its labours and its pleasures, but I admire," says he, "the wisdom of our clergy, who have chosen all the pleasures for themselves, and rejected the labour. They are as proud as soldiers; they have as great a train of servants as they, and of horses, and birds, and they live as merrily as they. They are arrayed like women, with skins of great value; they have rich beds, baths, and all the allurements of soft delights. But they take great heed lest they put on a breast-plate with the soldiers, or pass away the nights in the field, or to expose themselves to battles, and

\* See his Oration set down by Thuanus, lib. 35.

† Bernard, Serm. 6. in Psal. Qui habitat.

yet they take less heed to keep modesty and the laws of decency, which are proper to women, and to labour so much as they do. At the resurrection then, when men shall arise every one in his own order, what place do you imagine those men will find? The soldiers will not own them, for they took no part with them in their labours, nor in their dangers. The labourers and dressers of the vineyard will not any more for the same reason. What then can they look for? But to be driven from and accused by all orders, and to go into those places where there is no order, but where everlasting horror dwells.”\* Has it been amended since William Bishop of Mande wrote these words, “Alas! the churches are reduced to that condition, that when they come to be vacant, one can hardly find any persons fit to be chosen to succeed. And if sometimes, which rarely happens, there be found some good man hid as a lily among the thorns, the number of the wicked and incapable exceeds so much, that they will never let a good man be chosen prelate; but crying up such as themselves, they choose men after their own hearts, to the ruin of the Church, and the people that are under them. Else if the greater part in the Church were good, the elections would be made by the majority of voices, and they would be good and canonical; for those that would choose for God, would be the far greater number than those who should choose for the devil. But in these days it is quite the contrary. It is the fashion, that there must be more wicked than good, so that usually the elections are rather diabolical than canonical, and not made by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but by a conspiracy, or treacherous machination.” All these complaints were to no purpose, the evil was too general, and too inveterate to be stopped or remedied.

In the Council of Constance, all those nations who lived under the disorders of a long and obstinate schism, proposed some articles to reform as well the head as the members, and

\* Hugo Card. in Psal, 72.

correct the ill manners of the Church. But Martin the Fifth, who was then Pope, eluded that proposition, with saying, "That that council had already lasted four years to the great damage of the bishops and the churches; that it was needful to turn over that business to another time; and that that affair deserved to be thought on more leisurely; because," says he, "according to St. Jerome, every province has its maxims, and its opinions, which cannot be changed without stirring up great troubles."\* As if justice, piety, holiness, and good discipline, were not the same among all people and in every country.

The Council of Basil assembled some time after, with a design to proceed to a reformation of the head and the members; a declaration was very solemnly made, that there, the very beginning, and their first acts, should contain no other thing. But when they would have meddled with the Court of Rome, and the Pope's sovereign authority, every one knows after what manner Eugenius the Fourth exalted himself against them, and what endeavours he used to separate them, or at least to render their designs unprofitable. That produced new troubles and new disorders, and cast the Latin Church into a new schism. For that council declaring its right, deposed Pope Eugenius, and chose Amadeus Duke of Savoy: but all that came to nothing; for Eugenius remained master, and Amadeus was at length constrained to renounce the papacy. The Council of Basil and all its good designs were brought to nothing, and things remained in the same state in which they were before: which made an author in those times say, "That there could not be any thing expected from those who presided in the councils on the behalf of the Popes, unless that, when they saw the affairs of the council ordered against their masters and against themselves, they should oppose their decrees either by dissolving the council, or making divisions

\* Platin, in vit. Martin 5.

spring up in it. So that," says he, "matters come to nothing, and return into their old chaos, that is to say, into error and darkness, which no man can be ignorant of, at least, that has any knowledge of things past; and the tragedy that happened in our age at the Council of Basil, is a most manifest proof of.\*"

Some time after that, Pope Innocent the Eighth being dead, and all preparations made for a new nomination, Lionel Bishop of Concordia made a long and fine oration to the Cardinals, who were to go into the conclave, to persuade them to make a good election, that might answer the desires of the whole Church; he represented to them, "That Christianity was threatened every day by the power of the Turk; that the Hussites were in arms against their brethren the Catholics; that pernicious errors against the orthodox faith might be observed to increase in all places; that the Church of Rome, the mother and root of the universal Church, was every day more and more despised; that luxury reigned in the clergy, and that it was extreme among the people; that the patrimony of Saint Peter was wasted; that Christian princes, animated with a mortal hatred one against another, were just ready to destroy one another; and that, in fine, to make use of the words of Jeremy, One desolation called to another, which made him to weep over the Church, and say to it, Daughter of Sion, thy desolation is great as the stretching out of the sea; who is it that will bring thee any remedy?" After having represented those things, he adds, "That although the affliction of the Church was exceeding great, yet they might notwithstanding mitigate it, if laying aside their own passions, their canvassings; and their cabals, they would look to nothing else in choosing a Pope, but holiness, learning, and fitness, or capacity. That the eyes of all the Church were upon them, to beg of them a Pope who might by the good

\* Jacob. de Paradiso de Septem. Statib. Eccles.

odour of his name allure the faithful people to salvation.”\* He urged that discourse much farther, in shewing them the necessity that the Church stood in of a holy man, whose life should be without reproach. He added to his exhortations, threatenings on God’s part, and passed by nothing that might move the minds of those cardinals to do some good. Will you not say that words so weighty and so pungent ought to have made some impression on the minds of those cardinals, and that, at least for that time, they should have done well? They saw the whole Church in disorder, the conquests that the infidels made, Christian princes in arms one against another, church-discipline overthrown, the lives of the clergy profuse, piety violently beat down, and Christianity degenerated in all places; could any one imagine that such sad representations would not have been considered? But be not hasty; all the effect that they produced was the creation of Alexander the Sixth. That name alone, sufficiently celebrated in the history of the Popes, was enough to make men understand of what disposition those prelates were, and how little they were touched with the wounds of the Latin Church. Let us hear nevertheless what Raynaldus says, who in these kind of things is an author that can no ways be suspected. “The greatest part of the cardinals,” says he, “were very remote from those good counsels: for authors complain that some corrupted with money, others gained by promises of benefices and places, and others, drawn by the conformity of a vicious and impure life, gave their voices to Roderic Borgia. So that, instead of choosing a chaste man, they chose one who was infamous for his uncleannesses and fornications, for which he had been reprov’d by Pius the Second, yet was so far from amending under that reproof, that he took no care to conceal his impurities. For on the contrary he lived with Vacosia, a courtesan of Rome, as if she had been his real wife; and he had divers children by her, upon whom he heaped

\* Raynald. ad Ann. 1492,

riches and honours as much as it was possible for him to do, as if they had been his legitimate children." Behold what the Court of Rome was then.

Alexander the Sixth being dead, and Pius the Third who succeeded him having lived but thirty days after his election, the cardinals met again in the conclave. And because the life and government of Alexander had given scandal to all the world, and that the cardinals themselves had been but very ill satisfied with it, before they proceeded to an election, they drew up some articles, which every one swore to observe upon condition the nomination should fall upon him; and there was one among the rest which carried this with it, That the new Pope should call at the end of two years a general council for the reformation of the Church in its head and its members. Julius the Second was chosen, but he did not believe himself bound to keep his oath, for seven years passed away without any thing being said either of a council or a reformation. And therefore it was that this Pope thought the less of it. Nevertheless it fell out, that, having ill treated one party of the College of Cardinals, and having moreover stirred up the Emperor Maximilian, and Louis the Twelfth the King of France, against him, those two great princes joined with the disgraced cardinals, and called a council at Pisa. The act of that convocation, on the part of the princes, says expressly, that it was "for the extirpation of heresies and errors, which through the negligence of superiors had sprung up in divers parts of the world, and particularly for the reformation of the manners of the universal Church in the head and the members, and for the amendment of many great, notorious, long-continued, and almost incorrigible crimes, which had scandalized the universal Church." The cardinals also alleged the oath that the Pope had took, just before his promotion, in these very words, "I swear to observe and perform these articles throughout, and in every particular, sincerely, unfeignedly, seriously and in good earnest, and under pain of falling under perjury and an anathema, from



which I cannot absolve myself, nor give power to any other person to absolve me." They added to that, that by another article they all, and Julius himself, had sworn, "That if he who should be chosen should not perform his promise in good earnest, he should be held guilty of perjury, to be a breaker of his vow and of his faith, a disturber of the Church, and the cause of scandal to all Christianity; and that then two thirds of the sacred college should have power to assemble a general council." The council then being assembled, declared openly, "That there was a most evident necessity of reforming the Church in the head and the members;" and made a decree formed in these words, "The holy and sacred general Synod of Pisa, lawfully called in the name of the Holy Ghost, composing a general council, and representing the Catholic Church, doth define and declare, That that holy synod would not, nor could not, dissolve itself, till the universal Church should be reformed in faith and manners, as well in the head as the members, and till the heresies and schisms that had sprung up should be extinguished."\*

Behold, hitherto, the fairest hope in the world. It is not necessary for us to inquire, whether that reformation was the true cause of the calling of that assembly together, or whether it was only a pretence; and according to all appearances it was the latter. But whatsoever it might be, whether a pretence or not, three things result from it; the one, That that reformation was generally judged to be most necessary; the other, That it was extremely desired by the people, for they would never have contrived to have took up those things for a pretence which did not appear necessary, and which were not wished for; and the third is, that a reformation so necessary and so much desired should extend itself to faith as well as to manners, even, say they, "till the universal Church should be reformed in faith and manners."

See then what was the success of so weighty a business.

\* Vide Raynald. in Jul.

Julius on his side, who according to the general mind of the Popes, mortally hated those propositions of a reformation, displayed all the authority, force, and artifice that he had to elude that council, and to turn all those projects into air. And first of all, he made void and disannulled that convocation that had been called; he declared them the authors of schism and rebellion, as Dathan and Abiram, and their council; a conventicle of schismatics, a synagogue of Satan, and a church of malignants; he forbid all prelates to go thither under pain of anathema, and excommunicated all those who should afford them any help or assistance, directly or indirectly; and, in fine, he interdicted the towns and churches that should receive them. But as that way of authority alone could not produce the effect which he desired, since the world did not care always to be frightened with the papal thunder, so it was necessary for him further to elude that pretence of a reformation which those of Pisa had taken up. He then had recourse to that ordinary artifice of the Popes, which is, that when they cannot longer avoid a council, they labour to make themselves masters of it, to the end that nothing may pass there but what agrees with their interests and their desires. For this reason he called one at Rome itself; and to make himself more sure, taking up as well as his adversaries that pretence of the reformation of the Church, the better to colour his affairs, and to strengthen his party, he created some new cardinals. Nevertheless, as he would not omit any thing, he had recourse to arms; he made a league with Spain against France; he assaulted Ferrara that was held by the French; he went himself in person into his army; he filled all Italy with war; he drew the Switzers and Venetians to his interests; he gave battles; he excommunicated the King of France and all his confederates, and after having got off the Emperor Maximilian from them, he gave away their kingdoms to him who should first conquer them; and in fine he set up his conventicle at Lateran, where he and his successor Leo the Tenth made all things pass that they would have. I say, he

and his successor Leo the Tenth; for Julius died after the fifth session, and Leo, not being yet thirty-seven years old, was chosen in his place, by the faction of the young cardinals, against the mind of the elder sort, by reason of which Alphonsus Petrucius, a young cardinal, having had it given him in charge to declare the new election to the people, he did it in these words, "We have chosen Leo the Tenth for our Pope, Let the young men live." Leo, then, continued that council, in which, in favour of some light reformations which consisted but in words without any effect, he more than ever established the sovereign authority of his see, and confirmed the abuses of his court, and the disorders of the Latin Church. For he there solemnly made void the pragmatic sanction, which was almost the only good thing that remained in the government of the Latin Church; he there made the Council of Basil to be declared a conventicle, and caused it to be determined, That the authority of the Popes is above all councils; which obliged the university of Paris to reject that decree, and to sue forth an appeal made to a council lawfully called.

After this, I know not whether they can any farther say with any confidence, that our fathers ought to entertain good hopes of the Latin prelates, and that they ought to have expected a good reformation from their hands. All the world desired that there should be a reformation in the government of the Church, they impatiently demanded it, they themselves acknowledged the necessity of it, in the head and the members; the Pope found himself engaged to do it by a solemn oath, but when it was urged to be put in execution, he chose rather to inflame all Christendom, than to deliberate to reform himself, and to re-establish order; and he managed his party so well, that he found a whole council disposed blindly to do whatsoever should please him, without any regard had either of God or the Church, or of themselves. Did not all that give a fair hope of a reformation?

They will say, it may be, that Adrian the Sixth, succes-

sor to Leo, after having ingenuously confessed, in the Diet of Nuremberg, the disorders of the Court of Rome, and of all the prelates, as we have seen before, promised also to reform them. For he declared, "That he was resolved, as well from his own inclination as from the duty of his place, to labour to correct so great an evil; and he would do it in such sort, that first of all the Court of Rome, whence possibly the evil had grown so extreme, and so destructive, should be reformed; and so much the more, as he saw that all the world passionately desired it."\* I confess those historians give a good testimony enough of the intentions of that Pope in that respect; but we ought also to adjoin, what they add, to wit, that that confession and promise of his, which he made, "were very ill taken at Rome, and moreover, that they generally offended the prelates; that they seemed to be too ignominious for them, saying, that it rendered them yet more odious to the seculars, and contemptible to the people; and that especially, they were amazed to see a door opened for the introducing a diminution of their conveniences, or convincing them of an incorrigible obstinacy."† We ought not also to omit, that Adrian died soon after the return of his nuncio from Germany, not without a suspicion of being poisoned, as William Lochorst insinuates in a letter set down by Raynaldus; *Seu nimio, says he, Estu laboreq; fatigatus, seu infesto esu aut potu refectus, incidit in Morbum*;‡ by reason of which, Paulus Jovius relates, that immediately after the death of Adrian, some young debauched persons went by night and set up a wreathed garland on the door of the house of his physician, with this inscription, *Liberatori Patriæ S. P. Q. R.* We ought not likewise to pass by in silence what the author of the History of the Council of Trent has told us, That Clement the

\* Raynald. in Adrian. 6.

† History of the Council of Trent. Book I.

‡ Vide Raynald. in Adrian.

Seventh, who succeeded Adrian, “ saw clearly that Pope Adrian, having too far abandoned the ordinary style of the wiser Popes, had been too facile, as in confessing the faults of the Court of Rome, so in promising a reformation, and that he was too mean spirited, in asking the Council of Germany how provision might be made against the contentions of that kingdom. For thereby he drew upon his back the demands of a council, which was of great importance, especially with a condition to celebrate it in Germany, and had given too much courage to the princes, that they dared not only to send, but to print also a book which they called the *Centum Gravamina*, or *Hundred Grievances*, a writing that was ignominious to all the ecclesiastics of Germany, but more to the Court of Rome. That notwithstanding having considered all things well, he resolved, that it was necessary to give some satisfaction to Germany, yet so, that his authority might not be endangered, and that the advantages and profits of the Court of Rome might not any ways be diminished.” In effect, he sent a legate to Nuremberg, where the princes of Germany were afresh assembled, who proposed to them such a reformation, as should only respect the inferior clergy; “ So that it was judged, that that reformation would not only foment the evil as light and palliating medicines usually do; but that it would serve to enhance and raise the dominion of the Court of Rome, and the greater prelates, to the prejudice of the secular powers, and that it would open a door to a greater extortion of money; so that it was not received, being looked upon merely as a mockery to elude the expectations of Germany, and to reduce it to a greater slavery.”\*

\* History of the Council of Trent. Book I.

## CHAP. II.

A CONFIRMATION OF THE SAME THING, FROM THE HISTORY OF THAT WHICH PASSED IN THE FIRST QUARRELS OF LUTHER, WITH THE COURT OF ROME, CONCERNING INDULGENCES.

BUT we ought to add something to all that we have said, that if so many public proofs will not be sufficient to produce the conclusion, that there could not be any reformation hoped for on the part of Rome and its prelates, they may further see, if they will, something more particular. Let us examine after what manner they received the first complaints that Luther made against the preachers of indulgences, and the questors that Leo the Tenth had sent throughout the whole extent of his empire, and especially into Germany, there to sell publicly the pardon of sins, under a pretence of the building of the church of Saint Peter at Rome; but in effect, to have by that means wherewithal to enrich his kindred, and satisfy his own profuseness. The history of that, which is as a preamble to that of the reformation of our fathers, must needs give us a great deal of light to judge rightly of their conduct, and to decide the justice or the injustice of their actions. Examine closely then how that business was managed. Besides the manifest abuse that there was in the using, and in the very doctrine itself of indulgences, the questors were constrained to set before the people every day divers novelties upon that subject, to enhance their price and value before them, and further, they lived and guided themselves in that affair after a very filthy and dishonest manner. Luther, who was then professor of divinity in the University of Wittenberg, thought himself bound by the duty of his charge, and his conscience, to oppose himself to a traffic so mischievous, and so destructive of true piety.

To effect that, he proposed some *theses* for the clearing of that matter, and wrote them to the Archbishop of Mayence, who was also Bishop of Magdeburg, beseeching him to make use of his authority to put a stop to those excesses, and representing to him, that it was the duty of bishops thoroughly to instruct the people in the doctrine of the Gospel, and not to suffer their credulity to be so abused. He wrote also almost to the same sense, to the Bishop of Brandenburg, under whose diocese he was, and sent him those *theses* which he had framed on that subject, with a more large explication of them, which he added to them. He wrote the same to Pope Leo, he sent him his writings, he complained to him of the follies that his questors taught, and of the havoc that they made, reposing themselves upon him, and abusing his authority; he cleared himself before him of the false imputations of his adversaries, and was so far from having any ways violated that respect which as yet he believed due to his dignity and to his see, that he stooped even to excessive submissions, which his adversaries did not fail to make use of in the end.

Hitherto the most rigid censurers cannot find any thing blamable in the conduct of Luther. For I pray tell me what could any one have done better? He beheld a sort of men that dishonoured religion, that made a mockery of the devotion, or rather of the superstition of the people, who were a scandal to the whole church, who promoted false and destructive maxims. He opposed himself to them according to the duty of his place, he made his complaints to those to whom ordinarily it belonged to repress those excesses, he went even to the Pope himself, he acquainted him with the mischief that his questors wrought. He begged of him to give order about them, he used all the terms of respect that the Pope could desire. What can any find to blame in all this? They will say, it may be, that his complaints against the preachers of indulgences were false and ill-grounded. To clear this matter, we need but to see what his most fiery

enemies wrote. "Miltitius, the Apostolic Nuncio," says Ulembert, "one of the most fiery enemies of Luther, had sufficiently acknowledged, that the questors and preachers of indulgences, who had first given occasion to Luther to oppose himself, were not altogether blameless. That therefore he had earnestly reproved Tetzel, (who was the chief of the questors,) that he had not hindered those abuses that were intolerable to all honest men, and that grounding himself on the authority of the Pope, he had done divers things of his own head, which could neither be approved of, nor defended; so that he had brought dishonour on the holy see, and given ground for a most dangerous complaint, whereof he must one day give an account to the Pope."\* Florimund of Raymund acknowledged the same, that those questors committed most enormous crimes, in publishing their indulgences, and taking care for nothing else but to extort money from the people.† Belcair, Bishop of Mets, said, "That the impudence of the Pope's ministers was so great, that they made amongst themselves a public merchandise of indulgences, sometimes debauching themselves in the taverns, they played them away, and at dice, and other games, especially in Germany; and it was the common talk, That the Pope had given away all the money that should be collected in some countries of Germany to his sister Magdalen."‡ Guicchiardin goes so far as to blame the Pope himself, "in that following the counsel of Cardinal Peccius he had published the largest indulgences, without any distinction of places or time, not only for the living, but to draw souls out of purgatory also by means of his suffrage. That it was manifest, that he did that to extort money from the people; and that those who were employed to do it had bargained for the place, of the Court of Rome, by reason of which the thing came to be turned into a public scandal,

\* Raynald. ad ann. 1518.

† Raynald. ubi supra.

‡ Idem. ibid.



chiefly in Germany, where the greater part of those ministers sold them at a cheap rate, or gamed away the power of delivering souls out of purgatory." He adds, "That which rendered this affair yet more odious, was the donation that Leo had made of a sum of the money that should be raised by those indulgences to his sister Magdalen, and the commission that was given for that to a certain Bishop Archimbold, a man unworthy of such an employment, and who behaved himself with an extreme covetousness and rigour."\* Behold then two things indisputable, as it seems to me; the one, That Luther had right at the bottom, and that the business which gave him occasion to speak and write [against it] was filthy and scandalous in all respects; and the other is, That he guided himself after a most prudent and respectful manner, and that had nothing in it of any disorder.

Let us see now, after what manner he was treated. The first thing that fell out was, that neither the Pope, nor the Archbishop of Mayence, nor the Bishop of Brandenburg, vouchsafed to take any care to put a stop to those abuses that were committed. They know that afterwards the Archbishop of Mayence was himself concerned in a part of those indulgences, and that he got considerable sums by them. The second thing was, that Luther instantly raised against himself not only that whole swarm of preachers and questors, but the whole empire of the Pope; that is to say, all the creatures of the Court of Rome spread abroad throughout Europe, who stirred up all their endeavours to ruin him, raising against him the princes and the people by many false imputations.† Eccius, Doctor of Divinity, Silvester Prierias, Master of the Sacred Palace at Rome, and James Hockstraten, Inquisitor, wrote against him, the last of whom exhorted the Pope to make use of fire and sword, for the convincing of that heretic. Luther defended himself against this sort of men, by public

\* Raynald. ubi supra.

† See Sleidan, and the History of the Council of Trent.

answers, wherein he laid open their absurdities, and their false and scandalous assertions which they had proposed: but he did yet always contain himself within the bounds of a great respect for the Pope, and for the Church of Rome, holding, nevertheless, that they were not infallible, and that the authority of a council lawfully assembled was above that of the Pope; in which he said nothing, that the Faculty of Paris, and Gallican Church, does not say likewise.\* It appeared that it was their last interest that urged them to irritate Leo against him, and all his court. Who, else, were not well contented with that which he had undertaken to put a stop to, or, at least, to trouble the course of their exactions. Howsoever it was, when they set themselves to find out a way to repress those manifest excesses of the ministers of indulgences, and those who defended them, Luther was cited by the Pope, to appear in person at Rome to give an account of his writings and his conduct in that business, before the judges that Leo had assigned to him, who were Jerome, Bishop of Ascoli, Auditor of the Chamber, and Silvester Prierias, Master of the Sacred Palace. Leo wrote, at the same time, to Cajetan, his legate in Germany, a letter full of fire and choler against Luther, whom he treated as an heretic and seditious person, and gave him order to cause him to be seized as an heretic, and conducted safely to Rome, commanding all dukes, marquises, earls, barons, and all universities, communities, and powers, under pain of excommunication, with a reserve of the emperor only, to use all their force to seize Luther, and to give him up into the hands of his legate.† He wrote also to the same purpose to Frederick the Elector of Saxony. Luther seeing so violent a proceeding against him, proposed the reasons that hindered him from obeying that citation, which were taken from the infirmity of his health, which would not permit him to expose himself to the wearisome

\* See those pieces in the first Tome of Luther's Works.

† See Sleidan, and the History of the Council of Trent, by Father Paul.

toils of that journey; from his poverty, which did not afford him wherewithal to do it; from the tie that he had at the University of Wittenberg, from whence it was not in his power to depart without the consent of his prince; but more especially from that evident oppression which he suffered, in that he had the same person ordered to be his judge, to wit, Silvester Prierias, who was not only of the same order with the preachers of indulgences, but the same person who had immediately before wrote a dialogue against him; so that it was visibly to give him up into the hands of his adversaries, and the parties themselves.\* The University of Wittenberg wrote to Rome in his favour, and the prince, Frederick of Saxony, having most earnestly applied himself to the legate, obtained, in the end, with a great deal of difficulty, that the cause should be tried in Germany, and that for that business, Luther should come and appear before the legate at Augsburg.

Although Luther could not be further ignorant what spirit the Court of Rome and all its ministers were animated with, as to himself, yet he did not fail notwithstanding to appear before Cajetan; but it was after his friends had obtained a safe conduct for him from the Emperor Maximilian. Cajetan was vexed with such a prevention, that broke all his measures; nevertheless he received Luther honestly enough, and proposed at first to him, on the part of the Pope, to recant, and to promise for the future, that he would not fall back again into his errors, nor any more disturb the Church. Luther answered, That his conscience did not accuse him of any error, that he entreated him to tell him in what he had erred, and that he was ready either to justify himself, or yield himself to be instructed. Cajetan then objected to him, as two great and fundamental errors, that he had wrote, "That the merits of Jesus Christ did not belong to the treasure of indulgences, against the extravagance of Clement the Sixth; and that faith, that is to say, a firm belief of one's justifica-

\* The first Tome of the Works of Luther and Raynald.

tion, was necessary to those who came to the sacrament, and those who should appear before the judgment of God; for on the contrary, said he, it is uncertain whether those who draw near to God shall obtain his grace or not." Luther defended his propositions, and the discourse falling upon the sovereign authority of the Pope, whom Cajetan affirmed to be above a council, above the Scripture, and above all that was in the Church; Luther formally denied it to him, and maintained, on the contrary, that the Pope was beneath the Scripture and a council. The next morning Luther presented to him a justification of his propositions in writing, in which he inserted a great many words full of respect to the Pope, to the Church of Rome, and to the legate himself in particular. But Cajetan, without being willing to hear him speak of his justification, shut up all with this, That it was his pleasure that he should revoke his errors, under pain of incurring the censures with which he had received orders to punish him; adding, that if he would not recant, he had nothing to do but to withdraw himself, and to come no more before him.

Luther withdrew from the legate's house, and having been advertised some days after, that they endeavoured to imprison him, notwithstanding the safe conduct of the emperor, he withdrew himself from Augsbourg, not being ignorant of what had befell John Huss and Jerome of Prague in the Council of Constance. Before his departure he wrote to Cajetan two very submissive letters, in one of which he acknowledged that he had not, in treating of that business of the indulgences, preserved all that respect which he ought to have had for the name of the Pope, and that howsoever he had been urged by the carriage of his adversaries, he confessed, that nevertheless he ought to have handled that matter with more modesty, humility, and respect; that if he had any ways displeased him, he begged his pardon, offering to publish it himself, and to use civiler terms for the future. He offered likewise not to speak any more from thenceforward of indulgences, provided he imposed silence on the questors also, or obliged them

to observe the same measures in their discourses. And as to the recantation which they required of him, he protested that he had done it in good earnest, if his conscience had allowed him to have done it, but that there was no command, nor counsel, nor consideration of any person in the world, that could make him say or do any thing against his conscience.\* In the second letter, observing all along the same submissive and respectful style, he declared to him, That he had withdrawn himself from Augsburg, and begged that he would not think the worse of him, if he appealed from him to the Pope, and at the same time he sent him his act of appeal. That appeal was founded, 1. Upon this, That he had not determined any thing upon the point of indulgences, but that he had only proposed some *theses* to be disputed on according to the custom of the schools. 2. That the opinions of the doctors, as well canonists as divines, being very different, and there being nothing defined for certain in the church upon that subject, he had a right to choose one side to maintain in the dispute, much more when he was urged to it by the indiscretion of the questors, who under a pretence of those indulgences had dishonoured the Church of Rome, and the power of the keys, by their detestable covetousness and scandalous conduct, seducing the people unto new opinions, and selling justifying grace for money. 3. That he had not only submitted his disputation to the judgment of the Church, but even to the judgment of every man more learned than himself, and in particular to Pope Leo. From whence he concludes that he had no just cause to cite him. That nevertheless he had offered to his legate to refer himself to the judgment of the Church of Rome, and of the Universities of Basil, of Friburg, of Louvain, and of Paris; which his legate would not accept. That he would not let him see wherein his error lay; but that he had only pressed him merely to recant,

\* Luther, Tome 1.

threatening him if he did not, or if he did not go to Rome, he would excommunicate him and all who adhered to him; although he had always protested, that he had not any opinion but what was founded on the Scripture, on the fathers, and the canons. That therefore finding himself oppressed by that whole proceeding, he appealed from the legate, and from all that the Pope, through ill information, had done against him, to the Pope himself better informed. Notwithstanding, he withdrew himself from Augsburg, and by his retreat rendered vain and ineffectual all the conspiracies they had contrived against his person, to make him a prisoner.

Cajetan having failed of his intent, wrote to Frederick Duke of Saxony, against Luther, accusing him as guilty of a heinous crime, in that he would not recant; and further exhorted and required that prince, either to send him to Rome, or to drive him out of his territories. Luther very solidly justified himself before his prince, and made him see the oppression and most evident tyranny that they used against him. And because that the cardinal had formally declared in his letter to Frederick, that so weighty and pestilentious an affair could not remain a long time in that condition, and that the cause should be carried on at Rome, that menace obliged Luther to make an act of appeal from the Pope, and from all his proceedings against him, to a council lawfully called. At the same time almost, Leo sent a *Bull* into Germany confirming his indulgences, and the doctrine upon which they were grounded. That doctrine was, "That by the power of the keys given to St. Peter, and to his successors, the Bishop of Rome had a right to pardon to the faithful all the guilt and punishment of their actual sins; to wit, the guilt by means of the sacrament of penance, and the temporal punishment by means of indulgences, whether in this life or in purgatory, and that by those indulgences he could apply to the living and the dead the superabundance of the merits of Jesus Christ, and the saints, either by way of absolution, or by way of suffrage, so that the living and the dead participating of those

indulgences, were delivered from the punishment that the divine justice would inflict on them for their actual sins." He commanded therein all under pain of excommunication, from which they could not be absolved till the point of death, to believe it also: and to the end no person might allege ignorance, he gave an order to all archbishops and bishops, by virtue of their holy obedience, to cause his *Bull* to be published in all their churches, giving nevertheless power to his legate to proceed against the disobedient, and to punish them as he should think fit.

Behold here the true history of the first quarrel of Rome with Luther! Let them judge now, whether our fathers, under whose eyes all that business passed, could any more hope for a reformation either from the Pope's hand or his prelate's. Instead of making a holy and Christian reflection upon the just complaints of this man, how mean and contemptible soever he might appear to them, they thought of nothing but keeping up that evil, which they did then in publishing their indulgences, which they knew had not any foundation, either in the word of God or in the practice of the primitive church. They thought of nothing but how to protect them, and indirectly to forbid those scandalous and wicked excesses of their ministers, instead of correcting them severely and repressing them. They thought of nothing but their own interest, and not to let slip any occasion that might be offered to heap up money, without having any regard either of the honour of the Christian religion, or of the salvation of souls. They thought of nothing but how to settle more and more the sovereign and monarchical power of the Pope of Rome, where they should have wholly applied themselves to make Jesus Christ reign in the hearts of men. They thought of nothing else but putting a stop to the happy breakings out of those first bright beams of the truth which came from Luther's mouth and pen; where they should have received them, and made use of them to obtain from God a further and greater light. They made it a fundamental mat-

ter, to get Luther to recant; and not being able to compass that, they thought of nothing but how to ruin him by all the ways they could use. They raised a strife and process about a matter of faith, of religion, and of conscience, and a process that was unjust, and that could not be defended in the very form of it. For what kind of proceeding was that, openly to cite a man to appear at Rome, who had done nothing but only proposed some *theses* to dispute of, on a matter upon which there had not yet been any thing defined? What manner of proceeding was it, to give him a party himself to be his judge, and to declare him a heretic before ever he had heard him, as the Pope did in his letter to Cajetan, to stir up kings, princes, and the people against him, and to shew it was his mind to begin to treat of so weighty a matter with his imprisonment, without any regard had, either of the protestations which he made, or of the reasons he alleged, or of his respectful submissions towards the Pope and his legate? Who may not see in all that, an inflexible resolution always to retain the Latin Church in that deplorable condition wherein it was found to be then, and even to make its yoke heavier, if it had been possible? So far were they from having any design to reform it, and to free it from those enemies and superstitions under which it groaned.

I am not ignorant, that some way to excuse so violent a proceeding, one has said, That almost at the same time wherein Luther had wrote his first letter to Pope Leo, full of respect and submission, he had caused to be printed two little books against the Epitome of Sylvester Prierias, wherein he spake of Rome and its bishops in terms extremely injurious, that which, says one, evidently discovered a wicked and deceitful spirit, that should send forth out of the same mouth sweet and bitter.\* But all that is nothing else but a discourse of a certain Ulemburg, full of falsehood and calumnies, a sworn enemy of Luther and his doctrine. For it is manifest that the

\* Raynald. ad Ann. 1518.



first letter of Luther to Pope Leo, which is that that is treated of, was wrote in the beginning of the year 1518, when he had not as yet any other dispute than with the questors and preachers of indulgences, and that those little books that Ulemburg speaks of, which served for an answer to that Epitome of Sylvester, were not wrote till the year 1520,\* after the Pope and his whole court had openly declared themselves against Luther, after Luther had appealed from the Pope to a council, and after the Pope had made his doctrine to be condemned as heretical by the divines of Louvain and Cologne; which evidently appears from that very Epitome of Sylvester, which makes mention of that appeal of Luther to a council, and from the marginal notes that Luther made upon that, which also make mention of those decisions of Louvain and Cologne. It is then a false report of an enemy of Luther, who not being able to find any thing till then blamable in his conduct, has on purpose confounded those times to render him odious, and to justify, after some manner, a proceeding that cannot be defended. They know not how to deny, that the violence which they used against him, was not openly condemned, not only by the common people, but by the more wise and knowing persons themselves. "He complained," says Coclæus, that is to say, one of his most fiery enemies, "that he was unjustly oppressed by his adversaries, whom he openly produced, and gained to himself in a little time the favours not only of the simple people, who easily believed him, and who listened after all sorts of novelties; but that also of divers grave and learned men, who giving credit to his words, through an ingenuous simplicity, thought that that monk had no other end, than defending the truth against the questors of indulgences, who, as Luther accused them, appeared to have a greater zeal for the drawing of money to themselves, than for procuring the good of souls." He adds,

\* See both his Letter, and his Writings in the 1 Tome of the Works of Luther.

“ That the learned men, poets and orators, defended him, and charged the prelates and the divines with covetousness, pride, envy, barbarousness, and ignorance; saying that they only persecuted Luther for his learning, because he appeared to be more learned than themselves, and more free in speaking the truth against the cheats and impostures of hypocrites.”

Some time after that Luther had appealed from the Pope to a council, the Emperor Maximilian died, which obliged Leo to send Charles Miltitz into Germany in the quality of his nuncio. He presented a golden rose to the Elector of Saxony, which the Pope had sent him as a token of his particular friendship; but that present was accompanied with letters which were sent both to the prince and his council, in which the Pope all along requested them, that they would give up Luther into his hands as a heretic, and a child of the devil. Luther has wrote in some part of his works,\* that Miltitz was loaded with sixty-six apostolic breves, to cause them to be stuck up from place to place, and by that means to conduct him more securely to Rome, in case that Prince Frederick should give him up into his hands. But all those breves, and all those letters, were to no purpose; for that prince would not leave Luther to so unjust a passion.

This obliged Miltitz to betake himself to other measures: he thought that to make up that business, he ought to take a course contrary to that of violence and authority. He would then have some private conferences with Luther to reconcile him to the Pope; he highly blamed the lewd conversations of the sellers of indulgences, and persuaded Luther to write yet once more to the Pope with respect and submission; and yet notwithstanding it was agreed that he should impose silence on both parties, and that the whole business should be committed unto some bishop of Germany, as to him of Treves, or to him of Saltzburg.† Luther performed on his part in good earnest all that was agreed on; he wrote to Leo with all the

\* Preface to Tome 1.

† See Sleidan and Raynaldus.

respect imaginable, and let him see that the questors, and those who had till that time upheld them, had dishonoured his see and his church; that as to himself, he found himself very unhappy to see that their calumnies should have prevailed over his innocence, and he further offered to give over that matter of indulgences, and wholly to be silent in it, provided that his adversaries should do the like.\* But whether it was that all that negociation of Miltitz was but feigned on his part, or that in effect his counsel was not approved by those of his party, as Luther himself insinuates, it is certain that from the time that that letter had been drawn from him, George Duke of Saxony, a prince that stuck very close to the interests of the Pope, desired that he would make a public disputation at Leipsic upon the matters in controversy; the dispute was managed, the beginning between Eccius and Carolostad concerning free-will and grace, but they drew in Luther himself upon the subject of indulgences, of purgatory, and the power of the Pope. And they procured almost at the same time from the Universities of Cologne and Louvain, a condemnation of divers articles drawn out of his books. He defended himself against these new adversaries, and made the world see by his public writings the truth of his doctrine, and the injustice of those condemnations.†

But within a little after, Pope Leo being unwilling to try any thing further, published his terrible Bull of excommunication against him, which they call the *Bull Exurge*; there, after having earnestly importuned Jesus Christ, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, with all the saints in paradise, to come to the succour of the Church of Rome, he sets down in particular one and forty articles of Luther's doctrine, which he declared to be respectively "pestilent, destructive, scandalous, false, heretical, offending pious ears, seducing souls, and contrary to the Catholic truth, and to the charity, to the respect and obedience that was owing to the Church of Rome, which is

\* Luther, Tome 1.

† Luther, Tome 2.

the mother of all the faithful, and the mistress of the faith; and as such severally, he condemned them, disproved them, rejected them, and declared that they ought to be rejected by Christians of both sexes. He forbid all bishops, patriarchs, metropolitans, and generally all church-men, and kings, the emperor, the electors, princes, dukes, marquesses, earls, barons, captains, &c. and in a word, all sorts of men, to hold those articles, or to favour them in any manner whatsoever, under the penalty of excommunication, and being deprived of their lands and of their goods, and treated as infamous heretics, favourers of heretics, and guilty of high treason." And as to Luther, he complained of him, that he would not come to Rome, where he would have let him have seen that he had not done so much evil as he believed, and he aggravated it as a great rashness in him to have appealed to a council, against the Constitutions of Pius the Second and of Julius the Second, who would have those punished as heretics that made such appeals. "That therefore he condemned as heretics, him, and all his adherents, if in the space of fifty days they did not renounce all their errors; he forbid all Christians to have any commerce or conversation with them, or to yield them any necessary things, and gave his orders to the emperor, to kings and princes, &c. to seize their persons, and to send them to Rome, promising great rewards to those who should do so good a work."\*

Luther, some time after, wrote against that Bull, and appealed afresh to a council lawfully called; notwithstanding he justified himself with great solidity about all those condemned articles. And it is pertinent to note, that among those articles that the Pope anathematized as heretical, or rash, or scandalous, and contrary to the Catholic truth, these following propositions might be found: "That that proverb was most true, that said, That the best penance is a good life. That it would be very well if the Church in a council should ordain

\* Extat apud Luther tome 2. & apud Raynald. ad an. 1520.

that the laity should receive the communion in both kinds. That the treasure of the Church, from whence the Pope drew his indulgences, is not the merits of Jesus Christ and the saints. That the Bishop of Rome, the successor of Saint Peter, is not the vicar of Jesus Christ over all the churches of the world, nor that there was any one established by Jesus Christ himself in the person of Saint Peter. That it is not in the power of the Church or of the Pope, to make articles of faith, nor to establish new laws for manners or for good works. That though the Pope should hold with a great part of the Church, an opinion which should not itself be erroneous, yet it would not be a sin or a heresy to hold a contrary opinion, especially in things not necessary to salvation, until a general council should have disproved the one and approved of the other; that the ecclesiastical prelates and secular princes did not do ill when they abolished the order of begging friars. That purgatory could not be proved by the holy canonical Scripture." These propositions are declared to be either pestilent, or pernicious, or scandalous, or heretical, without specifying any one in particular, for the Pope speaks of them only in the whole, that they are such. So it was that Leo and all his court managed those matters. To affirm that a true amendment of life, a holy and sincere return from vice to virtue, is the best of all penances, appeared to be a detestable crime to them. To wish that a general council might establish the communion of the eucharist, according to the institution of Jesus Christ and the custom of the primitive Church, was such an abomination with them, as was thought sufficient to deserve the flames. Not to believe that the merits of Jesus Christ and of the saints made up a certain treasure, which neither faith, nor holiness, nor repentance could give the faithful any part of, but which were to be dispensed only by the way of indulgences for money, passed in their judgments for a hellish heresy. To hold that our faith has nothing else but the word of God for its object, and not that of men also, and that God alone can impose moral laws on the conscience,

was, in their opinion, an astonishing wickedness. To believe that one may without heresy hold an opinion contrary to that of the Pope, in matters not necessary to salvation, and not determined by any council, was a pestilent error. To give the least blow to the interests of monks, or the fire of purgatory, was a horrible sacrilege, for which there was not any remission.

After that condemnation, the Pope wrote to John Frederick Elector of Saxony, earnestly entreating him not to give any more protection to Luther, and he sent Jerome Aleander his nuncio into Germany, to cause that condemnation to be executed. But Aleander not being able to obtain of Frederick what the Pope desired, obliged the Emperor Charles, who had been elected in the room of Maximilian, and the princes assembled at Worms, to cite Luther to appear before them. The emperor gave him, to that effect, his letters of safe conduct, and Luther having compared and constantly maintained his doctrine, without any ways regarding either the threats or the solicitations of the partisans of the Court of Rome, they were upon the point to imprison him, notwithstanding the safe conduct of the emperor, and to treat him as they had heretofore done John Huss and Jerome of Prague in the Council of Constance. But the Elector Palatine vehemently opposing himself to that breach of the public faith, they were contented with proscribing him by a public edict. In that edict, they treat him as a lunatic, as one possessed by the devil, and as a devil incarnate; they banish him all the territories of the empire, they forbid him fire and water, meat and drink, they order that his books should be publicly burnt, and threaten to all that contradict, the most rigorous punishments in the world.\*

After all that, who can say that our fathers could yet with any shadow of reason hope for reformation on the part of the Popes and the prelates? We may see in their conduct, not

\* Extat apud Raynald. ad ann. 1521.

only a repugnance to a reformation, but a settled design and an unshaken resolution to defend their errors, superstitions, and abuses, of what nature soever they were, and to hazard all, rather than once to consent that the Church should be purged. We may see that they made use of all that the most exact and refined policy could make them contrive of all the authority that the splendour of their dignities, and the places which they held, could give them amongst men, and of all that force and violence, that the favour of princes and the credulity of the people could afford them. They went so far as loudly to declare themselves lords of men's faith: they exclaimed, they wrote, they disputed, they accused, they condemned, they terrified, they excommunicated, they had recourse to the secular power; and could our fathers, without being blind, look any further for a reformation from such persons as those?

---

### CHAP. III.

THAT OUR FATHERS, NOT BEING ABLE ANY MORE TO HOPE FOR A REFORMATION, ON THE PART OF THE POPE OR HIS PRELATES, WERE INDISPENSABLY BOUND TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR OWN SALVATION, AND TO REFORM THEMSELVES.

WE come now to inquire what our fathers were bound to do, in so great a confusion. They were persuaded, not only that it was possible for the Latin Church to have within it a great many corruptions and abuses, but that it really had a very great multitude of them; that false worship, errors and superstitions, had broke in as an inundation upon the Christian religion, and that those abuses growing more gross, and growing every day more strong, put Christianity into a manifest

danger of ruin. Moreover, there was not any hope of remedy, either on the part of the Pope, or on the part of the prelates; for the Court of Rome, with all its associates, had loudly declared against a reformation, maintaining that the Church of Rome could not err, that she was the mistress of men's faith, and not to believe as she believed, was a heresy, worthy of the flames; and as to the prelates, they had all servile obedience to the wills of the Popes, besides that ignorance, that negligence, that love of the things of the world, and those other vices in which they were plunged.

Howbeit, the business was not about matters of small importance, nor about the questions of the school, most commonly unknown to the people, nor about some speculative notions, which could not be of any consequence to the actions of true holiness. The controversy was about divers things essential to religion, which not only fell within the knowledge of the people, but which likewise consisted in matters of practice, and which by consequence being wicked, as our fathers could make no doubt that they were, could not but be very contrary to the right worship of God, and men's salvation. For the dispute was about a religious worship which they were to give not to God alone, but to creatures also, to angels, to saints, to images, and to relics; about certain and infallible springs from whence they ought to draw their salvation, in building their confidence upon them; for besides the mercy of God through the merit and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, they joined to that, the merit of our good works, our own satisfactions, the over and above satisfactions of the saints, and the authority of the Bishop of Rome in dispensing of indulgences. They treated of other works which they held that we ought to do through the obligation of our consciences, and with assurance that they were good, and those they made a part of our sanctification, for they added to those that God had commanded us, those that the Popes and their prelates commanded out of their mere authority. They treated of ill actions, from which we ought to abstain out of the motions of our consciences, and which



one could not commit without sin; for besides those that God had forbidden us, they likewise placed in this rank, those which it should please the Church to forbid us. They treated about a certain and infallible rule of faith upon which the minds and consciences of Christians might stay and rest, for they would have that principle consist in the interpretations, in the traditions and decisions of the Church of Rome or its prelates. The controversy was about Jesus Christ himself; for they said that the sacrament of the eucharist was the very person of the Son of God, and they adored it under that quality. The question was about divers customs, introduced into the public ministry, or generally established by the customs of the people, that our fathers thought very contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and true piety. In fine, in all those and other such like things they treated about the peace and just rights of the conscience, the glory of God, the hope of salvation, and the preservation of the Church of Jesus Christ upon earth. Let them tell us then precisely what our fathers ought to have done. Was there any thing in the world of greater concernment than those things which I have set down? Or to speak better, was there nothing that could any ways stagger them, or hold the minds of all honest men in suspense, for so much as one moment? Were they bound to renounce their conscience, their God, and their salvation, under a pretence that the flatterers of the Church of Rome speak of her, what the Holy Scripture says of the Godhead, "That if she pulls down, there is no person that can build up; if she shuts, there is none can open; if she retains the waters all is dried up; if she lets them out they shall overflow the earth."\* Do they believe that they ought to have precipitated themselves into an inevitable damnation, and to have precipitated others by their example, to consent to the ruin of the Christian religion, and utter extinction of the Church, and that lest they should have been wanting in that respect and blind obedience

\* Decret. 1. Part. Dist. 40. Cau. 6. in notis.

that the Court of Rome and its prelates require of all the world? This would be in truth to set that obedience at too high a price, and it would cost us very dear: but they will find but few persons of good understanding, who will not confess that that would be to push on things a little too far.

They will say, it may be, that we ought not also to suppose a thing so much in question; that that prodigious corruption of the Latin Church whereof we speak, and those pretended interests of the Christian religion, and men's salvation, which according to us obliged our fathers to reform themselves, without having any regard of the Court of Rome or its prelates, were nothing else but chimeras that we ourselves have formed at our pleasure, or specious pretences that our fathers took, for occasions to separate themselves, and that we take after them to defend them with.

To answer to this objection, I will not say that there is no appearance that our fathers made use of those motives, as a pretence to cover their other interests with. They can scarce know how to imagine any interests interwoven in a business that evidently drew after it a thousand persecutions, and a thousand afflictions, and wherein they were necessarily to go through the most violent storms, as the sequel will justify. In effect, let them say as much as they will that Luther was hurried away by his resentments, it belongs to those who treated him with so much injustice, to dispute that matter with him before the tribunal of God, who will one day render to every man according to his works. But as to our fathers, who had no part in those personal quarrels, they can no ways be suspected to have had an interest of passion or animosity. I will not likewise say, that if our fathers themselves had had other interests than those which they have set before us, which is contrary to all appearance, that yet it cannot be said in respect of us, that we do not follow them in the true faith, since we have had leisure enough to acknowledge what our reformation has drawn along with it, and what it has cost us. But I will only say, that I make that supposition only to let

our adversaries see, that without amusing us any more with those formalities, and those perplexing ways which they make use of continually, which are proper for nothing but to defend errors, and to destroy the Church by the tyranny of those who govern, they ought to come to the bottom, and to determine with us those fundamental articles upon which we ground the right that our fathers had to reform themselves. I do not then prejudge any thing by my supposition, I explain only the sentiment of the Protestants, and the persuasion that they entertain. If what they say, is not true, it is certain that they have had reason to reform themselves, for without any more reasoning, a man ought always to prefer God and his own salvation before a hundred popes, and before ten thousand bishops. We ought then to come to an examination of those matters.

This is what the author of those Prejudices, as hot as he is in his controversy, has been forced to acknowledge. For to disentangle himself from an argument, to which he says the whole book of the Apology of Mr. Daille is reducible, [and which he represents in these words, “We ought not to remain united to such a communion as binds us to profess fundamental errors against the faith, and to practise an idolatrous and sacrilegious worship. But the Church of Rome binds us to profess divers fundamental errors, and to practise idolatrous and sacrilegious worship diverse ways, as in the adoration of the host, &c. Therefore we ought not to remain in her communion, &c.”] he distinguishes between two sorts of separation, one of which he calls simple and negative, which, says he, consists more in the negation of certain acts of communion, than in positive acts against that communion from which we separate. The other he calls a positive separation, which includes the erecting of a separate society, the establishing of a new ministry, and the positive condemnation of the former communion, to which it had been united. Upon that distinction, he says, “That it is to no purpose that the Calvinists say, that their consciences will not any more allow

them to be united with the Catholics, sheltering themselves under that ambiguous term of union, That their consciences cannot any further hinder them from taking part in some actions, which their false principles make them look upon as criminal; but they would no ways engage them to all those excesses to which they are carried out. That in fine, if it were true, that without betraying your consciences, they could not give that honour which we pay to the saints and their relics, they ought to content themselves not to give it. But that it will in no wise follow from thence, that they ought to go about to set up a body apart. That it is this latter sort of separation whereof they accuse us, and that it is that kind of it that we ought to justify ourselves from." And a little lower, "If," says he, "the Calvinists should make what suppositions they pleased upon the state of the Church of Rome, if they should as much as they had a mind to do, accuse it of error and idolatry; it would be enough to answer them in one word, That if those pretended errors should give them any right to refuse to profess them, and to practise those actions which should include them, yet they no ways gave them any right to set up themselves against the Church of Rome, to anathematize her, to set up a body apart, and to take to themselves the quality of pastors, although they had neither authority nor mission."\*

I do not now meddle with that positive separation, which the author of the Prejudices makes so great a crime in us. We shall shew in the end, that our fathers did nothing in that respect, but what they were bound to do in their consciences, and with the neglect of which they could not dispense without sin. But this we shall come to consider in its proper place; it may be enough for us at present, to know, that with the consent of the author of Prejudices we may suppose it as a thing indisputable, That our fathers, obeying the dictates of their consciences, had right to refuse to profess those errors,

\* In Chap. 7.

in which they believed the Church of Rome to be entangled, and no more to take any part in certain actions that involved those errors. I profess it were desirable that the author of Prejudices had told us a little more clearly his own thoughts of that negative separation; but howsoever he has carried himself in his expressions, I may say, if I am not mistaken, without fear of any opposition, that that which he has here granted us is not one of those concessions, which are sometimes given to adversaries, only to cut off the dispute; but that indeed he has spoken according to his real thoughts. For when in a controversy of this nature a man distinguishes about this general *thesis*, “That one ought to separate from a church which binds one to profess error,” in noting, that it may be said in two senses, the one, That one ought to separate one’s self *negatively*, in not meddling with that which would wound the conscience: and the other, That one ought to separate *positively*, that is to say, that one ought to set up a society separate from that, and to establish a new ministry. That he quitted the former sense, in saying only, that it was very ill applied to the Catholic Church, restrained himself only to the latter, that he would say, that it was this latter kind of separation whereof he accused us, and about which we ought to justify ourselves, that our consciences could not any further hinder us, than from taking part in those actions which our principles should make us look on as criminal; that if we could not, without betraying our consciences, render that honour to saints and relics which they give them, we ought to content ourselves with not doing it. When a man, I say, speaks as the author of Prejudices after this manner in the heat of a dispute, which he believes to be as weighty as that; there is a great likelihood, that it is not a mere condescending to his adversaries, but a true and lively expression of that which he finds in himself to be very just and reasonable. Howsoever it be, without informing ourselves further about a thing wherein we are little concerned, we will suppose it, since he will have it so, as a proposition not to be disputed,

That our fathers could lawfully separate from the Church of Rome, by a *negative* separation, that is to say, in not taking any part in that which would wound their consciences. But that signifies, in our style, that they had right to reform themselves, since we call nothing else precisely *reformation*, but that public rejection which they made of divers things, which they judged to be ill, and contrary to Christianity. Whether they did ill to go further and to proceed to a positive separation, that is a question apart, which does not in the least hinder, that their reformation, taken only as a *negative* separation, might not have been done with justice, and according to that right which conscience gives to every man.

But now, methinks, this point being so well cleared, clears a multitude of others, and we may, by that concession of the author of Prejudices, very well decide some questions. In the first place, They ought no further to set before us that absolute obedience to the orders and decisions of the Church of Rome in the matters of faith and worship, to which they would hitherto have all the faithful indispensably obliged. For if those, whose consciences shall tell them, that that Church binds them to believe errors and to practise a false worship, may refuse to profess to believe those errors, and to perform that worship, who sees not that that absolute obedience is overthrown? Since it will depend on the dictates of the conscience of every one, and that the conscience of each one will give it its bounds, and suspend it, in respect of some certain things and actions. 2. The Church of Rome can no more treat those as disobedient and rebellious, who through the dictates of their consciences refuse to profess to believe that which she decides, and to practise that which she ordains, nor persecute them as such; and whatsoever she should make them suffer upon that pretence of rebellion and disobedience, would be but an unjust persecution, of which she will be bound to give an account to God and men. 3. They cannot also any farther demand of us what call our fathers had to reform themselves, that is to say, to reject their superstitions, and the

errors which were to be found in the Church of Rome in their days; for they needed nothing else but the motions of their consciences to give them a right to refuse to profess them. 4. They ought also to acknowledge that the authority of the Church, how great soever it may be, is yet far less than that of the conscience, since it is not only limited, but surmounted, and that whensoever they should be in opposition, a man would have right to leave the authority of the Church, and to follow his conscience. 5. And since even an erroneous conscience, such as the author of the *Prejudices* supposes ours, and that of our fathers to be, could suspend acts commanded by the Church, it follows necessarily from thence, that to reconcile the Church and the conscience when they should be set in opposition, we must come to the foundation, and discuss the things themselves, for there is no other way to free the conscience from errors. And how much more are we obliged to do it, when the Church abuses her authority, in teaching those things which are really false, or in commanding those actions which are indeed unjust and criminal. All then depends on the discussion of those matters by themselves.

But, they will say, your fathers ought to have been contented to have made use of their rights, each one in particular; they could have kept themselves from making any profession of believing those pretended errors, and not have taken any part in those actions which they disapproved, and yet nevertheless have kept silence. Wherefore did they disturb the public peace by their tumults? Why did they divulge by their outcries the judgment which they made of the tenets and customs of their church? Did they not in that sin against that respect which they owed to their prelates, and that charity which they owed to their brethren?

To answer to this objection, I say, That the keeping silence is not always equally just, it has its bounds and its measures according to the weight of the things which are treated of, and to the circumstances of times and persons. If the business had been only about some mere questions of the school, upon

points of speculation, or about some unprofitable ceremonies, or some bad order in the government, or even about some popular superstitions, which should not have proceeded so far as to corrupt the saving efficacy of the Gospel, I confess our fathers had been more obliged to have kept silence, than to have encountered their prelates, and raised those troubles through the diversity of their opinions. The love of peace, respect for order, Christian charity, bid us to bear things of that nature well, which we do not so well approve of ourselves, and even there to follow the fashion as far as we can, without wounding our consciences; and if we happen to speak, or write of them, it ought to be done in a gentle and prudent manner, with a regard had to the times, and the dispositions of men, always remembering that the Church of God will never be in a state of complete perfection upon earth, and that God himself bears with the defects of his children through his mercy. But we ought also to take heed how we stretch the keeping of that silence too far; for there are certain seasons, wherein one cannot hold one's peace, without betraying of God, without weakly abandoning the true interests of the Church, and without falling into that detestable sin, which Saint Paul calls, "holding the truth in unrighteousness." Rom. 1. 18. Such was the time of the triumph of Arianism, in the Fourth Century, for there the matter being a capital heresy, which had then took hold of the public ministry, there was not any more place for silence, there was a necessity on the contrary of crying out, and of crying very loud, without any regard had either to the complaisance which they owed to their brethren, or to the love of peace, or the dignity of the prelates, or the authority of councils, or to all those false reasons of silence which human prudence ordinarily suggests. Therefore it was, that a simple monk of those times, called Aphraates, although he neither had any other call or office than that of the concern that every one has for the preservation of the truth, yet could not contain himself within his cell, nor be hindered from opposing himself with all his might



to that heresy; and the Emperor Valens, who favoured the Arians, having checked him for that boldness, in telling him, that he ought to have kept himself in his cell, and to have applied himself only to pray to God, according to the conditions of that religious life into which he had entered, Aphraates answered him, “If I were a maid, and should keep my chamber with my father, and if I should see fire take hold of the house, should I not be bound to go out of my chamber, and run on every side to bring water to put out the fire?” meaning by that, that when the safety of Christianity was in danger of being destroyed, it was a crime to hold one’s peace and sit still in quiet.

But this is exactly the case wherein our fathers found themselves. For they beheld the Christian religion, and by consequence the Latin Church, ready to be shipwrecked, as a vessel that takes in water on every side. They saw in that miserable church, divinity falsified and corrupted by a thousand vain and ridiculous questions: the schools infected with the art of sophistry and cheats: the pulpits prostituted to tales, jests, and legends: benefices filled with persons unworthy and incapable: church dignities sold to those who bid highest: good learning banished and persecuted: religion loaded with a rabble of childish ceremonies: the people abused by a thousand follies: church-government changed into an intolerable oppression: the worship of God transferred to creatures, and even to those creatures that were dead and insensible: the saving truths of the Gospel neglected, errors and fancies of men’s minds preached up instead of them: the study of the Holy Scripture abandoned: the actions of true piety altered by false ideas: the commands of God broken, his sovereign authority usurped, his mercy set in partnership with satisfactions of men, his laws associated with the laws of men, and his grace with our free-will: the only sacrifice of his Son multiplied, the virtue of his intercession communicated to saints and angels: the substance of bread adored as his divine body; his sovereign, prophetic, and kingly offices transferred

to the Pope, and his priestly to the priests; his sacraments altered, his clearest words eluded by their glosses and rash distinctions, and his ministry changed into a despotic empire over men's consciences. In a word, they saw nothing that remained entire in that religion. Whether their sentiments, in that regard, were just or unjust, reasonable or ill-grounded, it is what a discussion will justify, when they will seriously come to consider it. But nevertheless, our fathers were persuaded of all that which I have mentioned, and under that persuasion who can doubt that they ought not to have loudly declared themselves, and that a deep silence would not have rendered them criminal before God and men? And they were the more obliged to speak, in that, as we have shewn in the foregoing chapter, they had nothing more to look for from their prelates, and in that the unjust and violent proceedings of the Court of Rome against Luther, made them sufficiently know that the evil was not to be remedied on that side, and that the time for each man to reform himself, was already come.

---

#### CHAP. IV.

THAT OUR FATHERS HAD A LAWFUL AND SUFFICIENT  
CALL TO REFORM THEMSELVES, AND TO LABOUR TO  
REFORM OTHERS.

ALTHOUGH this question about the call of our fathers for a reformation, is already sufficiently decided, by what I have before represented, since they cannot require a more lawful call, than that which is founded upon the indispensable obligation of our salvation, I shall notwithstanding treat of this matter yet a little further, to omit nothing that may serve for our justification.

I say then, that the chief thing that ought to be done to form a right judgment of a call, in the business of religion, is to search into the nature of those actions about which it is engaged, whether they be just or unjust, good or ill in themselves; for there cannot be the least lawful call for that which is ill, but there is always one naturally for what is good, which I shall name a call of things, to distinguish it from that call of persons whereof I shall speak in the sequel. But now upon this principle, which to me seems indisputable, we have little else to do, than to demand of our adversaries whether they do not believe, that as it is naturally just to embrace and to defend the truth, so also that it is as just to reject and oppose errors, and to banish them not only out of that society wherein a man is, but even out of the world itself as much as it lies in his power to do: we need, I say, but only to demand of them, whether they believe not, that a falsehood has not in its own nature any right to be believed, or to be taught, and that it is for that reason, that she makes use of the colours of truth, to make herself to be received under another name than her own, because that when she appears in her natural dress, it excites, or at least it ought to excite, the hatred and aversion of men. I know very well that all falsehoods do not equally deserve that aversion, and that there are some that may appear indifferent enough in comparison of others; but I say that there are also some, of which one cannot tell how to pass so favourable a judgment. Errors in religion have a far different character from those in philosophy, and in religion itself those which always when they arrive vitiate the mind and heart, are far more odious than those which do not deprave the mind; and those which hinder all the saving efficacy of the Gospel are infinitely more so; how much more when they are gathered together to an exceeding great number, and mutually uphold and sustain one another, not unlike those black clouds which in the most stormy days of winter join themselves one to another to make up but one general one, and to deprive us of the light of the sun. Hitherto, possibly

they will not contest any thing. But if it be reasonable enough that there should be no quarrel made about those general propositions, they ought not further to make any in this particular question, if the actions of our fathers were in their own nature good and just, since we suppose, not only, that those things which they rejected and caused others to reject, were errors, but also that they were capital errors of that last sort which I spoke of just before, which one cannot look on without dread and amazement. For it is upon that supposition that we defend our fathers, and if they dispute it with us they ought to quit this dispute about forms, and to enter upon a discussion of the very foundation itself.

They may allege, that they had a long-continued possession, in favour of those things which our reformers opposed, since they were found established in the Church many ages ago; and that, as in a civil society, the laws forbid those to be molested, who are in a long and ancient possession, and to be bound to produce their first title, though at the same time it should be maintained, that they are usurpers. So also our fathers ought not to be heard any further, against the sentiments and customs which the times had in some sort consecrated and made venerable. But this answer will be of no use to them; for not to allege here, that the greatest part of those opinions and practices were new enough, as has been sufficiently proved; not to say, that they had been publicly disputed, and by consequence, that that possession whereof they speak was not peaceable: who knows not, that there can be nothing prescribed in matters of faith and worship against the true religion, since that religion is of God in all its parts, and that there is neither any time, nor custom, nor possession, that can make a true thing of a false, or a divine institution of a human tradition, or any virtue of a vice? In a civil society, laws establish prescriptions with very good reason, because without them, the peace of the community, which is the only end that those laws propose to themselves, cannot be well preserved. But in a religious society, the

principal end is the glory of God and the salvation of the faithful, which are two things that are established on certain, perpetual, and invariable foundations, and by consequence have no respect to any long prepossessions on the contrary side, how ancient soever they may have been. If religion were capable of any such prescriptions, Christianity would be bound to let Paganism alone; for how long time past has Paganism been seated in the possession of the faith of men? Saint Paul himself acknowledges it in those very places wherein he exhorts such to be converted. "Turn you," says he, Acts 14. 15. "from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth, who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways;" and elsewhere, "God having winked at the times of ignorance, commands now all men every where to repent." Acts 17. 30. They cannot therefore bring any thing of prescription against us, and it will always remain certain, that if that which our fathers have said concerning the corruption of the Latin Church in their days be true, as we suppose it to be, the Reformation was an action good and just in itself, and by consequence, in that respect, they can have nothing to say against their call to it.

But as it is not enough to establish a lawful call, to suppose that what is done is good in itself, and as it is further necessary that the person that does it should have right to do it, it remains yet to be further inquired into, whether our fathers had power to do what they did. For how many actions are there that are just in themselves which it does not belong to all the world to do, and which then become unjust and ill, when every one thrusts himself in of his own authority without being lawfully called? It is not permitted, for example, to all the world, to punish the wicked, although that punishment might be just; it is not permitted to all men to change public customs, although those changes should be good and advantageous to the society. We ought then to see what call our fathers had to reform themselves, and others. But

this question would be easily decided, if it be considered, that in all societies there are two sorts of common actions, the one sort of those that are so common, as to belong to all the body taken *collectively*, as they speak in the school, and not to each particular person. So in a parliament, to pronounce a sentence, to absolve a man, or to condemn him, they are the actions of the whole body, and not of each of those who compose it; so, to declare war and to make peace, are the acts of him or those who hold all the rights of the state in their hands. But there are other actions which are so common in a society, as to belong to each particular person, or as they say to all *distributively*, and not to all *collectively*. So, to give one's advice in an assembly, is the act, not of the whole body, but of each particular person who composes it; and to live in a kingdom, to form connexions, to possess one's goods, to labour to defend one's self against the evils of life, are actions so common, as to belong to all particular persons. And so the civilians have very well distinguished, in saying, that there are some acts which respect *omnes ut singulos*, and that there are others which belong *ad omnes ut universos*.

To apply that distinction only to our present subject, I say, that in religious society, which is the Church, faith, piety, holiness, and by consequence the rejecting of errors, of false worship, and of sins, are those common actions that belong to all private men. "The just shall live by his faith," (says the Scripture, Hab. 2. 4.) and as it would be ridiculous to demand of any man in a civil society, what personal call he had to live, to labour to avoid that which would be hurtful to his life, and to have a care of his own preservation, so it is also an absurdity to demand of our fathers, what call they had to believe aright in God, to worship him purely, and to remove far from them all that which they believed to be contrary to a spiritual life and their own salvation: for they need not for that, any other call than the obligation that lies upon every one to save himself, and the necessity of beating back all that which would oppose itself to so just an obligation. There are

not in a civil society any certain select persons, who only have a right to live, to act, and to labour for others, whilst those others should be dead, or not able to move: so also there are none in a religious society, who ought to believe and to be good for others, whilst those others should remain in ignorance or in sin; and that implicit faith, which some have invented, by which a man is to believe in general that which the Church believes, to go no further, is in truth the most commodious way of all others for those men who have something else to do than to serve God; but it is also most proper for the damnation of men. Faith then is a thing so common as to belong to particular persons; she is so one in the whole body of the Church, as to distribute herself to each one, and one could not be of that body of the Church, if one were not a believer, as one could not be of the body in a civil society, if one were not a man and had not life. So, each man has not only a personal call, but lies also under an obligation to believe, and to live as a good Christian; whence it follows, that each man has a call to remove far from him all that he shall judge to be contrary to the truth of his uprightness, faith, and piety, as also that being under an obligation to live holily and justly, he has a call to avoid sins, and to repent of them whensoever he shall commit them.

But is not this, some will say, to rend the Church by divisions, and to make one's self guilty of a schism, so to reject, out of self-will, the common sentiments and customs, without the consent of the whole society? No certainly, for the true union of the Church does not consist in holding of errors, how common soever they may be, nor in any false worship, after what manner soever it be established. These things do not only not belong to a Christian communion, but they destroy it, as diseases, how popular and general soever they may be, do bring nothing but desolation on a civil society, instead of being the bonds to unite it. So the union of the Church doth not bind any person in that respect; on the contrary, it engages us to shew our brethren a good example, in beginning to re-

form by ourselves: for the greater love any one has for the Church, the more he ought to free it from those evils that press in upon it, and especially then when those evils shall put it into a manifest danger of ruin. "If it is so," our adversaries will yet further reply, "is not that some way to break that communion, when those things that you renounce, are public and common?" I confess, that it is to break a society, but a bad society, which being against the right of Christianity, gives no lawful call to any person to enter into it, or to defend it, but on the contrary, she gives a call to all, and binds them at the same time to break and oppose it. A corrupted church has two bonds of its communion, the one consisting in what is good, the other in what is ill, the one of which makes it to be a church, the other a corrupted church, the one binding not only men among themselves, but with God also, and the other, that in uniting men among themselves, tends to divide and separate them from God. The former of those bonds ought to be regarded, and preserved entire, as much as lies in our power; but the second is a mortal bond, which no person has a right to make, and which all men have a call and obligation to dissolve. It is as certain, that the first of those bonds gives us a right and call to act against the other; for truth and piety authorize us against error and superstition, and it is the love that we bear to the Church that opens our mouths against its corruptions. There can then be nothing further contested about the personal call of our fathers concerning their own reformation. But had they any right to labour in the reforming of others? Who can doubt it? Charity would have bound them to procure that good for others, which they had thought it their duty to procure for themselves. That Christian communion in which they lived among their brethren, did not less oblige them to it. The interest of the glory of God which appeared to them to cry loudly for a general reformation urged them on to it, and their own innocence exacted it of them that they should make it appear to the eyes of the public, in laying open the foundations of



those errors, which they were constrained to forsake, which could not well have been done without exhorting others to imitate them. Being then bound to all these duties, none can deny, that they had not a sufficient call to stir up their brethren to reform themselves with them.

That which I have said will appear more evident, if we pass on to the consideration of the circumstances of the Reformation; for we have already seen, after a long and vain expectation, there could be nothing more hoped for on the side of Rome or its prelates. We have seen also that the evils whereof our fathers made such complaints, and which they would have cured, did not lie in things indifferent, that were trivial or tolerable, but in the very essentials of religion; and these two circumstances, added to what I have just before represented, let us see that our fathers were not only in the right, and not only under an obligation, but under a necessary and indispensable obligation to do that which they have done. I confess that if the Court of Rome and its clergy would have laboured in good earnest for a reformation, it had been the duty of our fathers to have received it from their hands; for how rude and corrupt soever their call had been, that action had rectified it. I confess also that if the dispute had been only about things of small importance, our fathers had done better to have kept themselves quiet, as I have acknowledged in the foregoing chapter. But they can allege neither the one nor the other; for Rome and its bishops were obstinate in the design to reform nothing, and matters were reduced to the very utmost extremity, so that the call of our fathers appears yet more indisputable, being grounded on these three foundations, of right, of obligation, and necessity; and that same necessity was so much the greater, as the evil was more inveterate, and had spread itself almost over all the parts of the body of the Church to which those words of Isaiah might be generally applied, "From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there was no soundness in her." ch. 1. 6.

But if any would have us yet further examine the other

circumstances, they will find that they all concur to establish that call whereof we treat: I rank in this place all those extraordinary qualities wherewith it pleased God to enrich those among our fathers who contributed most of all to the work of the Reformation. Who may not perceive in them a lively and penetrating understanding, a solid judgment, an exquisite and profound knowledge, an indefatigable propensity to labour, a wonderful readiness to compose and to deliver, an exceeding exact study of the Scripture and the principles of the Christian religion, a great and resolute soul, an unshaken courage, an upright conscience, a sincere love of the truth, an ardent zeal for the glory of God, a solid piety, without hypocrisy and without pride, a plain and open carriage, an entire disengagement from the things of the world, an admirable confidence in God and in his providence, a cordial friendship to all good men, and the greatest aversion to the vices, profanation, and sophistry of others? These were the gifts and talents wherewith the divine favour honoured the greatest part of them; there yet remains the liveliest characters of them in their writings, and they were as the seal wherewith God would confirm their call. For when his wisdom designs persons to any great work, it is wont to bestow on them those necessary qualifications to acquit themselves in it, and we may say, without fear of being charged with derogating from the truth, by those who know history, that from the Sixth Age until that of our fathers, that is to say, for the space of more than nine hundred years, there could not be found any space of time so fertile in great men, as that of the Reformation was, which shews that God had a design to make use of them for that work, as the event has justified.

Add to all this, the ardent and almost universal desire among the people to see a good reformation spring up in the Church; for even that is a yet farther seal to the call of the reformers, inasmuch as it is a testimony that God had marked out that age wherein to *purge his floor*, as the Scripture speaks, Matth. 3. 12. Who knows not that that desire was

such, as neither the artifices, nor the violences, nor the calumnies wherewith they laboured to darken the Reformation, could wholly put a stop to. The Church was left in ignorance and in superstition; she panted after the light of the Gospel, which had been for so long a time hid under a dark veil, and that general disposition wherein she was, may let us see that the time of her deliverance was come.

But, lastly, is it not true, that then the greatest part of those who laboured in that Reformation, were ecclesiastical persons, whom the duty of their place obliged more particularly than others to root out errors from the minds of men, to purify religion, and to endeavour that God should be worshipped according to his will? Every one knows that Luther and Zuinglius, who appeared the first in that great work, were not only priests, but ordinary preachers also, the one at Wittenburg, and the other at Zurich, and that the former was Professor in Divinity. And they are not ignorant that those who joined themselves to them to advance that design, were also in public offices in the Church, as the whole University of Wittenburg, a very great number of priests, and other churchmen, with bishops, and archbishops, in Germany, in Swedeland, and in Denmark, and some even in France, and the whole body of bishops in England. They will say, it may be, that the Pope excommunicated them all, whence it follows that they had no more either any public call, or lawful ministry. But that answer would be fallacious; for the Pope having excommunicated them for nothing else, but that business of the Reformation, his excommunication can be considered no otherwise than as null in this cause, without an obligation to enter upon an examination of the validity of his thunders in general. In effect, if they did their duty, if they obeyed their call in reforming themselves, and in reforming their flocks, it ought not to be questioned, that those excommunications which they suffered for so good a cause, did not fall, of right, upon those who unjustly pronounced them, and that not only what our reformers had done before, but also

what they did afterward, was well and lawfully done. Who can deny that an excommunication contrary to the glory of God, to the good of the Church, and to the salvation of men, should not be null? But if the Reformation was just, and the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the salvation of the people, called for it, as we suppose they did in this dispute, they may very well see that the thunders of Rome, upon this subject, are unjust, and by consequence of no consideration. They ought not then to propose things so to us, nor to deny the first reformers to be public persons who had a part in the ministry of the Church, and who for that reason had a most strict obligation to labour in the re-establishment of its purity. And to declare what we think; those excommunications of the Popes were so far from diminishing the right and call of the first reformers, that they did on the contrary confirm them the more, and that for two reasons: the one, in that they made them see more and more, that they could hope for nothing on the part of Rome, or the bishops who sided with it, from whence there arose an indispensable necessity on our fathers to employ themselves in it; and the other, in that those pretended excommunications furnished them also with a just subject of laying open more and more to the eyes of the people, the gross and fundamental errors, whose protection the Popes took up with so great an ardour. To which I add, that as much as the Popes and the prelates of their party opposed themselves to the Reformation, so much they lost of that right which yet remained to them in that public ministry, which they abused with so great injustice; and that very thing did but strengthen the right of the other party, and render their ministry more public and more lawful. For in those contests that divide a body or a society, that which one of the parties loses by its ill conduct, is re-assembled together and re-united in the other. But as it is only proper to our present purpose to treat of the call that our fathers had to reform themselves and to labour to reform others, that is to say, merely to reject errors, and to excite others to do the same;

and not to go further to talk of their right or call to the public ministry; we ought not to insist more upon this matter, which shall be treated of in its place. In effect, there are two sorts of calls which we ought not to confound; that of the Reformation, and that of the perpetual exercise of the Gospel ministry. And the author of the *Prejudices* himself seems to have judiciously enough distinguished them, when he lays down two sorts of separation, the one negative, which consists only in a rejecting of those things that are ill; and the other positive, which goes so far as to set up a body apart with the exercise of the ministry. We shall therefore speak elsewhere of the right that our fathers had to set up a public ministry, and it shall suffice for the present to have solidly established their call to reform.

To close this chapter, it remains only that we speak a word to a question which they here raise about this call, in the same sense in which we here consider it: for they demand of us whether it was ordinary or extraordinary?. To which I answer, that it was both the one and the other, in different respects. It was ordinary as to its right, since all men have an ordinary and perpetual right to reject errors and superstitions, and to employ themselves in making their brethren to reject them, according to the common laws of piety and charity. The pastors also have an ordinary and perpetual right to do the same thing, and to make use of that public authority which their function gives them for the guidance of their flocks. It was ordinary as to the obligation which lay as well upon the people as the pastors to do that which they did, because it was a law of Christianity, and not a new law or commandment that bound them to it: their duty was founded upon the principles of that very Gospel, and of the same Christian religion which Jesus Christ had founded, and whereof they made a profession. But I affirm that it was likewise extraordinary in two things.

First of all, in respect of that extreme and indispensable necessity which lay upon them, to do what they did. For

although we have always a right to reject those errors and that false worship which may creep into the Church, and although we should be always bound to make use of it also, if it were so, yet it is not always necessary to come to the practice or the exercise of that right and of that obligation, at least to so public and splendid a one as that of our fathers was, because the Church is not always in a state of confusion and disorder, as she was in their time. Things ordinarily glide away in a more regular course; the public ministry is more pure, and the Gospel more disengaged from the oppression of traditions or human superstitions.

Secondly, That call was extraordinary in respect of those qualities wherewith God invested our first reformers, and those who joined with them in so great a work; for it is not an ordinary thing to see such eminent gifts, and that in so great a number, as those which appeared in the age of the Reformation, accompanied with such an heroic spirit as our fathers had, and such a great love for the purity of the Gospel as the people had, who received their instructions; all which constrains us to acknowledge a particular and special providence of God throughout the whole conduct of that divine work, who raised up labourers, fitted for the harvest which he had prepared.

---

---

## CHAP. V.

### AN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS THAT ARE MADE AGAINST THE PERSONS OF THE REFORMERS.

WE have hitherto, methinks, sufficiently justified the action of our fathers in the business of the Reformation. It appears, that they had but too many reasons to suspect a great corruption, not only in the government of the Church, but in the

worship and doctrines of it also, and too just motives to engage them to make a more particular examination. It may not less appear by what we have said concerning the infallibility of the Church of Rome, and that absolute authority which she ascribes to herself over men's consciences, that her pretensions have no foundation, and that all the faithful have a right to judge of the matters of religion by themselves, and to discern what is good from what is ill. We have seen nevertheless that our fathers were not moved so publicly to make use of their right, but by an extreme and utmost necessity; and if they will do them justice, they ought freely to acknowledge, what the author of the *Prejudices* has not dared to deny, that they had a sufficient call to go as far as a negative separation, and openly to refuse to believe and to act, what their consciences should not allow them to approve.

But as that motion of conscience was not universal, or common to all those of their time, and as it had encountered the interests of a great body, that was in possession of the government of the Latin Church, they have laboured to render it odious by all sorts of ways; and even those, who were not able directly to condemn it, have not failed to search out divers pretences to cry it down; and having nothing to say against their actions, they have taken up something against their persons. This is that, that the most of our adversaries endeavour with great care; this is that, that their writers of controversies, and missionaries, who are spread abroad on all sides among us, and who make use of all sorts of ways to gain proselytes, do, even now, all their days; and this is that, that the author of the *Prejudices* in particular has done.

His argument may be well nigh reduced to this: That there is no likelihood that God committed the care of reforming his church, to persons whose life and conduct was disorderly and scandalous. And the conclusion that he pretends to draw from it is, that we ought to reject, without any further examination, that reformation, and to put ourselves into the communion of the Church of Rome.

1. It will be no difficult matter to shew him, that, blessed be God, we have, as to what concerns us, on every side matter of edification, from the manners of those who were first of all made use of, in so holy and so necessary a work; and this we shall presently make out. But before I come to that, I am obliged to tell him, that his way of reasoning is the most captious and the most contrary to the interests of the true religion that can be imagined, and that it is contrary even to the interests of the Church of Rome which it would defend. I say in the first place that it is captious; for since our fathers reformed themselves only out of the motion of their consciences, which dictated to them that they ought to do it for the glory of God and their own salvation, how can he pretend that we who have followed them out of the same reason, can revoke an action which we believe to be just and lawful, out of merely foreign considerations, taken from the persons of those who excited us to do it, if otherwise it does not appear to us that the consciences of our fathers and our own were deceived, and that our action is unjust in the foundation? If the law of the conscience obliges us, and gives us a right to separate ourselves, at least negatively, how can we depart from that separation on the account of personal actions, in which neither our fathers nor ourselves have had any part, and which have nothing of common with our separation? Our reformation being good and just, as we are persuaded it is, is it not true, that we ought to hold ourselves to it, whatsoever they tell us further of the passions of Luther, or of the marriage of some monks? These things are wholly separate; for our fathers might very well read the writings of Luther, and hear the preaching of these monks who should discover to them the abuses of the Church of Rome; they might very well reform themselves in the end, out of a motion of their consciences stirred up by their teachings, without either approving or canonizing their other actions. But they will say, To have avoided falling into that motion of conscience, your fathers ought not to have heard them. And why ought they



not? That same motion that their teachings stirred up, and that produced a reformation, sufficiently notes that they ought. But whether they ought, or whether they ought not, they did hear them, the thing was done; and that which they heard having caused that sentiment of their consciences which obliged them to reform themselves, we should be impious if we should quit that reformation, without any one's satisfying us about that sentiment, or shewing us that it is ill, and fit to be condemned. But that they can never do by those personal actions which have no relation to it; else, they would be bound to condemn the comfort which we every day receive from the Psalms of David, under a pretence that David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, and to reject that instruction that we gather from the books of Solomon, under a pretence that Solomon was not so constant as he ought to have been in the worship of the true God. There is then nothing else but a sophism in all that.

2. But if that way of reasoning is captious, it is not less contrary to the interests of the true religion, since it would have us judge of the Reformation, by the quality of the persons who preached it, and not by itself or the nature of the things it treats of, which would establish a principle whose use could not but be very pernicious to the Church; for if we ought not to consider its doctrine in itself, but to judge of it by the persons who should teach it us, how could any one discern the angels of darkness, when they should be disguised into angels of light, and be able to know the false prophets when they should work signs and wonders even to deceive if it were possible the very elect? How could any know those impostors and those hypocrites, who come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves? Moreover would it be a hard matter for those men who should be interested against the sound doctrine to invent a thousand calumnies against the persons of the teachers of it? and how many did they invent in the beginning against the apostles, and the primitive Christians, whom they represented to the people as the most

wicked among men? I confess it is a great means of edification, that those who preach a good doctrine confirm it by good examples, and that on the contrary it is scandalous, when their works do not correspond with their words. But nevertheless it does not follow, that one ought to receive a word because it is spoken by persons of an honest life, or to reject it for the contrary reason; for this maxim would make us very often reject truths and receive heresies. It is then certain that we ought to examine that word in itself without any dependance on those who preach it; for truth is not in men, but in God alone; she cannot change her nature nor lose her right through the vices of her ministers. If our fathers were reformed by the authority of Luther, or by that of Zuinglius and Calvin, they would have some reason to draw us back to the examination of their manners, since in that case they would treat of that which would either establish or destroy the right which they would have had to believe their mere words. But how many times have our fathers and we protested, that we do not believe that which our reformers said, because they *said* it, but because they *proved* it; and because those things appeared sufficiently evident in themselves. We look upon them only as persons whom God made use of to teach men their duty; they discovered it, our fathers saw it, we see it also, and it is on the sight of this duty alone, and not on their authority, that the Reformation depends. As it frequently falls out that our very enemies make us know our duty in reproaching us with our faults: suppose we that a Jew or some other infidel should have accused and convinced the Latins that they had corrupted their Christianity, and had not preserved the Gospel in that state wherein Christ and his apostles left it, is it not true, that without any regard to the person, the Latins would be bound to do that which our fathers have done, and that the quality of him who should have so reproached them, would not have been a sufficient excuse before God, to hinder them from the doing of their duty? It is then very evident that we ought to judge of those matters

by the matters themselves, and not by the persons who teach them to us, and by consequence, that the principle of the author of Prejudices is false, and contrary to true piety.

As to what he says, that there is no likelihood that God has committed the care of reforming his Church to scandalous persons; I answer, that God has committed to all the faithful the care of reforming themselves, and to all his pastors that of exhorting their flocks. If it falls out, that among those pastors who have acquitted themselves, in that respect, of their charges, there should have been some few who did actions worthy to be blamed, that ought not to create any prejudice against the word, nor put a stop to the motion of the consciences of the faithful, any more than the defection of Saint Peter, or his excessive compliance with the Jews, ought to have hindered the conversion of people to Christianity. The ministers that God makes use of, are men who have their faults, and faults sometimes of the highest nature, as may appear from the example of Aaron who encouraged the Israelites in idolatry, and of Jonah who fled to Tarshish when he was bound to have gone and preached to Nineveh; but their faults make the word of God lose nothing either of its truth or its authority.

3. It is a very strange thing that the author of the Prejudices has not taken any heed, in laying down a very bad argument against us, of furnishing us with a very good one against the Church of Rome, in that estate wherein it was in the days of our fathers. For if we ought to judge of the doctrine by the qualities or the actions of those who teach it, I pray consider, what judgment could our fathers make of that religion that the Court of Rome and its prelates taught, and whether they had not all the grounds in the world to reform themselves. If there be no likelihood that God committed the care of reforming his Church to persons who were guilty of scandalous actions, there is far less that God has given infallibility, and a sovereign authority over men's consciences, to such persons as the Popes and prelates were in the days of our

fathers, according to the description which the unsuspected authors that we have quoted give us of them, and divers others that we might here add to them if we so pleased. And that which makes these two arguments differ, is, that his concludes upon a principle which we maintain to be false and ill; where ours concludes upon a principle which he himself admits and acknowledges to be good; so that in his own judgment, we have a sufficient foundation whereon to establish the justice of our reformation.

Let us see, nevertheless, of what nature those actions are wherewith he reproaches our first reformers. "I will not," says he, "stay to examine the accusations wherewith they have been charged by divers authors. I do not pretend to detain myself in any but those public things that are so manifest, and so exposed to the eyes of all the world."\* I confess he has reason, not to stay upon all that which his passion has invented against them; for who knows not, that calumny has no bounds, especially when interest and passion stir it up? Our reformers are not the only persons who have been attacked after that manner; the Jews said of John the Baptist that he had a devil, and of Jesus Christ that he was a blasphemer, a Samaritan, a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. Matth. 11. 18, 19. If then they have called the Father of the family Beelzebub, what will they not say of his servants? Matth. 10. 25.

But what then are those things that are so public, so manifest, and so exposed to the eyes of the whole world, which the author of the Prejudices has found fit to be insisted upon? "That new Gospel," says he, "was preached only out of the mouths of those monks who had quitted their habit and their profession, only to contract scandalous marriages, or from the mouths of those priests who had violated that vow of virginity which the Calvinists themselves confess to have been imposed on all priests and on all monks in the West, by divers coun-

\* Prejugez. Chap. 3. p. 64.

cils, and on all the monks and all the bishops in the East; and the first-fruit of this doctrine was the setting open the cloisters, the taking off the veils of the nuns, the abolishing of all austerities, and overthrowing of all manner of discipline in the Church." This is that which forces him to say, "That the reformers struck men's eyes with a spectacle that could not but create horror, according to the common ideas of piety and virtue which the fathers give us."\*

The author of the Prejudices will not take it ill, that in order to our answering him, we must put him in mind, what he himself exhorts us to, "To transport ourselves into another time than that wherein we are at present, and to represent to ourselves our separation in its first rise, and during the first years wherein it was made amidst the Switzers and in France."† Upon his thus placing us in that state which he desires, we will declare to him, that the general depravation which reigned amidst the monks and the priests, is to our eyes *a spectacle worthy of horror, according to the common ideas of piety and virtue which the holy Scriptures and right reason give us.* We will tell him, that that which scandalizes us, is to see that for a respect of a purely human order, they endured for so long a time a disorder that dishonoured the Latin Church, that drew upon it God's judgments, and that laid open the ministry of the Church to an everlasting reproach. It is in the detesting of those infamies and those impurities, that the true zeal of Christians ought to consist, and it is to the searching out of a solid remedy for them that one ought to apply the discipline of the Church, and not to keep them up under a pretence of observing rash vows, and a celibacy that God never commanded. If the author of the Prejudices is more scandalized to see priests and monks married, than to see them plunged into all the filthiness of debauchery, I cannot hinder myself from telling him

\* Chap. 3. p. 65.

† Chap. 2. p. 51. &amp; 52.

that he makes Christianity a law of hypocrisy, and it may be yet somewhat worse; for hypocrisy does not content herself with mere names, she would have fair appearances without, of those things which she really rejects. Whereas for him, he rejects not only the things but their appearances also, suffering patiently the loss of any more seeing either the things or their appearances, provided we do not meddle with those empty names of celibacy and virginity. But true moral Christianity inspires other sentiments, she would have us honour that celibacy and virginity as gifts that come from God; but she would also have a contempt and horror for those specious names when they shall be applied to those beastlinesses and excesses which both God and men condemn. She would have us in that case, instead of being scandalized to see a false celibacy made void, and a vain shadow of virginity abolished, that we should on the contrary be edified to see them rescued from those snares of sin, and to have recourse to a lawful marriage that God has allowed unto all, and that he has even commanded unto those who have not received the gift of continency. It was in the view of this that our fathers looked upon the marriage of those priests and monks as the abolishing of an unjust law, contrary to the express words of Saint Paul, 1 Cor. 7. 9. "If they cannot contain, let them marry," and which moreover had produced such mischievous effects as it was no longer possible for them to endure.

"But," says the author of Prejudices, "we do not intend to speak of the interests of families, of marriage, nor of base and fleshly passions in the lives of those great bishops, and all those great men of old, whom God opposed to the heresies that rose up against his church, as Saint Cyprian; Saint Athanasius, Saint Basil, Saint Gregory Nazianzen, Saint Jerome, Saint Epiphanius, Saint Chrysostom, and Saint Augustine. They were all of them eminent in sanctity, in a disengagement from interests; and continency was always

joined to their ministry.”\* We may say of that author, without doing him an injury, that he does not write ill, what he thinks, but that he scarce thinks well, that which he writes, and that which I shall here come to shew is an example of it; for he here lays down a great trifle under the shew of one of the fairest things in the world. Saint Cyprian, Saint Athanasius, and those other bishops were not married. I see it, but who told him that they did it by virtue of a general law that forbade bishops to be married? Who told him that divers other bishops, who were not less great than those, for their sanctity, their disengagement from the interests of the world, never lived in marriage, as St. Spiridion, St. Gregory the father of Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory Nyssene, St. Prosper, St. Hilary, Sydonius Apollinaris, Synesius, St. Eupychus of Cesarea, and divers others? Who told him that priests were not generally married in the primitive church, whether it were in the east or in the west, as may be justified by a thousand proofs? And in fine, that they do not vainly wrangle in saying, that those bishops or those priests were really married before their ordination; but that they were not during their prelateship or priesthood, whether it were that their wives were dead, or whether they were put away, it is good to note what the history of St. Eupychus of Cesarea in Cappadocia relates, whom St. Athanasius formally called a bishop, suffered martyrdom within a little after his marriage, being as yet as it seemed in the days of his nuptials,† and what St. Cyprian relates of Novatus, a priest who was accused to have kicked his wife who was great with child, and to have caused an abortion;‡ which evidently concludes the use of marriage during the prelateship and priesthood. What then can the author of the Prejudices conclude

\* Chap. 3. p. 64.

† Athanas. Orat. 1. contra Arian. Sozomen. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 11. Hist. tripartit. lib. 6. cap. 14.

‡ Cyprian. Epist. 49.

from the example of St. Athanasius and St. Chrysostom, and those others unmarried, unless this, that each one was in that regard in his full liberty, and that as there were some that did marry, so there were also some that did not? Did he need for so little a matter to declaim rhetorically, and to set down these great words with an emphasis, "That our reformers struck men's eyes with a spectacle that could not but create horror, according to the general ideas of piety and virtue that the fathers give us." I shall not say, that the ideas of piety and virtue do not depend on the fathers, but on the Gospel and right reason, and that it is by them that we ought to judge the fathers, and not those by the fathers. I will not say that the fathers of the purer antiquity are so far from giving us an horror at the marriage of ecclesiastics, that Chrysostom assures us, on the contrary, that what St. Paul wrote to Titus concerning a bishop's being the husband of one wife, he has wrote wholly to stop the mouths of those heretics who condemned marriage, and to shew that marriage is not only an innocent thing, "but that it is so honourable also, that according to him it may be elevated as high as the episcopal throne."\* But I will only say, and I will say it with an assurance of its being approved by all honest and upright men, that the marriage of church-men, which of itself is an honest and holy state practised under the Old Law, practised in the primitive church, and authorized by the Scripture, cannot be considered but with the greatest edification when it shall be set in opposition to the disorders and filthinesses that celibacy has produced, which is but a purely human institution, without any lawful foundation. It belongs therefore to those of the Church of Rome to tell us, whether they are much edified by the lives that their priests led, in the age of the Reformation, and by that permission which they gave them, for a sum of money, publicly to keep their concubines. They are to tell us, whether they have no horror for those strange

\* Chrysost. Hom. 2. in Ep. ad Tit. Cap 2.



assertions of their doctors, "That a priest sins less who through the infirmity of the flesh falls into the sin of fornication, than if he should marry; and that it is a less evil for priests to burn than to marry."\* As for us, we have that general precept of Saint Paul, which has its use as well in respect of church-men as others, "If they cannot contain let them marry;" 1 Cor. 7. 9.; and the doctrine of the same apostle, "Marriage is honourable in all, or in all things; but the whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Heb. 13. 4.

But the author of the *Prejudices* says, "That the law of celibacy, whether it were just or unjust, or whether it did not begin if they will have it so, till Pope Siricius's time, they cannot at least deny, that the spirit of God did not carry out all the famous bishops of old, and those who have been eminent for sanctity, to imitate Saint Paul, and to follow that counsel which he gives to renounce marriage, to set themselves wholly to please God, and that the same spirit did not from the very first ages of the Church inspire a very great number of Christians of both sexes to remain virgins all their lives, as Saint Justin witnesses, and Origen against Celsus. Whence then comes it to pass that there should have nothing appeared of that instinct, or of those motions of God's Spirit in the pretended reformers, nor in the societies which they have established, any more than all those other graces which shone so illustriously in the saints of antiquity."

Here is yet further, another example of that which I said just before, that that author does not take too much care of that which he writes. For can there be a rasher thing in the world than to offer to thrust one's self into the counsels of God, and magisterially to decide what qualities the reformers ought to have had? Continency and virginity are the gifts that God distributes to men as he pleases, but it is what he has given only to some persons; it no ways follows either

\* Rosius Confess. Cap. 56. Pighius. Costerus and alii.

that their persons were not acceptable to him, or that he could not make use of them in the greatest works of his providence. Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, as the Scripture calls him; was not he married? Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve Patriarchs who founded the Church of Israel, were not they? Moses, the deliverer of the ancient people, by whom God gave his law, and by whom he had wrought so many miracles, was not he? Aaron, and all the high-priests who succeeded him, were not they? All those calls, and divers others whereof the Scripture speaks, were methinks most weighty and for the greatest part extraordinary; and nevertheless we do not see, that God, in giving them, has made any reflection upon the advice of the author of the Prejudices. Who ever gave him a right to lay down rules with such authority of what God ought to do, and what he should not have done, and by that means to raise himself so high as to be a censor of God's actions? He ought at least to have called it to mind, that Jesus Christ made no scruple to choose married men, out of whom to make his apostles and evangelists. The Scripture mentions the mother-in-law of St. Peter, that is to say his wife's mother; for that word in Greek can be taken in no other sense but that. It speaks also of the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist. The author of the Commentaries upon the Epistles of St. Paul, under the name of St. Ambrose, assures us that all the apostles had wives except St. Paul and St. John; and St. Ignatius and St. Basil say the same thing, without any exception. Virginitie is not then an inseparable character of the call of God, as the author of the Prejudices would persuade us.

But after that first assault of the author of the Prejudices, which was made with all the weapons that he first found in his hands, he reproaches the reformers with the little fruit that their preaching wrought for the sanctification of those people who followed them. "Their ministers themselves," says he, "have been constrained by the evidence of the truth to acknowledge, That all their pretended Reformation did not

produce any renovation of the spirit of Christianity, and that it had rather increased than lessened the disorders of those who embraced it;" and for that he produces the complaints of some ministers, as of Capito and Calvin himself, and of Luther, against the vices of their age. I acknowledge that if they compare our fathers' manners and ours, with the grace that God has given us in renewing his Gospel in the midst of us, they would find but too much reason to make us cover our faces with confusion, that we were unworthy of so great a favour. I confess also that there may be many found among those who at first embraced the Reformation, who instead of profiting by it, abused it, as the best things may be abused. But I say, that they ought not to insult over that confession that we make in that regard; for besides that a doctrine is not the less sound for not being so carefully observed as it deserves, we can yet further say for ourselves, and say it to the glory of that God whom we serve, that he has poured forth a sufficiently abundant measure of his blessing on our fathers, and that if any compare their manners with those of the other party who rejected the Reformation, they will find reason enough to confess, that God was in the midst of them. It is true indeed, that they might not see there those Pharisaical devotions of which the hypocrites and superstitious make a vain shew: they might not see there those men who publish to all the world their mortifications and their fasts, who withdraw themselves out of the crowd, to make themselves to be more taken notice of, and who never enter into their secret retirements but with the greater ease to be able to mix themselves in all that is common in the world. But they may there behold a solid piety, plain and natural, without art and affectation, a true fear of offending God, with a free and open carriage, which never sought to hide itself by distinctions and illusions; but in good earnest to follow the dictates of conscience, without saying, to hinder them from doing their duty, either what will become of us, or what will become of our brethren or

sisters? Because they knew that those events were in the hand of God, and that poor worldly interest ought never to prevail over the love of the truth.

As to the wars that the author of the *Prejudices* imputes to the Reformation, it had been, methinks, his prudence not to have turned the dispute upon a matter on which he well knows that we have but too many things to say for our justification. If some princes of Germany took up arms to defend themselves against the assaults of their enemies, they thought that the justice and law of nations authorized that defence, and that being sovereign in their states, they were bound to protect their subjects and to preserve that trust that God had put into their hands. And as for those commotions that happened in France in the times of the Reformation, there is no person who is ignorant of their true causes. It is true, that the interest of our religion had some part in them; but it had at least the good fortune to be found joined with that of the preserving of that great kingdom to its just possessors, against those pernicious designs which made but too great a noise afterwards; and whatsoever sad remembrances the author of the *Prejudices* has awakened, by his undeserved reproaches, yet we shall not fail to maintain, that the blood of our fathers was very well spent for so good a cause.

“Luther,” says he, “was not afraid of animating his followers to murders and blood, by those horrible words which are to be found in his first tome of his works, of the Wittenburg edition; ‘If we hang up robbers on gibbets, if we punish heretics and thieves with the sword, why do not we assault with all our forces those cardinals and those Popes, and all that scum of the Roman Sodom that ceases not to corrupt the Church of God; why do we not imbrue our hands in their blood?’”\* It is certain, that there can scarce be any passage related after a more envenomed and base manner, than the

\* Chap. 3. p. 75.

author of the Prejudices relates that; and this will appear if they will but make these following observations. 1. That he separates those words from the sequel of the discourse, to give them quite another sense than Luther intended by them, which is, to speak properly, a kind of falsification, more dangerous than that of corrupting the words of a sentence. 2. That he would make us imagine that those words are addressed to the followers of Luther, to animate them to blood and slaughter, which is a perfect calumny. 3. That he quotes them not as spoken upon a supposition, but as spoken purely and simply, which is further contrary to the truth. Behold then what the matter truly was; Sylvester Prierias, Master of the Sacred Palace at Rome, having wrote against Luther's doctrine concerning the Pope, and in particular against his appeal to a council, had peremptorily maintained, That it was not lawful to appeal from the Pope to a council, because the Pope was a sovereign judge, and liable to no appeal, and that those who sued out such appeals were cast out of the Church and excommunicate. That the Pope alone was the infallible rule of truth, whose decisions were certain and irrefragable without a council; where those of a council were nothing without the Pope, nor bound any person if they were not authorized by the Pope, so that whosoever should not receive the doctrine of the Pope as the infallible rule of faith, from whom the Holy Scripture itself heretofore and now derives all its force, he is a heretic; and many other propositions of that nature. Upon that Luther writes, that "All those things were maintained only out of a hatred of a general council, and to hinder any one from being heard who should give any succour to the afflicted church. That the Pope's creatures seeing well that they could not hinder a council, began to seek out ways to elude it, by saying that the Pope was above a council, and that without his authority none could either be called or held; in a word, that a council had not any power, but that the Pope alone was the infallible rule of truth. That it seemed to him then, that if the fury

of those men took place, there would not further remain any other remedy but this; That the emperor, the kings, and princes, should make use of their arms against those public pests, and that those matters should not be decided by words, but by the sword." In the close of which, he adjoins those words which the author of the Prejudices has related.

So that his meaning is not to animate his followers to blood and slaughter, as the author of the Prejudices interprets it; but only to draw an absurd consequence from his adversaries' hypothesis, which is, That if he would also take away the only remedy that was left to provide against the desolations of the Church in assembling a free council, he would set the emperor, the kings, and princes, in arms against the Popes and the Cardinals and all the Court of Rome, and would reduce things to the utmost extremity. I myself will not say, that there may not be somewhat too violent in those kind of expressions; but after all, his design is not to animate his followers to blood and slaughter, but only to let Sylvester see the necessity of a council, that might judge above the Pope, from that inconvenience, that otherwise there would remain no other course to the emperor, to kings and princes, to re-establish order in the Church, than to make use of their compelling power. And that further appears to be the sense, because he adds immediately after, "That the authority of the Bishop of Rome, whether it were of divine right, or whether it were of human, could not be urged, but by the precept, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, which in granting him to be a father, puts him under the first table; so that if he should do any thing in opposition to them, he might be admonished, and even accused by the least of the faithful." Which lets us see that his meaning was no other than that which I have represented.

I confess it were to be wished that Luther had observed more of the mean, than he did, in his manner of writing, and that, with that great and invincible courage, joined with that ardent zeal for the truth, and with that unshaken constancy,

that he always shewed, there might have been discernible more of stayedness and moderation. But those faults which most frequently proceed from temperament, do not take away men's esteem of such, when besides them they may see a good foundation of piety in them, and virtues heroical throughout, as they may discern to have shone in Luther. For they cannot cease extolling the zeal of Lucifer Bishop of Cagliari, nor admiring the eminent qualities of St. Jerome, although they do acknowledge too much sharpness and passion in their style. And it may be that there was even some particular necessity in the time of the Reformation to use vehemency of expression, the more easily to rouse men out of that profound sleep wherein they had lain for so long a time. However it be, I had rather come to agree that Luther ought to have been more moderate in his expressions; and if the author of the Prejudices would be contented with complaining of the sharpness of his style, he should be also contented, for every answer to be entreated, that hereafter he will not himself any more imitate that which he condemns in another; especially in writing against those, who, having lived in the last age, cannot have given him any personal occasion to be carried away against them with passion, after the manner that he has been, in many places of his book.

If, in the judgment that he passes on them, he would not hearken to charity, he ought, at least, to hearken to justice, and not to have charged them with foul accusations, under the pretences of having mistaken and misunderstood; I place in this rank, that which he further alleges against Luther in these words: "There never was any one," says he, "but Luther, who durst to boast in his printed works, that he had had a long conference with the devil, that he had been convinced by his reasons that private masses were an abuse, and that that was the motive that had carried him out to abolish them. But common sense," adds he, "has always made all others conclude, not only that he was in an excess of extravagance, to take the devil for a master of truth, and to give

himself up to be his disciple; but that all those who had any marks that they were his ministers and his instruments, and who had not any lawful authority in the Church to make themselves be heard, did not deserve, that any should apply themselves to them, or that they should so much as examine their opinions."\* Behold here Luther, a disciple, a minister and instrument of the devil, if one will believe the author of the Prejudices.

To refute that calumny, we need but to represent in a few words what that business was that he there speaks of. Luther, following the style of the monks of those days, who were wont by a figure of rhetoric to fill their books with their exploits against the devil, relates, that being one time awakened in the midst of a dark night, the devil began to accuse him for having made the people of God idolatrise, and to have been guilty of idolatry himself for the space of fifteen years, wherein he had said private masses, and that the reason of that accusation was, that he could not have any thing consecrated in those private masses; from whence it followed that he had adored, and had made others adore, mere bread and mere wine, and not the body and blood of Jesus Christ. He adds, that that accusation struck him at his heart, and that to defend himself he alleged that he was a priest, that he had done nothing but by the order of his superiors, and that he had always pronounced the words of consecration very exactly, with the best intention in the world; from whence he concluded, that he could see no reason to have the crime of idolatry laid to his charge. That notwithstanding the tempter did not fail to reply, that those excuses would nothing avail him, in that the Turks and the priests of Baal obeyed also the order of their superiors, with a very good intention, and that nevertheless they were truly idolaters. Upon this, he says that he was seized with such a violent agitation of spirit, accompanied with a general sweat over all the parts of



his body, and a confusion wherein he found himself, having been made to understand that his defence was not solid, since besides a good intention and obedience to his superiors, he ought to have examined further whether the action disputed was good in itself and agreeable to God, and on that he made a resolution to renounce all private masses.

This was the discourse of Luther there, upon all which I shall make no scruple to profess, that that manner of expressing things under the form of a combat with the devil, appears to me indeed a little remote from common use, and makes that return into my thoughts, that Luther himself has said somewhere in his Works, *Pium Lectorem oro ut ista legat cum Judicio, et sciat me fuisse aliquando Monachum*. In effect, he could not wholly throw off, as he would, the style of the convent. But I say, notwithstanding, there is nothing in all that which is remote from the duty of an honest man, nor which may not be entirely innocent, whether one take that narration literally, or as a kind of figure and parable. He says, that the devil accused him in his heart: that signifies, that he represented to himself, in his conscience, the accusations that the devil might one day form against him, before the tribunal of God. What crime was there in all that? Is not the devil called in Scripture, "The accuser of the brethren?" Rev. 12. 10. And does not the history of Job introduce him as appearing before the throne of God, to render the piety of that holy man suspected? Luther adjoins, that in his first defences, he alleged his priesthood, his obedience to his superiors, his good intention and exactness. What is there extraordinary in all that? Is it not very natural that those sorts of pretences should come in to the succour of a burthened conscience? He says in the sequel that these defences were opposed by the accuser, as insufficient and incapable to hide him from the sin of idolatry. What is there here that may deserve any blame? May not the devil speak truths in accusing us? Does not he know how to exaggerate our sins, and strongly to oppose our vain excuses?

At last Luther says, that to render those instances of the accuser unservicable for the future, he resolved within himself to abandon private masses, which served for the ground of that accusation. What is there in all that, that may not be the motion of a good conscience? He would shut the mouth of the adversary, and take away from him any means of accusing him before God, as if he had been a wicked person and an idolater; he would snatch away from him those weapons that he made use of to combat and terrify him. Let the author of the Prejudices turn all that as he pleases, he can never find it in a bad sense. Every Christian is bound to order his conduct so that he may be sheltered from the attempts of the devil, for he is a roaring lion, saith St. Peter, who walketh about daily seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. 5. 8.; and when to put a stop to the accusations of that enemy, a man examines his own actions, with a design to amend them, and to forsake the evil of them, he had need be a good detractor and well skilled in calumniating, that can take a pretence from that to say of him, That he has taken the devil for a master of truth, and that he has given up himself to him to be his disciple, his minister and instrument. Would the author of the Prejudices take it well, that we should give those horrible titles to Dominic, one of the greatest saints of the Church of Rome, under a pretence that Antonius has wrote of him somewhat like that we have seen of Luther? He says, "That Dominic saw the devil one night, holding in his iron hands a paper, which he read to him by the light of a lamp, and that having asked him what that meant which he read, the devil answered him, That it was a catalogue of the sins of his brethren. Upon which Dominic having commanded him to leave the paper to him, and the devil doing it accordingly, that saint found therein certain things, about which," says Antonius, "he corrected his religious."\* See here then, according to the style of the author

\* Antonius. Chron. 3. Parte tit. 23. Cap. 4. 6.

of the Prejudices, the disciple, the minister, and the instrument of the devil; not only because it was he who taught him the disorders of his convent, but also because the accusations of the devil gave him an occasion and a motive to make new orders in his society, neither more nor less than those that Luther made use of for the abolishing of private masses. But as it would be no difficult matter to defend Dominic, by saying that he did but make use of that paper against the intention of that accuser, and to shut his mouth for the future: so also it is not a difficult thing to justify Luther by saying precisely the same thing, since that was in effect against the intention of the devil, that he made use of his accusation, and that he did so, only to confound him, and to take from him for the future any ground of accusation.

I will end this chapter, in desiring the author of the Prejudices to remember, that we have seen not a long time since, men taken up in defending themselves, not only against those common reports, that are spread abroad of them amongst the people; but also against those public writings that charge them with very strange accusations. We have heard their complaints, "that they have seen so many mouths of calumny opened to tear them, so many enemies conspiring together to destroy their honour and reputation, and those enemies vomiting up against them all that hell can invent of the blackest and foulest calumnies, and violating the truth by a hundred infamous lies, even to lay to their charge crimes against the state."\* We have heard them complain in these terms: "That one has broken charity by Latin printed poems, where one heaps upon them all the curses that the most inflamed choler is capable of conceiving, and where one cries down their solitude as the hell of the heathen poets, and as the residence of damned souls. That beyond all that, one has yet further violated all modesty, and broke all the bounds that should have restrained persons of the

\* The second Letter of Monsieur Arnaud. 2 Part. Pag. 110, 111.

most deplorable consciences before God, and lost honour before men, if they had not wholly prostituted themselves to calumny, in forging a chimerical assembly at Bourg-fontaine, and charging six divines with abominable designs to destroy the incarnation of the Son of God, the Gospel, all the sacraments, and all the other mysteries of the Christian Religion, and to establish Deism upon the ruins of Christianity." Let him learn then, by that example, not lightly to believe the calumnies wherewith they have laboured to darken our first reformers, and to cease to give himself over to a passionate spirit that suggests those odious accusations against persons whose lives have appeared pure and entire to a great people, who having known and followed them, can give a better testimony of their conduct than their interested enemies do. Let him remember what Monsieur Arnaud has wrote to justify some of the religious of our time, whom he accuses to have been uncommunicants, asacramentarians, and foolish virgins, who in all matters affected an extravagant and schismatical singularity. "That there was a time in the life of St. Teresia herself, who was the ornament of these last times, wherein she was decried not only concerning the faith, but concerning manners also. That moreover, divers have thought her possessed with a devil, and would have her conjure. That after that and toward the end of her life, she was treated as one possessed with a devil, as a hypocrite and dissembler, and one that had lost all honour. They publicly defamed her in the pulpits in the churches, and they compared her with one Magdalen de la Croix, a woman filled with a lying spirit, and famous throughout all Spain for her forgeries, and her communication with the devil. That they witnessed against her and her religious, things of so foul a nature, that they were accused in the sacred office, and charged with having committed a thousand forgeries. That the inquisition was forced to inform against her and her nuns, and that they expected every day when they should be made prisoners. That her books were seized by the same inquisition to be

censured. That her general marked out one of her monasteries to be a prison for her. That the Pope's nuncio treated her as a turbulent woman, and a common whore. That he thought to have overturned from top to bottom a new edifice of the Dechaussez. That he used them with the greatest rigour, banishing some, imprisoning others, and generally condemning them as if they had been a people of a new sect infected with errors, or such an ill life as it was necessary to cut off that course, that they might not infect and destroy the whole world."\* This is well nigh the treatment that they gave the first reformers; they have laboured to cover them with reproaches, to weaken the efficacy of their preaching; and those very persons themselves that so loudly complain that we load them with calumnies by so unjust a proceeding, are now-a-days the first that make use of it themselves against us.

---

## CHAP. VI.

A FURTHER JUSTIFICATION OF THE FIRST REFORMERS  
AGAINST THE OBJECTIONS OF THE AUTHOR OF THE  
PREJUDICES, CONTAINED IN HIS TENTH AND ELE-  
VENTH CHAPTERS.

AS the book of the Prejudices is nothing else but a confused heap of objections and unjust accusations, that the author of that book has piled up one upon another without connexion and without order, so I find myself constrained, that I may not break off the connexion of my subject, to break off that of his chapters. Therefore after having answered his third chapter, where his invectives begin against the manners and

\* Second Letter of Mons. Arnaud. First Part. Page 105 & 103.

conduct of the first reformers, I shall dismiss the examination of his 4th, 5th, and 6th, where he treats about the call of the ministers of our communion, to my Fourth Part; and where he treats of the right that we have to a Gospel ministry, and that which he afterwards says in the 7th, 8th, and 9th chapters, concerning our pretended schism, to my Third Part, wherein we shall treat of our separation from the Church of Rome; and I shall now pass on to the examination of his 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th, wherein he renews the same personal invectives against the first reformers. But as those chapters are composed of almost nothing else but frivolous matters, swelled up with declamatory exaggerations, by injuries and passion; we shall not think it unfit, if setting aside all that in them which is to no purpose, or too passionate, we set down in a few words all that that is more essential in those objections, and that we answer them also in a few words.

1. *Objection*, is, That Andrew Carolostadius, Arch-Deacon of Wittenburg, whom Melancthon runs down as a brutish fellow, without wit and without learning, who embraced the fanatical doctrine of the Anabaptists, was the first who had the boldness to assault the doctrine of the real presence, and to that effect he invented an extravagant explication of those words, *This is my Body*, saying, that by the word *This*, Jesus Christ did not mean that which he held in his hand, but that he pointed to his own true body.\*

*Answer*. It is not true that Carolostadius was the first that opposed the doctrine of the real presence. Bertram, Erigenes, Rabanus, opposed it in the Ninth Century, when Paschasius spread it abroad: Berengarius opposed it in the Eleventh; and in the age of the Reformation itself, the Bohemians, called Taborites, and those of the valleys of Piedmont and Provence, called Waldenses, openly rejected it. So that although all they have said of Carolostadius were

\* Prejug. legit. Chap. 10. Pag. 234.

true, yet we have not any particular interest in him, and we shall say in respect of him, that which St. Augustine said in respect of Cæcilianus: “Cæcilianus is not my father, for Jesus Christ has said, Call no man father upon earth, for one is your Father, even God; but I call Cæcilianus my brother, my good brother, if he be a good man, but my bad brother if he be not good.”\* Notwithstanding I know not whether that pretended anabaptism of Carolostadius is not an ill-grounded accusation, into which Melancthon and Luther himself, who did not love Carolostadius, might have been surprised, as it frequently happens among persons divided in their opinions, at least it is certain that Carolostadius defended himself by public writings, and that he protested that he was innocent. And as to that explication that he gave of the word *This*, in the words of Jesus Christ, it is an error from the truth, and a false gloss on the signification of that word; but it is an error notwithstanding that does not hinder, that the ground of his sentiment concerning the eucharist should not be true and right; and how many different interpretations are there of the same word, upon which they refute one another amongst the doctors of the Church of Rome, and who almost all say things very remote from common sense?

2. *Objection.* Zuinglius had already began his reformation before ever he spoke a word of the real presence, and adoration of the host, although he notes in his works that from that very time he was persuaded in his heart that Jesus Christ was not really present in the eucharist. But as it is very hard to believe that during all that time he never said mass, that he never assisted at it, and that he never administered the sacrament, that he should not all the while be discovered by those who adored it, and that he should never have done the same actions that were practised by others, they may very well understand what judgment their minis-

\* Coll. Carth. 3. cum Donat.

ters used in their conduct during those first years. For according to all their principles they ought to have condemned it, since it was as little allowable to Zuinglius to partake with that worship, as it is at present to the Calvinists, and since they pretend that it is so far forbidden them, that they urge the obligation that they say lies upon them not to take any part in it, as the chief reason of their separation. So that Zuinglius remaining yet in communion with those who adored the eucharist, contributed to that adoration by his ministry; and joining himself to their assemblies, rendered himself guilty of all those sins which the Calvinists apprehend to be committed in remaining united to the Church. He would every day have betrayed his conscience, he would every day have committed a criminal idolatry. And it is in that condition, that the Calvinists pretend that God made use of him for the greatest work that ever was done, which was the reformation of the error of all their fathers.\*

*Answer.* As that accusation is founded upon this only thing, That it is very hard to be believed, so also we shall here answer in saying, That it is very hard to be believed that Zuinglius did any thing during that time that should be repugnant to the dictates of his conscience. All the histories of his life shew that he was a man of strict piety, and of a severe virtue; that he was not used to those juggles of the hypocrite, which we may see practised by so many, and even by those who would appear the most severe; and that moreover he never did any thing remote from the sincerity of an honest man. They cannot then without equally violating the laws of justice and those of charity, suspect on those mere conjectures, that he went contrary to his sentiments on that occasion; and the author of the Prejudices ought to produce the proofs of his accusation, or to suffer himself to be condemned for injustice and malignity. It is true that during that time Zuinglius neither quitted his ministry nor

\* Prejug. Chap. 10. pag. 238.



forsook those who adored the eucharist; but who has told the author of the *Prejudices*, that men ought to forsake a people that are in error, in the same time that they have hopes of disabusing them, and labour to reduce them into the right way? As the reformation of a church is not the work of a day, none can think it strange that Zuinglius did not propose all of a sudden all that he had to say, and that he did one thing after another. It is sufficient, that during the time wherein he set himself to that work, he did not in the least partake in the abuses which he had a design to correct, and therefore the author of the *Prejudices* ought not to have accused him without ever laying down the proofs of his accusation. The history of Zuinglius relates that he was called to the \* Church of Zurich in the beginning of the year 1519, and that from the first moment wherein he was there, he set himself with all his might to the instruction of his flock, to the reformation of those grosser errors wherewith the ministry was then infected, and to the correcting of men's manners, which succeeded so well with him by the blessing of God, that within less than four years he changed the face of that church, and disposed it to a thorough reformation. But among those errors that he opposed, he applied himself particularly to the sacrifice of the mass, shewing the people out of the Scripture that there could be no other real sacrifice than that upon the cross, whence it is very easy to conjecture that he carefully avoided to assist in a ceremony that he so openly opposed, and from which he himself withdrew his hearers.

3. *Objection.* Zuinglius engaged the magistrates of Zurich to call a synod, and to make themselves judges and arbiters for the ordering the state of the religion of their canton. There was never till then a synod of that nature spoke of, and it is an astonishing thing, that men's rashness and insolence should have been able to have carried them out to so

\* Chair.

great an excess. The Council of Two Hundred, that is to say, two hundred burghers of a Switz town, as learned and ready in matters of divinity as one may believe the Switz burghers were, called together all the church-men under their jurisdiction, to dispute before them, with an intention to order the state of religion with the understanding of the matter.\*

*Answer.* It were much to be wished that the discourse of the author of the Prejudices were as well ordered as that action of the Senate of Zurich was; besides these abuses and superstitions that were ordinary, they had seen for some time past a preacher of indulgences in that church called Samson, sent by the Pope to distribute his pardons. That preacher managed his part so well, that there were not any crimes, how great soever they were, that were or should be committed, which he did not set a price upon, without making any other difficulty than about the sum that was to be paid him; and by that means he put the whole country into a dreadful disorder, filling it with profligate persons.† Zuinglius opposed this seducer with all his might, and at the same time he laboured to give his flock the knowledge of the true principles of the Christian Religion, and to bring them back to Jesus Christ, and his Scripture, in freeing them from the errors and superstitions of men's invention. But as the word of God was never yet without adversaries, the greater number of the church-men lifted themselves up against Zuinglius, and accused him before the people to be a heretic, which forced the senate itself to take knowledge of those accusations, and to call together a synod composed of all the church-men of its state, wherein every one had the liberty to propose what he would against Zuinglius, and Zuinglius that of defending himself. And that very thing was done by the consent of the Bishop of Constance, who sent his de-

\* Hospin. Hist. Sacra, Part. Alt. Fol. 22.

† Hospin. Hist. Sacra, Part. Alt. Fol. 22.

puties thither, and among others John le Fevre, his vicar general. What was there in all that that might not come from the justice and prudence of a senate? If the accusations wherewith they charged Zuinglius had been well grounded, it had been the duty of the magistrate to have enjoined him silence; and being false as they were, it was the magistrate's duty to uphold him. What is it that the author of the Prejudices can blame in that conduct? *They called a synod.* We maintain it to be the right of kings and sovereign magistrates within the extent of their states. The Holy Story testifies that Josias intending to set up the pure worship of God in his kingdom, called together an assembly of priests, prophets, and the elders of the people, 2 Kings, 23. 1. Can they deny that the Christian emperors did not heretofore call councils to order the state of religion, and to provide against disorders in the church? Can they deny that our kings have not often done the same in their kingdom? *But the Senate of Zurich would of itself take cognizance of the matters of religion.* I say that that very thing was its right; for if it be the duty of every Christian, for the interest of his own salvation, to take cognizance of those things that the churchmen teach, and not blindly to refer themselves to their word, as I have made it appear to be in the First Part, it is not less the duty of magistrates to do the same, to bind the churchmen to acquit themselves faithfully in their charges, and to teach men nothing that might not be conformable to the word of God. So that if the ministers of the church go astray from that word, and if they corrupt their ministry by errors and superstitions, it belongs to the magistrate to labour to reduce them to their duty, by the mildest and justest methods he can use. Thus the Kings of Judah used it heretofore, as it appears from the history of Hezekiah, Josiah, and of some others, who made use of that lawful authority that God gave them for the reforming of their church by the word of God. We all know that the ancient emperors took cognizance, either by themselves or by their commissioners, of ecclesias-

tical affairs, and not only of those that respected the discipline, but of those also which related to the doctrine and the very essence of religion itself, to that degree, that they frequently published under their names, in the form of edicts, decisions of opinions, condemnations of heresy, and the interpretations of the faith, which they had caused to be disputed in their presence in synodical assemblies. We ought not therefore to imagine, that magistrates ought not to interpose in matters of the faith, under a pretence that they are laymen, for on the contrary they ought to interpose themselves more in those than in those of discipline, because the faith respects every man, where discipline relates to the clergy more peculiarly. Therefore it was that Pope Nicholas the First told the Emperor Michael, who was present in person in a council where only the fact of Ignatius Patriarch of Constantinople was treated of, whom that emperor had deposed, “That he did not find that the emperors his predecessors had been present at synodical assemblies, unless they might possibly have been in those where matters of the faith were treated of, which is a common thing, relating generally to all, and which belongs not only to the clergy, but the laity also, and universally to all Christians.” There was nothing therefore in that action of the magistrates of Zurich that was not a right common to all sovereign magistrates within the extent of their jurisdictions.

But they will say, Was it not to break off the unity of their church, with the rest, to go about so to order the state of religion within their canton, without the participation of other churches, and were they not schismatics in that very thing? I answer, That when a prince or a sovereign magistrate is in a condition to call a general council together to deliberate about the common faith, he would do better to take that way. But when he is not, as the Senate of Zurich evidently was not, ought he to abandon all care of the churches of his state? They will see in the end of this treatise, that the states of Germany seeing the oppositions that the Popes

made to the calling of a general council, often demanded a national one of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. They will see also that that emperor was sometimes resolved to do it, and that he threatened the Popes to cause divers colloquies or conferences of learned men to be held, to labour to decide those articles that were controverted. They will see that our kings, for the same design, have sometimes deliberated about assembling a national council in France: and nobody is ignorant of the conference of Poissy, under the reign of Charles the Ninth. There was nothing therefore in the conduct of that business that did not belong to the right of sovereigns, and nothing in it which they can charge with schism. For when a prince or a senate assembles a synod, to condemn heresies or reform errors, and by that means takes cognizance of matters of religion, provided that in effect that which it condemns be a heresy, or that which it reforms be an error; he is so far from breaking Christian unity, that on the contrary he confirms it, as much as he can, in freeing it from a false and wicked unity, which is that of error, which cannot be other than destructive to the whole body of the church, and which cannot be too soon broken. So that we ought to judge of their action, more by the foundation, than the form or manner. For the foundation being good, its action cannot but be approved. When a man is sick, with divers others, as it frequently happens in epidemical diseases, it would be injustice in him not to provide for his own particular healing, but to stay for a general one; and it would be a great absurdity to say that if he did do so, he violated the rights of the civil society, for the civil society does not consist in being a communion of sickness, but in being a communion of life. On the contrary it ought to be said that in healing himself in particular, he established as much as in him lay that civil society which he had with his diseased companions, because he encouraged them by his example to heal themselves with him, the better to enjoy in common the advantages of life. It is the same case here: where a church

sees itself infected with error and superstition with divers other churches, she no ways violates Christian unity in labouring to reform herself particularly; for the Christian unity does not consist in the communion of errors and abuses, it consists in the communion of true faith and piety. It establishes therefore on the contrary that unity, because it gives others a good example, and thereby encourages them to reform themselves, as it has done. All that which a prince or sovereign magistrate ought to observe in those seasons, is, on one side to take heed that he makes a just discerning of good and evil, I would say, that he reforms nothing, which would not be in effect an error, or a superstition, or an abuse, and that he does not give any wound to the true religion under a pretence of reformation; and on the other side, to offer no violence to men's consciences, but to purify the public ministry as much as he can, by the general consent of the people that God has committed to him. But this is that, which not only the magistrates of Zurich, but those also of other places who laboured in the reformation of their churches, religiously observed. They constrained no person, and they rejected nothing that was not alien to the Christian religion.

“But,” says the author of the Prejudices, “those two hundred burghers of a Swiss town were as learned and ready in matters of divinity, as we may easily judge Swiss burghers to be.” I answer, that this is the objection of the Pharisees: “This people,” said the enemies of Jesus Christ, “know not the law.” John 7. 49. But Jesus Christ did not answer them amiss, when he said to them, “Father, I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Luke 10. 21. Let the author of the Prejudices, if he will, be of the number of those wise and prudent ones, we shall not envy him his readiness and his learning; and we shall rest satisfied with this, that it has pleased God to place us in the same rank with those mean Swiss burghers, to whom, as much babes as they were, God vouchsafed to make

his Gospel known. The true knowledge of Christians does not consist in having a head full of scholastic speculations, and a memory loaded with a great many histories, and multitudes of passages of divers authors, or a great many critical notions, nor in having well studied Lombard, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, Bonaventure, Capreolus, Ægidius Romanus, Occham, Gabriel Biel, the canon law, the Decretals; and all those other great names wherewith they stunned the people in times past. Our true knowledge is the Holy Scripture, read with humility, charity, faith, and piety. See here all that those poor burghers of Zurich knew; they were neither prelates, nor cardinals, nor doctors of Louvain, nor of the Sorbonne, but they were good men, they feared God, they studied his word; and for the rest, the state of their understandings, and the degree of their light, appears by the reformation which they made, for the tree may be known by its fruits.

4. *Objection.* The matter which was to have been handled in that pretended synod cannot be more considerable. For they treated therein about abolishing all at once the authority of all the councils that were held in the church since the apostles' days, under a pretence of reducing all to the Scripture.

*Answer.* Since the true authority of the fathers and councils consists in their conformity with the divine writings, the way solidly to establish them is to reduce all to the Scripture, as they did in that synod. If the author of the Prejudices pretends to give the fathers and councils an authority quite different from that of the word of God, wherof they ought to be the ministers and interpreters, we may answer him, that he affronts them under a pretence of honouring them. For as it is the greatest real injury that can be done to a subject, to give him the authority of his prince; so the most effectual injury which they can do to the fathers, is to invest them with the authority of God.

5. *Objection.* They meddled with the faith of all the other

Christian churches, which the Switzers could not but condemn in embracing a new faith.

*Answer.* The Switzers did not embrace a new faith, but they renounced those errors, that it may be might have prevailed for some ages, but which were new in regard of the Christian religion. They did not condemn other churches in that which they had of good, but they condemned that evil which they had in them. A sick person who has cured himself condemns the diseases of others, but he condemns not that life which remains in them: on the contrary, he exhorts them to be healed, for fear lest remaining in that sick condition they should die.

6. *Objection.* They treated about all those dangerous consequences, which that change of religion would have produced, and which were easy to have been foreseen. *p.* 243.

*Answer.* They treated also about the glory of God and their own salvation: and all those dangerous consequences which could not but come from the blindness and passion of those who would hold the people of God under their servitude, ought not to have prevailed over two such great interests as that of the glory of God and men's salvation. All these objections are very nearly the same that the Pagans made against the primitive Christians; and it seems that the author of the Prejudices has studied them out of Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, to make use of them against us.

7. *Objection.* Moreover they declared that they would have men make use of the authority of the Scripture only, and by that rash and unheard-of prejudice, they condemned the procedure of all the foregoing councils, wherein they were wont to produce the opinion of the fathers to decide the controverted questions. *p.* 244.

*Answer.* The Scripture is the only rule of the faith of Christians, and there is no other but that alone whose authority we ought to admit as sovereign and decisive of controversies. It is not true that all the foregoing councils admitted of the opinions of the fathers and their traditions under that



quality. The author of the Prejudices lays it down, without proof and reason.

8. *Objection.* The church being in possession of its doctrine, they ought to have forced Zuinglius to produce his accusations against that doctrine, and to have made the proofs which he alleged against it to have been examined. But instead of that they ordered that he should appear in that disputation in quality of defender, and that it should be the others' part to convince him of error. *p.* 244.

*Answer.* If the Church of Rome would have the world believe the doctrine that she teacheth, it is fit she should furnish it with proofs, and her pretended possession cannot assure it. Those who propose any thing as matter of faith are naturally bound to prove it, and it is absurd to say that possession discharges that obligation; for the faith ought to be always founded upon proof, and it never stands upon mere possession, otherwise the heathens ought to have kept their religion, which was established on so ancient a possession.

9. *Objection.* All that examination was further grounded upon this ridiculous principle, That if there could not be found any person within the territory of Zurich that could make the errors of Zuinglius appear by the Scripture, it ought to be concluded that he had none. As if the weakness of those who opposed his doctrine could not be an effect of their ignorance, rather than a default in the cause they defended.

*Answer.* This objection is no more to the purpose than the foregoing. What could the Senate of Zurich have done more than to have assembled all the clergy of their states, to have called the Bishop of Constance or his deputies thither, to have received all the world, and given all liberty of proposing their arguments and proofs? It belonged to them to offer them if they had any, and if they had none, they ought to have acknowledged that till then they had abused the conduct of the people, in teaching them those things for which they had no proofs. Notwithstanding I see well that the author of the Prejudices tells us how he understands wo

should be bound to believe things upon this frivolous foundation, that there may be some in the world able to prove them, or peradventure there might be some to come hereafter to do it. This is the faith which he wishes that the magistrates and people of Zurich would have had for the hindering their reformation. He would have had them imagine that although they should have seen nothing that should have proved the worshipping of images, and that of relics, the sacrifice of the mass, and the other points that were in controversy, yet that they ought not to have ceased from believing them with a divine faith, and to have devoutly practised them, because there might have been possibly some men in the world ready enough to prove them, or that if there were none, then there might have some arose afterwards to have done it. By this principle the Jews and Heathens may yet at this day accuse all the conversions of the first Christians of rashness.

10. *Objection.* The Calvinists cannot deny that their pretended reformation was not established on the spirit of error, and that the burger-masters of Zurich were not persuaded of falsehood, since they immediately rejected divers things which Zuinglius had maintained there with as much obstinacy as those points of doctrine which they have yet common with him. He laid down also some propositions manifestly contrary to the Scripture, without taking any pains to explain them. *p.* 248.

*Answer.* When the author of the Prejudices will take the pains to consider well the sense of Zuinglius and ours, he will find a perfect agreement. Zuinglius denied the intercession of the saints, we do not less in the sense wherein they understand the word *intercession* in the Church of Rome, to wit, that the saints intercede for us as true mediators. We deny not that the saints pray in general for the church a prayer of charity and communion; Zuinglius denied it no more than we. Zuinglius denied that it was allowable to make images for the use of religion; we deny it with him. We believe that it is indifferent to make them for a civil use;

Zuinglius never said the contrary. Zuinglius said that the true way not to err was to cleave wholly to the word of God; we say so also. He said that Jesus Christ alone was given us for the pattern of our life, and not the saints; but he meant it of a first and perfect pattern, and so he explained himself when he added these words, *Capitis enim est nos deducere non membrorum—It belongs to the Head to guide us, and not to the members.* There is nothing in that contrary to the Scripture.

11. *Objection.* Zuinglius, to gain the burger-masters to his side, had the art to pick out certain vulgar reasonings, and very well fitted to the understandings of the Switzers; he declaimed fiercely against the Popes, who had forbidden the priests marriage; he highly exaggerated the rigidity of the command of the church which enjoined abstinence from meats, which he attributed to the Popes only. *p.* 255.

*Answer.* Those vulgar reasonings were nevertheless very pertinent reasons, for they made them see that the prelates had usurped a tyrannical domination over their consciences, and that they exercised it after the most scandalous manner in the world, enjoining a celibacy that filled the church with beastlinesses and impurities, and forbidding the use of meats on certain days, from which they abstained not themselves. For the rest, those injurious discourses against a whole nation which had always a great deal of virtue and glory, are not methinks within the rules of Christian charity, nor even within those of civil honesty. If the Switzers have not naturally as florid a wit as some other nations have, they have a solid, right, judicious, laborious, constant, faithful, sincere mind, which are qualities far more estimable than those which usually accompany that which they call the heat of imagination.

12. *Objection.* Zuinglius answered to a reason of the Chancellor of Zurich, after a very false and sophistical manner at the foundation, but proper enough to confound the understandings of the Switzers. He accused the chancellor

of ignorance in that he took, he said, these words, *The field is the world*, for a parable, whereas they were only an explication of the parable, and not the parable itself. But the chancellor would have said no more but this, That these words, *The seed is the word of God*, could not be taken according to the letter, since they were the explication of a parable to which they had reference; therefore Zuinglius took great heed how he answered, and he was forced to save himself by a trick in giving the words a change. For there is nobody who sees not that what the chancellor said was indisputable; and that those words, *The seed is the word of God*, being the explication of a parable, could not be taken in the letter, but that it is as if Jesus Christ had said, *When I spake of the seed in this parable, I mean by that the word of God*. But these words, *This is my body*, being no explication of any parable, and not being accompanied with any circumstances that should oblige us not to take them according to the letter, there is nothing more ridiculous than to compare them with the expressions that explain parables. p. 257.

*Answer.* This is no great subtilty from a man who talks of nothing but a gross and Switz understanding. As we ought not to take literally those words which explain a parable, so we ought not to take literally those words which explain a sacrament. For in this respect a sacrament is as a visible parable, since it is a visible sign, that represents an invisible grace. The reason for which we ought not literally to take those words that explain a parable, is because we see the matter treated of there, is one thing that represents another, and which by consequence cannot be that other thing substantially and really. And the whole reason for which we ought not to take literally the words that explain a sacrament is, because we see the matter treated of there is one thing which signifies another, and which by consequence cannot be that thing substantially and really. So that these words, *This is my body*, and those, *The seed is the word of God*, are alike; and if we ought not to take the latter literally

because they are the explication of a parable, we ought not also to take the others literally because they are the explication of a sacrament.

» These are the principal objections of the Tenth Chapter of the Book of Prejudices, excepting one which is taken from the manner wherein they formed our first assemblies at Paris, at the beginning of the Reformation, and the election that they made there of a layman to the calling of the ministry, for the solution whereof I refer you to the Fourth Part, where it shall have its proper station. We are now to go on to the Eleventh Chapter.

13. *Objection.* All the discourses, and all the writings of the Reformers, says the author of the Prejudices, breathed forth nothing but a poisonous malignity, and an implacable hatred against the Church of Rome; and that spirit is so plain to be seen, that it astonishes me how persons, be they never so little equitable, can endure it, and not conclude, as reason would force them to do, that it is impossible they should have done that by the Spirit of God.\*

*Answer.* In reply to that reproach, I shall not here make an apology for injuries and outrages, under a pretence of zeal, as Mr. Arnaud has done in his pretended *Overthrow of the Morality of Jesus Christ*. For I acknowledge that zeal ought to be moderate and discreet. Neither shall I say that the author of the Prejudices may with very good reason leave that censure to a pen less violent and less passionate than his own, which, in giving us lessons of mildness and charity, has filled his pages with nothing but these words, *insolent, rash, ridiculous, impostors, calumniators, furious, devils, and instruments of devils*. For any one may very well apply these words of the Gospel, according to the translation of Mons, to him,—“Take out first the beam that is in thine own eye, and then shalt thou see how to take out the

\* Prejug. Ch. 11. Pag. 272.

mote that is in thy brother's eye." Mat. 7. 5. But I shall say, that when they find in the writings of the first reformers expressions that plainly appear to be too vehement, whether in respect of things or persons, equity would require it of them, that before they judge, they should consider whether they had not some particular circumstances that obliged them to speak after that manner. But although we acknowledge that our first reformers were not wholly free from faults, and that we no ways pretend to canonize all their words, nor all their actions, yet if they take heed to the circumstances of the times wherein they wrote, they will see that they ought to judge of them far otherwise than the author of the *Prejudices* has done, and that it is neither through malignity nor hatred that they spoke with so much vehemence against the Church of Rome, but that they were urged to it by reasons which they judged most weighty. First of all, they thought that there was some necessity of using such a style, to awaken men out of that profound sleep wherein they appeared to have been for a long time, and to put all of them into that just fear which they ought to have of God's judgments, when they were plunged into errors like to those wherein they pretended the Church of Rome then was. And it is most true, that until their days, the world had lain under a great insensibility. Not, that they did not know the evil, that they did not bewail it, that they did not thirst after a remedy, and that they did not readily hear all who would proclaim it; but after all, they remained all along in the same state, or to say better, they grew worse and worse every day. Upon that account it was, that our first reformers thought that they ought to represent things strongly, without extenuating words, to make the greater impression upon those minds that security or fearfulness had held bound in sleep. 2. They were obliged to all that, by the protection that errors and abuses found in their days, among the greater part of the prelates and the monks of the Church of Rome, who had orders from Rome, as I have proved elsewhere, to lift themselves

up in all places for the defence of that which they called the ancient religion, and who accused the reformers of heresy and impiety. For then it was necessary to make use of all the force of expressions that they had, to dissipate those accusations, and to discover to the world the grossness of the abuses which the Court of Rome maintained. 3. They saw themselves further constrained to it, by the severity which they had to wipe off, on the part of their adversaries; for as they were persuaded of the justice of their cause, the most natural effect of the persecutions which they were to endure was to open their eyes more, and the more to urge their understanding to acknowledge that justice, and to make all the world acknowledge it, not only to comfort themselves, and to encourage themselves in their afflictions, but also to strengthen their brethren whom they saw every where in the fetters of the inquisitions. Being then provoked to it by these three reasons, the one taken from the stupidity wherein they saw the greatest part of men, the other from the obstinate defence that was made of errors and abuses, and the third from the persecutions which they had to endure; it must not be reckoned such a wonder that they spoke with vehemence upon the subject of the Roman religion. Otherwise, it had been ill to have done so. 4. They themselves ought to acknowledge that the greater part of those abuses were of such a nature, that it had been a very hard matter not to have spoke of them without indignation. As for example, that vain devotion that they had kindled in the minds of the people for images, for relics, for *Agnus Dei's*, for pilgrimages; that credulity which they had instilled into them for all sorts of miracles, for apparitions of saints, for the return of souls out of purgatory, and I know not how many other things which our more enlightened age has some kind of shame of, but which yet made up the greatest part then of religion with respect to practice. How could they coldly treat of the abuse of indulgences, which had gone so far as not only to give pardon of sins for money by means of

confession and contrition, but even to pardon them in express words without either, as Pope Boniface the Ninth did to the whole state of John Galeacius Viscount of Milan; for so Corionel relates it in his history,\* where he says, “That the Lombards not being able, by reason of the war which they were engaged in, to go to Rome to gain indulgences, Pope Boniface, at the request of John Galeacius, gave the same indulgences to Milan that were at Rome, and would that all the subjects of that viscount should be absolved from all their sins, without any contrition or confession. *Sianche non fosse contrito ne confesso, fosse assoluto di qualunque peccato.* With a charge nevertheless to remain ten days at Milan, and to visit five churches every day, and to offer to one of those churches, the two thirds of that which they should have expended if they had gone to Rome. The Pope took one third part to himself, and designed the rest to the building of a certain church.”

Behold here that which refers to things. As to persons, I confess there may be found lively complaints in the writings of the first reformers against the abuses of the Court of Rome, against the ignorance and negligence of the prelates, against the scandalous lives of the clergy, against the tyrannical government wherewith they ruled the church. I acknowledge also, that when they looked upon that great body of the Roman hierarchy, its props, its pretensions, its maxims, its interests, its occupations, they could not hinder themselves from speaking of it as an empire very opposite to that of Jesus Christ: but they ought to be so far from laying it to their charge, that they said it out of a hatred or an implacable aversion toward the Church of Rome, as the author of the Prejudices does, that they ought on the contrary to attribute it to a real compassion which they had for the people of God, to see them so ill instructed, so ill guided, so ill governed; and to an ardent desire to procure a good reformation throughout

\* Corionel la sua. Hist. di Milan. p. 203.



the whole body of the Latin Church. And the greater their compassion was, the more difficult it was to manage that matter without giving some touches to persons in whom the source of all that evil resided, and especially in a time which they saw overspread on all sides with injuries and calumnies, and exposed in divers places to rigorous persecutions.

14. *Objection.* To that reproach, the author of the Prejudices adds another, which he begins to express in these words: "Although they should have had a right to have drawn away from the bosom of the Church of Rome its children, they had certainly no right to make use of impostures and frauds for that purpose; and if they did, it is a visible conviction that it was the devil that acted by them, and that their pretended reformation was his work." He alleges in the close a passage of Calvin's,\* wherein he pretends that Calvin calumniated the Church of Rome, in laying it to her charge that she had a far greater care of her traditions than of the commandments of God; and that she reckoned it a lesser sin to be defiled with the debaucheries of the flesh, than not to be confessed, or not to have fasted on Friday; to have broken all promises, than not to have fulfilled a vow of pilgrimage; and upon this the author of the Prejudices makes his exclamation with his usual heat. *p.* 273.

*Answer.* I reply, that Calvin speaks in that passage not of that which the Roman Church dogmatically taught, but of that which might be seen in the common practice of his time; and unless they should deny the most clear truths, they cannot deny that the idea which the authors themselves of the Church of Rome give us of its deplorable state in the age of the Reformation, does not fully confirm the testimony of Calvin. That which I have set down upon this sad subject, justifies the too little care that the prelates and other of the ecclesiastics took to root out vices from the midst of their flocks, and settle in their place a true holiness, when

\* Calvin. Instit. lib. 4. cap. 10. Ss. 10.

they had then a far greater ardour to make men's traditions to be observed; and if we had need to urge this proof further, it could be done without doubt with a great deal of ease.

15. *Objection.* "Another kind of calumny is, to lay to the charge of the church the opinions which she either rejects, or which she never authorized as matters of faith. Examples of this may be seen in every page of the books of their ministers; as when they reproach the Catholics with setting up as articles of faith, the corruption of the Greek and Hebrew text, the immunity of the clergy to be of divine right, the certainty of the declarations that the Popes make of the holiness of particular men which they call canonization, the efficacy of Agnus Dei's, the infallibility of the Pope, his temporal power over kings, his pre-eminence over councils, the jurisdiction of the church over the souls in purgatory, and many other opinions of that nature that the church does not prescribe to its children, that she does not insert into the confession of faith which she requires of those that return to her, and which she never defined by the voice of her councils." p. 276.

*Answer.* If the author of the Prejudices would be satisfied about all the points that he has noted in that objection, he ought to cite those passages of the ministers against whom he forms his complaints, and not to make as he does a captious heap of divers things wherein he may mix the false and true together. Notwithstanding, I shall not omit to say by the way something of my own head upon each of those articles. Upon the first I can easily believe that there have been some ministers who have reproached the Church of Rome with the having canonized the corruptions of the Greek and Hebrew text, because that in effect there are a great many such corruptions in the vulgar version, which the Council of Trent has canonized, not only in declaring it authentic, and forbidding any to reject upon any pretence whatsoever, but also in saying that they ought to be held under the penalty of an anathema for the canonical books of

the Bible, *prout in Ecclesia Catholica legi consueverunt, et in veteri vulgata Latina editione habentur.*\* All the question therefore may be reduced to this, whether we ought to hold under pain of anathema some ill translations which are to be found in the vulgar, for the corruptions of the Greek and Hebrew text; and for us, we believe that they cannot rationally contest it. As for the immunity of the clergy, it may be also that some doctors of the Church of Rome have been reproached for holding it as a matter of faith, because there are some among them that in effect ground it upon the Scripture; and every one knows that all that which they hold as out of the Scripture, ought to be held as a matter of faith. But they would have said nothing against the truth, when they should have maintained that Pope Leo X. in the Council of Lateran defined, “That there was none either divine or human right that gave the laity any power over the persons of the clergy;”† which implies that the clergy are excepted by divine right from that general rule that subjects all the world to the higher powers. We all know that our kings opposed that rash decision; but in the end it was a council that did it which had the Pope for its head, and it belongs to the author of the Prejudices to tell us whether he believes that that Pope and that council erred. As to the certainty of canonizations, since there is nobody in the Church of Rome that makes any scruple to invoke those saints which the Pope canonizes, and that moreover they agree in that maxim of St. Paul, that whatsoever in the matter of religion is not of faith is sin, methinks it is not ill grounded to say either that the Church of Rome sins, when she invokes those canonized saints without any certainty of faith, or that she holds it as a matter of divine faith that the Pope cannot be deceived. The author of the Prejudices shall choose which

\* Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. de Canon. Scrip. & decret. de edit. Bellarm. de Cler. lib. 1. c. 28.

† Concil. Lateran. sub Leon X. Sess. 9. in Bull. reform.

side he pleases: if he takes the last, he contradicts himself; if he takes the former, St. Paul condemns him; for he condemns all those who throw away the acts of their religion after that manner at all adventure. If the efficacy of *Agnus Dei's* has not been established by the councils, that belief may be found at least heretofore so strongly and universally established in the Church of Rome, that it may be very well ascribed to her without any fear of mistaking. They tell us that Pope Urban V. sent to John Paleologus the Emperor of the Greeks an *Agnus* folded up in fine paper, wherein there was written five verses which explained all its properties. Those verses carry with them, "That the *Agnus* was made of balsamus and wax with crism, and that being consecrated by mystical words, it drove away thunder and scattered storms, that it gave women an easy birth, that it prevented one from perishing on the seas, that it took away sin, that it kept back the devil, that it made a man to grow rich, that it secured one against fire, that it hindered one from dying a sudden death, that it gave a man victory over his enemies, and that in fine a small piece of the *Agnus* had as much virtue as the whole."\* As for that which regards the infallibility of the Popes, their temporal power over kings, and their pre-eminence over the councils, we do not say that those were articles of the faith received throughout the whole Church of Rome. There is not one of us that knows not that those pretensions were always opposed by the sounder part of the French. But they cannot deny that they were not at least the pretences of Rome, and that its Popes did not determine, "That it was necessary to the salvation of every creature to be subject to them."† They cannot deny that Pope Gregory VII. did not decide in a council, "That the Church of Rome did never err, and that it would never err according to the testimony of the Scripture,"‡ nor that the

\* Andr. frust. in fine lib. Epigr. in heret.

† Extravag. Commun. lib. 1. cap. 1. De Major. & Obed.

‡ Decret. 1. Part. dist. 19. cap. 1.

opinion of those who believe that the Pope is infallible in his decisions of faith, is not the more common and general one in the Church of Rome,\* and that those who hold it speak of the other only as an opinion that the Church tolerates for the present, and that they look upon it as an error, and such a one as approaches even to heresy, for those are the express words of Bellarmine.† They cannot deny that they generally hold in the Church of Rome that the Pope is by divine right the sovereign monarch of the Church, whom all Christians are bound to obey, the sovereign and universal vicar of Jesus Christ, his sovereign pastor, to whom Jesus Christ has given a fulness of power, which goes not far from ascribing infallibility to him. They cannot deny that the Popes did not often define “that the Church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all other churches,” and that the Council of Trent has not also declared it in divers places.‡ They cannot deny that the Popes did not pretend to be above the councils, that Sixtus IV. did not condemn a certain man called Peter de Osma, for having taught that the Pope could not dispense with the ordinances of the universal Church,§ nor that Leo X. did not declare in the Council of Lateran, with the approbation of the council, “That it was evident as well from the testimony of Scripture, as that of the fathers, and of other Bishops of Rome who had gone before, and by the holy canons, and by the very confession of the councils themselves, that the Pope alone had a right and power to call councils together, to transfer and dissolve them, as having authority over all councils.”|| They cannot deny that the same Leo

\* Ibid. cap. 2. Decretal. Gregor. lib. 3. tit. 42. cap. 3. Baron. ad. Ann. 1076.

† Bellarm. de Rom. Pont. lib. 4. cap. 2. See the Doctrine Anciennes Theolog. de la Faculte de Paris, par Jacques de Vernaut. And the testimonies that he relates.

‡ Concil. Trid. Sess. 7. De Baptis. can. 5. & Sess. 14. cap. 3. & Sess. 22. cap. 8.

§ Raynald. ad Ann. 1479.

|| Concil. Later. Sess. 11. in Bull. abrogat. Pragmat. Sanct.

did not condemn Luther for having appealed from him the Pope to a council, "against the Constitutions," says he, "of Pius II. of Julius II. who ordained that those who made such appeals should be punished with the same penalties that were decided against heretics,"\* nor that the Council of Trent did not submit itself to its confirmation of the Pope, as it may appear by the last act of that council.† And as to the pretences of the Popes over the temporalities of kings, they cannot deny that Clement V. has not declared in one of his Clementines, as they are called, "That it ought not to be questioned, but that he had a superiority over the empire, and that the empire being void he succeeded in the power of the emperor,"‡ nor that Alexander VI. did not give, "out of his pure liberality," says he, "of his certain knowledge and fulness of power," to the Kings of Castile and Leon all the lands newly discovered in the Indies, as if they had belonged to him,§ nor that Gregory VII. did not decide in his Council of Rome, "That the Pope could depose emperors, and dispense with the oaths of allegiance to their subjects,"|| nor that Innocent III. did not ordain in the Council of Lateran, "That if any temporal prince neglected to purge his territories of all heresy, the bishops should excommunicate him," and that if within a year he gave no satisfaction they should make it known to the sovereign bishop, to the end that he should declare his subjects absolved from their duty of fealty, and that he should expose his land to be taken by Catholics.¶ They cannot also deny as to practice that there are not divers examples to be found of Popes who undertook effectually to depose emperors and kings, and to give away their kingdoms to others. In fine, as to that which regards their jurisdiction over souls in purgatory, nobody is ignorant

\* Bulla Leon X. contr. Luther. apud Raynald. ad Ann. 1520.

† Concil. Trid. Sess. 25. ‡ Clementin. lib. 2. tit. 11. cap. 2.

§ Raynald. ad Ann. 1493. || Baron. ad Ann. 1076.

¶ Concil. Lateran. 3. Sub Innocent. 3.

that the Popes pretended to have power to draw souls out of purgatory, at least through the dispensation of the treasure of the Church, which is that which they say is made up of the superabundant satisfactions of Jesus Christ and the saints. It is upon that also that their indulgences in respect of the dead are founded; and Leo in his bull of excommunication against Luther had wrote, "That indulgences were neither necessary nor useful to the dead."\* Furthermore I cannot forbear taking notice here of the fallacy that the author of the *Prejudices* gives us, and which is common to him with a great many other persons. He would have us judge of that doctrine of the Roman Church, but only by that which she has decided in her councils, or by that which is contained in an act of the profession of the faith which she makes those make who embrace her communion. This I say is a perfect fallacy.

1. Because we ought also to judge of her by her common practice, which being open to the eyes of all the world, discovers much more clearly the true sentiments of that church, when the decisions of the councils do not, and the acts of which are almost unknown to the people.

2. Because the Council of Trent itself and the act of the profession of the faith, obliging as they do those who submit themselves to it, to receive in general unwritten traditions and those things which the Church of Rome observes, they engage them by consequence to receive and practise all that which is commonly observed and practised in that church, under a pretence of tradition and observance, although it should not be formally contained either in the decisions of councils, or in that profession of faith. So that the conscience of a man who is in that communion, binds him to believe and do all that others believe and do.

16. *Objection.* "The third kind of calumny is not less ordinary in their ministers, nor less unjust in itself. It consists

\* Bulla Leon. ubi supra.

in running down as blamable errors certain articles of the belief of the Church, which not only were no errors, but about which they have been at last constrained to acknowledge that the difference between them and the Church consists more in words than in the thing itself, whether they themselves have forsook their first thoughts, to take up those of the Catholics, or whether by a blind rashness they had openly condemned them without understanding them." To prove this corruption, the author of the *Prejudices* lays down the point of justification, which, he says, the first reformers took for the chief ground of their separation, and yet nevertheless he adds one of their professors of Sedan named Ludovicus le Blanc, who has made some *theses* of justification, after having examined the doctrine of the Catholics, and that of the Protestants, and their principal differences about that matter, concludes upon all the articles that that of the Catholics is good, and that the Protestants are only contrary to them in name.\*

*Answer.* I acknowledge that in this controversy the Church of Rome takes the word justification in one sense, and that we take it in another, and I do not deny but that has sometimes produced in that dispute, ambiguities and differences, or words. This is also that which M. le Blanc had a design to clear in his *theses* of justification, which the author of the *Prejudices* has abused. But besides that, in that very thing we have two advantages over the Church of Rome, the one, that we speak as the Scripture has done, and that we take the words after the manner that Jesus Christ, that St. Paul, and St. James have taken them, when they have treated about this doctrine, whereas the Church of Rome gives them another sense, and the other, that in so taking the words in their true signification that idea that we give of justification, is distinct and clear, where that of the Church of Rome is embroiled and confused. Besides that, I say, it is certain

\* Prejug. Pag. 281.



that we have but too real differences upon that point which no ways consists in words, but in the very things themselves, and which make very weighty controversies. To manifest this truth, we need but to cast our eyes upon the four chief doctrines that form the idea of our justification according as the Scripture has given it us. The First is, That it is an act of the sovereign mercy of God that pardons our sins, and which by virtue of the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, discharges us from the punishment we have deserved by them. The Second is, That God out of that same mercy in pardoning our sins adopts us for his children, and gives us a right to his eternal inheritance by the merit of Jesus Christ his Son. The Third, That we apply to ourselves the satisfaction and merit of Jesus Christ by a lively faith, accompanied with a sincere repentance, and a holy recourse to the divine mercy, and that it is this faith that puts us into the communion of our Redeemer. And the Fourth, That God in pardoning and adopting us, imposes this condition upon us, that for the time to come we live holily according to the laws which he has given us, and that this very thing is a necessary consequence of that communion which we have with Jesus Christ, as well as of our faith, our repentance, and our recourse to the divine mercy. There is not any one of these parts of our justification upon which we have not very considerable differences with the Church of Rome. For in the First we differ,

1. Concerning him who pardons us. The Church of Rome would have it, not only that it should be God in the quality of a sovereign judge, but men also, that is to say priests and bishops in quality of inferior and subordinate judges, and that their absolution is a judiciary act, for so the Council of Trent has defined it to be.\* But we believe that there is none besides God who can pardon our sins under the quality of a sovereign judge, and that the pardon which we

\* Concil. Trid. Sess. 14. Can. 9.

receive from the mouth of his ministers is a ministerial pardon, which consists in a declaration that they make to us of God's pardon, as the interpreters of his will revealed in the Gospel.

2. We differ about the extent of that pardon. The Church of Rome would have it, that God in pardoning the sin retains the punishment, that is to say, that he acquits us from eternal punishment, but that he reserves to himself the inflicting of temporal punishments; and we on the contrary hold that he remits all sorts of temporal and eternal punishments, and that the afflictions which he sends us are not the punishments of his justice, but the corrections and chastisements of his fatherly discipline.

3. From whence there arises a third difference, which consists in this, that the Church of Rome believes that those temporal punishments wherewith God visits us, are true satisfactions to his justice for our sins, which we deny.

4. There arises from thence yet another difference concerning that, which they call those penul works which every one imposes upon himself, or which their confessors impose on their penitents, for they would that these should be also satisfactions to the justice of God, which we do not believe.

5. The Church of Rome would have it, that those satisfactory punishments should go beyond this life, and it is partly upon this that they ground their doctrine of *purgatory*, which we reject.

6. It is also upon that very thing that the indulgences of the Church of Rome are grounded, which cannot be taken for mere relaxations of canonical punishments, since they extend most frequently very far beyond the life of man, and sometimes even unto five and twenty, and thirty thousand years.

7. We may say also, that the difference which we have with them concerning that first act of the mercy of God that pardons our sins, arises from the difference which we have with them concerning the opinion of the necessity of

auricular confession; for that opinion is partly founded upon this, that absolution of the priests is a judiciary act, and that in that respect the Church has a true tribunal before which the faithful are bound to appear, and partly upon the opinion, that the penances which the priest enjoins are true satisfactions to the divine justice which they are bound to undergo.

8. Lastly, it is from the same source that the difference proceeds which we have with them concerning the superabundant satisfactions of the saints, of which they will have it that the faithful may partake, and whereof in part they compose the treasure of the Church.

Behold here eight controversies included in the explication of the *first* act of our justification. Upon the *second*, we differ about the foundation upon which the right that God gives us to life eternal is established; or if you will, about the proper and direct cause in consideration of which God gives us that right, for we establish it alone upon the merits of Jesus Christ, in virtue of that communion which we have with him. But the Church of Rome establishes it upon the merit of our works also, for she would have it, that after God has given us his grace by which we do good works, we truly inherit not only an increase of grace but eternal life, and even an increase of glory; and she anathematizes those who do not believe it.

We differ also about those to whom God gives that right, for we believe that God gives it only to his elect, in whom he preserves it by his grace, and by the gift of perseverance; but the Church of Rome believes that he gives it also to divers reprobates whom his grace abandons, and who finally perish in their sins.

Upon the *third* doctrine, we differ concerning the nature and the definition of justifying faith; we look on it as an act of the soul that embraces or accepts the satisfaction and merit of Jesus Christ, and which applies the promises of God's mercy made to us in the Gospel, and we labour as much as

we can to live according to that thought. But the doctors of the Roman Church frame an idea of that faith extremely cold and incorrect, for they content themselves to say that it is a consent that we yield in general to all the truths revealed in the word of God; and there are some that go so far as to say, that faith fails not to justify us, although it should not have the least regard to the particular mercy of God towards us, which is a thing that we cannot understand without horror. For the rest, when I shall say that the doctrines of the imputation of the merit of Jesus Christ, and his satisfaction, are known but to a very few in the Church of Rome, as that also is, of the application that we make of them to ourselves by the internal act of our souls which receives them; when I shall say that these truths, so important and so necessary to the practice of Christianity, are almost stifled, by that great multitude of external exercises with which they busy the people, I shall say nothing in my judgment that the more sincere persons will not acknowledge, and of which, God grant they may be able hereafter to convince me of a falsehood in that respect.

In fine, the *last* doctrine that fully makes up the idea of our justification according to the Scripture, produces of itself a considerable controversy between the Church of Rome and us. For as for us, we limit ourselves to the good works to which our justification obliges us, and which God has enjoined us, without going any further. But the Church of Rome extends them even to those which she herself commands, for she pretends that her laws properly and directly bind the conscience under pain of mortal sin; and therefore it was that Leo X. condemned Luther for having wrote that the Church had no power to make laws concerning manners or good works. All these controversies that naturally arise from the different explications which they give of the tenet of justification, let us sufficiently see that the author of the Prejudices is mistaken, if he thinks that we should have no more upon this matter than differences about words; and

M. le Blanc is too sincere and too learned to have pretended to deny any of those things which I have mentioned, although he has judiciously remarked, that men may easily equivocate upon the different significations of the terms.

It is therefore neither a piece of rashness, nor impertinency, that our first reformers had such a regard to the matter of justification, as being a thing of the greatest importance in religion; and it is on the contrary most just, that having seen that doctrine of the salvation of Christians, neglected, obscured, and corrupted, that they should have judged it necessary to set themselves upon the re-establishing of it.

---

## CHAP. VII.

### AN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS OF THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CHAPTERS OF THE PREJUDICES.

TO understand well what is in the Twelfth Chapter of the author of the Prejudices, we must in the first place take notice of the design he proposes to himself, and the means he makes use of to reach it. As to his design, he explains himself in the very title of the Chapter, which is this, "That the spirit of a politician, every way human, that appears in the differences that the Calvinists have had with the Lutherans, gives a right to reject them, without any further examination, as a sort of men without any conscience." He explains himself yet further in the beginning of his discourse after this manner: "It has been demanded," says he, "of the Calvinists, with good reason, how it could come to pass, that if Luther, Zuinglius, and Calvin, had received a mission from God, and were the instruments that he made choice of for the greatest work that ever was, which is the reformation of the errors of sixteen centuries, they should not avoid being

openly divided between themselves, to dismember themselves from one another, to persecute one another after so outrageous a manner, and to treat one another as the declared enemies of God and his church." He explains himself also in another place, where he speaks after this manner: "The innocence or the crimes of Luther equally condemn the Calvinists, either for having declaimed against an innocent person, or for having given unjust praises to one of the most wicked men that ever was; and that monstrous conjunction which they have made in his person, of holiness, with the most detestable crimes, is an evident proof, that they have not the least idea of Christian virtue, nor of the spirit of Christianity." See yet further how he speaks in the same chapter: "If Luther were an instrument of the devil, a wicked person, a schismatic, a violent and passionate man, what will become of the reformation that he has established, and which serves as a foundation to that of the Calvinists?" In fine he explains himself in the 321st page, where he says, "That our behaviour in respect of the Lutherans is enough to give a ground to conclude that the heads of the party of the Calvinists have been such as have guided themselves more by policy than conscience; which being," adds he, "most contrary to the Spirit of God, and remote from that which ought to be found in those new prophets which he would extraordinarily raise up, for the reforming of his church, it is not possible for us to take them for men of that kind, and we have a most just ground to refuse to hearken to them." It results from thence that the author of the *Prejudices* had a design to conclude,

1. That they ought to reject us without examining any thing that we say, and without so much as hearing us.

2. That we are a sort of men without any conscience, who have no idea of Christian virtue, nor of the spirit of Christianity, and who guide ourselves by worldly policy.

3. That we overthrow the Reformation of Luther, which serves nevertheless for the foundation of our own.

4. That our first reformers had none of their mission from

God, and that they were not the instruments which he made choice of to reform the errors of the Church of Rome. To establish these propositions he heightens on one side the differences that were between Luther, Zuinglius, and Calvin, and all that the heat of disputation made them say on one side and on the other, and in the end he sets down the esteem that we have always had of Luther notwithstanding those divisions, and the condescension that we have for him and those of his party, in opposition to the hatred that we have always, says he, testified against the Church of Rome.

All that unjust reasoning is founded upon divers false propositions that the author of the Prejudices has supposed as evident and beyond all doubt, and of which notwithstanding he has captiously suppressed one part, to give the more colour to his invective.

1. His reasoning is founded upon this proposition, That we hold our first reformers to be new prophets, or, as he speaks, to be the apostles of a new Gospel. But this is a false and calumnious supposition, for we hold, on the contrary, that our reformers preached nothing new; they were not under the quality either of new prophets, or apostles of a new Gospel; they did not boast that they brought a new revelation into the world, but they only opposed human errors that had no foundation in the *old Revelation*, and in that respect I have shewn that they had a more than sufficient call in the right that is common to all Christians, and in the ministry which they themselves exercised in the Latin Church, without any necessity that there should be any extraordinary and immediate mission of God for that; and I have explained in what sense it must be understood that there was something extraordinary in their call.

2. That reasoning supposes, That we ought not to hear any reformers till first we have examined the quality of their persons; and if the quality of their persons do not satisfy us, we ought to reject their words, and to remain in the state we were in before. But there is nothing more pernicious than

than this principle, to which I oppose a contrary principle, which is, That we ought to judge of that which our reformers said by the word of God, and by the proper characters of truth or falsehood which are in the things themselves, after a manner abstracted from the judgment that we may make of those persons, and that it is a way to error to judge by the qualities of the persons. This is that which I have made appear elsewhere, and shall not omit to establish it yet further in this place, for the greater clearing of this truth. I say then that when it falls out that those who preach have personal qualities that do not satisfy us, it is indeed a reason that obliges us to take the greater heed to their doctrine. But those matters being at the bottom, as they are, true or false in themselves, without the persons that propose them changing their natures, they ought to be chiefly considered in themselves, if we would assure ourselves in a good conscience that we are in the way of truth; for we cannot have that assurance if we judge only by the persons, since the faith is immediately founded upon the word of God, and not upon that of men, whosoever they be. Moreover, every one knows that a judgment concerning persons is oftentime more difficult and more subject to error than that of the things themselves, whether it be because ordinarily it depends upon a great number of particular circumstances, which one cannot exactly know, and which yet one ought to know before a man can be able to judge, or whether it be also because it is open to the illusions of hypocrisy, which hides real vices under the appearances of virtue, and to those of calumny, which turns the best actions into a bad meaning, that suppresses the good and heightens the bad. Besides that, it is certain that the judgment which is made of persons ought partly to depend on that of things, so far is it from that, that what is made of things should depend on that of persons. For on the one side how many founders of heresy have there been whose lives have appeared to have been very exemplary, and who were notwithstanding ravenous wolves? How many Phari-



sees who have boasted of their righteousness, while their doctrine was a leaven whereof great heed was to be taken? There have been some who have even gone so far as to have wrought miracles; and Jesus Christ has foretold, that false christs and false prophets shall arise, who shall work great signs and wonders, capable of seducing the very elect, if it were possible. Matth. 24. 24. And on the other side do not sufficiently understand the ways of Divine Providence, to be able to conclude without rashness, that it never makes use of persons guilty of many crimes, either for the propagation of its truth, or the reformation of errors. St. Paul says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man." 2 Cor. 4. 7. The same apostle teaches us that divers in his time preached Jesus Christ out of a spirit of envy and contention. God heretofore made use of Solomon, not only for the building and preservation of his temple, but also to give the Church some part of the holy Scriptures, which is much more than the temple, and yet notwithstanding that prince gave himself over to the love of women, and fell into idolatry; and lastly, Jesus Christ made use of a Judas at first, that sold him into his enemies' hands.

But to decide this question by examples drawn out of the Scripture, we find in the history of the Church of Israel, (2 Kings 10. 27.) that Jehu king of the ten tribes reformed that church, that he took away the worship of the false gods which Ahab had introduced, that he demolished the temple of Baal, and broke down his images: see here without doubt a good reformation. Notwithstanding it is said that he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, but that he retained the worshipping of the golden calves that were at Dan and Bethel. It is also related that he accomplished that reformation in a very odious manner, and very unworthy of a prince that made profession of the fear of God: for having assembled all his people, he told them that he would serve Baal much more than Ahab had done; he commanded that

all his prophets and priests should meet together, and all the worshippers of that false god, to celebrate a solemn feast for him. He himself pointed out the day of the feast, and caused a publication of it to be made. But when the assembly was come into the house of Baal, and all those poor people who trusted in his word, when they thought of nothing but their devotions, he put them all to death without letting any one escape. Suppose we that we ought to judge of a reformation by the persons that make it, what may not be said against this? Jehu made use of hypocrisy and treachery, he broke the public faith and his own in the most scandalous manner in the world, and the most contrary to the sincerity of an honest man. Besides that, he yet remained in the superstitions of Jeroboam, and made the Israelites remain in them too. If we would believe the author of the Prejudices, the reformation that he made would be rather the work of the devil, than that of the Spirit of God. Jehu would not have been extraordinarily chosen by God to reform his church and purge it from idolatry. But this is not the sentiment of the Scripture; it does not without doubt approve of the treachery and hypocrisy of Jehu; it condemns the golden calves that he kept up: but it does not omit the praising of that reformation in that good which it had, and to say that it was well-pleasing to God. And it is true that Jehu was extraordinarily called to that, as it appears by the anointing that the Prophet Elisha gave him by one of his disciples.

We find in that same Scripture, the history of divers other reformations which were made in the Church of Judah, but we find also that they were almost wholly different among themselves. Some went so far as the abolishing the usage of the high places and the groves, which were heathenish superstitions, and the incense that was offered to the serpent of Aaron, which was a kind of idolatry; others yet retained all these things. Some even of those who made these reformations committed actions very displeasing to God, which the

Scripture reflects on. It says of Asa, (2 Chron. 16. 12.) who was one of those reformers, that being sick of the disease whereof he died, he sought not to God, but to the physicians. It says of Jehoshaphat, (2 Chron. 20. 37.) who was another, that he aided a wicked king, and that he loved those whom God hated, (2 Chron. 19. 2.) because he joined himself with wicked Ahab. It says of Joash, (2 Chron. 24. 18—22.) who was yet another, that he fell in with the people into the exercise of idolatry and the use of the groves, and that he cruelly killed a prophet because he opposed those superstitions. If you judge of those reformations by their persons, according to the principle of the author of the Prejudices, you must say not only that those reformers ought not to be heard, but that the Spirit of God was not there: for you see their dissensions, since some went further than the others, and that some condemned what the others retained; you see personal actions which you cannot excuse, since the Scripture itself condemns them. But if you judge according to the Scripture, which is more worthy to be followed than the author of the Prejudices, you will give to those reformations the praises which they merit in themselves, you will approve of the more perfect ones, you will distinguish in the imperfect the good from the bad, without having respect to the persons; and when at last you would judge of the persons, you would do it as justice and charity would ordain you to do.

If the principle of the author of the Prejudices were reasonable in regard of the reformers of the Latin Church, it is certain that it would be so further in regard of the propagators of the Christian Religion and of its ordinary teachers. I would say, that if those of the Church of Rome had reason not to hear the reformers because they had differences among themselves, because they spoke injurious words of one another in the heat of their disputes, because they can take notice of some vices in them, or a conduct that may be suspected to have had too much worldly policy, it follows from thence, by

a far greater reason, that the heathens ought not to have heard the Christians as often as they should have seen the same things to have appeared among them. But when was it that they might not have seen them appear? The age of the apostles, which we may justly call the age of innocence, and of the peace of the Church, in comparison of others, was that exempted from divisions and vices? Those who have read the Epistles of St. Paul cannot be ignorant that there were some among the first preachers of Christianity, who would yet have retained Moses with Jesus Christ, and the law with grace; that there were others who opposed themselves to St. Paul about divers points of his doctrine, and who laboured to blast the honour of his ministry; that there were some who in preaching the Gospel discovered themselves to be too much transported with human passions; that there were even some who went so far as to deny the doctrine of the resurrection. St. Paul does not spare them, and the just complaints that he frequently makes of them, sufficiently note that they had not on their parts all the respect for him which they ought to have had. Notwithstanding, whatsoever complaints he made of them, howsoever vehement he was in his disputes, yet we do not see that he excommunicated them, nor that he delivered them over to Satan as he did the incestuous person of Corinth. He defends his apostleship, he calls them *deceitful workers, ministers of Satan transformed into the ministers of righteousness*, 2 Cor. II. 13, 15.; but he fails not yet in the same chapter to give them the title of *ministers of Jesus Christ*. "Are they ministers of Jesus Christ? I speak as a fool, I am more," v. 23. Would the author of the Prejudices have thought it well done if the Heathens of that time had followed his maxim, and if without ever examining the Christian Religion in itself, they should have presently prejudged, upon the divisions which they beheld, and upon the moderation that St. Paul yet kept towards those persons, whom elsewhere he treated roughly enough, that the Spirit of God did

not accompany the Christians, and that their doctrine could not proceed from heaven?

Will they say that those infidels ought to have carried themselves after that manner in the time of Constantine, when the bishops that composed the Council of Nice appeared so eager, and so divided among themselves, that they presented the emperor with books of accusations one against another, managing a bloody war while they saw themselves united together in the same assembly? \* Will they say that they had reason to be prejudiced against Christianity, then when they saw the quarrels that rent the Church upon the subject of the consubstantiality of the Son of God; † or then when they saw those which fell out about the word of *Hypostasis*, between the orthodox themselves, who accused one another to be heretics; or then when the East and West were divided about the concurrence of Meletius and Paulinus for the bishopric of Antioch; or when the two great and illustrious reformers of the Church in the time of the Arians, Eusebius of Vercel, and Lucifer of Cagliari, were divided upon the subject of the Arian bishops, who returned to the orthodox faith; or when the Catholics and the Donatists mutually persecuted one another, and that in the very flames of those persecutions the Catholics did not cease to call the Donatists always their brethren, although they oftentimes called them also heretics, schismatics, Pharisees, &c. and though they loaded them with injuries, and though the Donatists on their part treated the Catholics with all the indignities imaginable, even to the outrageously rejecting of the name of brethren, which they gave them.

Those who are well versed in ecclesiastical history, will yield that we might urge those examples a great deal further if we would but take the pains to do it, for there have been very few ages wherein Christians have not been divided

\* Socrat. Hist. Eccles. lib. 1. cap. 5.

† Vide Baron.

between themselves, and that frequently upon grounds trivial enough, and wherein there may not have been found in their conduct that very thing which the author of the Prejudices believes to be incompatible with the Spirit of God, that is to say, the heats of dispute on the one side, and on the other some \* *measures* of that which he calls human policy. I shall not here mention the disorders which happened about the business of Nestorius and his heresy, nor those which followed quickly after on the occasion of the Eutychians and Monothelites. I shall omit the schism of the Greeks and Latins, and the re-unions which they made up sometimes among themselves out of a human policy. I shall say nothing of the confusions wherewith the Latin Church was agitated in those times, which Baronius calls unhappy, and wherein he says the Popes made void the acts of one another. *Infelicissimo tempora cum alter alterius res gestas intrusus quisque Pontifex aboleret.*† In effect, Formosus having accepted of the papacy against the oath that John VIII. had made him take in deposing him, that he would never think of being bishop, Stephen VII. his successor made him to be condemned in open council, and all the ordinations that he had made to be void; and having at last caused his body to be taken out of his grave, he made the three fingers wherewith they give their blessing to be cut off and thrown into the river Tiber: but John IX. successor to Stephen, assembled another council at Ravenna, wherein he not only made all that Stephen and his council had done against Formosus to be void, but he even made all his acts to be canonically burned, re-establishing the memory of Formosus, and the ordinances that he had made. Some time after, Sergius a great enemy of Formosus came to the papacy, and he annulled in his turn the acts of the Council of Ravenna, and made void all the ordinances of Formosus. Notwithstanding the Church of Rome reckons all those men among her Popes,

\* Radourcissement.

† Baron. ad Ann. 903.

and acknowledges them all to have been lawful ones: and which is further remarkable, John IX. in the same act wherein he makes void the Council of Stephen, and wherein he condemns it to the flames, does not fail to call Stephen his *Predecessor of holy memory—Pia recordationis predecessorem*. Upon which Baronius \* exhorts his readers to consider, that although the Popes have had predecessors very worthy of blame, yet they have been wont notwithstanding to have a great deal of respect for them. So that, says he, although Stephen had been a detestable Pope, who had invaded the see, and who during his papacy had committed all sorts of execrable crimes, yet John nevertheless calls him his predecessor of holy memory; which may appear at least as strange as the moderation of Zuinglius and Calvin in respect of Luther.

I might add to all these, another example drawn from the conduct of the Church of Rome, upon the occasion of her latter schisms. Every one knows the divisions of the Fourteenth Century, which divided all the West about the concurrence of two anti-popes. Both parties were extremely animated, they looked upon one another as excommunicated, as anti-christs, the enemies of God and his church; they mutually anathematized one another; they took up arms one against another, and made a bloody war. Urban VI. on his side, in a bull that began, "The vine of the Lord of sabaoth, that is to say, the holy Church of Rome, has a great evil in her womb, and sends forth grievous sighs, &c."† treats his anti-pope and his cardinals as children of iniquity and sons of perdition, vipers, wicked wretches animated with the spirit of the devil, schismatics, apostates, conspirators, blasphemers, &c. He deposed, and spoiled them of all their honours, dignities, prelacies, offices and benefits; he confiscated their goods, and declared their persons to be infamous and detestable; he excommunicated all those who believed, who re-

\* Baron. ad Ann. 904.

† Raywald. ad Ann. 1378.

ceived them, their defenders and favourers, and even those who should give them ecclesiastical burial, if they did not pull them out of the grave again with their own hands: he forbid all faithful people of what quality soever, even kings themselves, queens, emperors, to receive them into their lands, to give or to send them either bread, or wine, or meat, or wood, or money, or merchandise.

He excommunicated particularly all those who should hold his competitor for Pope, or who should call him Pope, or who should receive any favours, indulgences, dignities, or prelacies from him. And as if all this had not been enough, he ordained a holy crusade against those schismatics and those condemned persons, to pursue and root them out, under the same privileges which are given to those who take up arms for the conquest of the holy land.

He absolved also the subjects of those princes who should acknowledge his anti-pope, of their oath of allegiance, and he excommunicated those subjects themselves if they should yield any obedience to their sovereigns. On the other side, Clement VII. who kept his seat at Avignon, was not wanting to proceed against Urban and his followers, and to treat him and his party with the same heat that Urban had shewed against him. See here differences which were methinks sufficiently heightened. Notwithstanding whatsoever animosity there was there between those two parties, whatsoever wars they made one against another, whatsoever anathemas they mutually thundered out, the Church of Rome has not failed to own and canonize for saints those persons who lived and died in those two contrary obediences, and who even died in the hottest quarrels of those two anti-popes. For she has canonized on the one side St. Catherine of Siena, who took part with Urban, and who treated his competitor as anti-christ, and a member of the devil, and his cardinals as devils incarnate; and on the other side, she has canonized Peter of Luxemburg, who died the cardinal of Clement VII. and who had received that dignity from his



hands, against the express prohibition of Urban VI. under pain of excommunication ;\* so that here are two saints on the one and the other side lawfully excommunicated.

Mr. Daille, in his answer to the Monsieurs Adam and Cottiby, intending to retort this same objection that the author of the Prejudices gives us, has set before us the example of Saint Jerome, and Saint Cyril of Alexandria, who were cruelly and passionately carried out against St. John Chrysostom, so far as to compare his fall to the fall of Babylon, and to call him *traitor, Judas, Jechonias* ; he has also alleged the example of Stephen Bishop of Rome, who in the quarrel that he had with St. Cyprian, calls him *a false Christ, a false apostle, and deceitful workcr.*† But the author of the Prejudices does not think that these examples are to the purpose. He says, “ That the difference between Saint Chrysostom, and Saint Jerome, and Saint Cyril, respected only personal actions, in which none ever denied but that it might happen to the saints themselves to be surprised in respect of one another.”‡ But this is only a shift ; for if we may understand that it has happened to the saints to be violently carried out against another saint after the fiercest manner in the world, upon personal differences which have no other foundation than a surprise, I see not why we may not also understand, that it may happen to good men to be violently carried out against one another about the points of religion, which afford a more just pretence of animosity, when each thinks he has the truth of his side. Before I let go this example, I cannot forbear noting, by the by, that it is but very ill to the purpose that the author of the Prejudices censures M. Daille for having said that Theophilus of Alexandria and Epiphanius had condemned, excommunicated, and deposed Chrysostom from his bishopric ; for it is evi-

\* Raynald. in Urban. 6.

† Repons. a Mess. Adam. & Cott. Part 2. Chap 14.

‡ Prejug. Ch. 12. Pag. 311.

dent to those who are not ignorant of history, that Theophilus condemned and deposed him, and that Epiphanius being gone to Constantinople before that same condemnation, refused to hold communion with Chrysostom, which is precisely that which M. Daille would have said. But the author of the Prejudices does not answer me better upon the quarrel of Saint Cyprian and Stephen; "Their difference," says he, "was only upon a point which had not then been decided by the Church."\* This evasion is very pitiful. The more trivial the occasion is about which one is violent, that passion is both the more blamable, and the prejudice against the persons who are so carried away with it is the better grounded. To answer after that manner aggravates the passion of Stephen, instead of excusing it. "Stephen," adds he, "who had more reason at the bottom, was carried out by the ardour of his zeal only to some threats of excommunication. Or if you will, to an excommunication which having had no ground would have produced no real division, and would not have hindered but that Saint Cyprian should still have been honoured by the Church of Rome, and Saint Stephen by that of Africa." It is not certain that Stephen had more reason at the bottom than Saint Cyprian, on the contrary there were in their days as many heretics at least, whose baptism ought to have been rejected, as there were whose baptism ought to have been admitted. And as for the rest, whether Stephen had in effect excommunicated Saint Cyprian, or whether he had merely threatened it, what is that to our question? If he contented himself with a mere threatening of it, he remained in communion with a man whom he called *a false Christ, a false apostle, a deceitful worker*, and with a man whom on his part he accused of stupidity, of pride, of obstinacy, of presumption, of folly, of blindness of mind, and of wickedness. He abode in communion with Firmilianus who had

the same interests with Saint Cyprian, and who also accused Stephen of inhumanity, of boldness, of insolence, of schism, and manifest folly; who compared him to Judas, and said of him that he took part with heretics. If he actually excommunicated them, it further notes the excess of his passion, which could not in effect have been judged to have been less than a passion and a violent heat, since according to the author of the *Prejudices* himself, it would have had no ground, and would not have hindered but that Saint Cyprian should have been always honoured by the Church of Rome.

Since the author of the *Prejudices* was in the way to refute the answer of M. Daille, it had possibly more conduced to the public edification, if, instead of weakly insisting on those remote examples, he had applied himself to that wherein M. Daille adjoins, the fierce injuries wherewith the divines of the Roman Church may be every day seen to rend one another, although they then remain and though they yet live in one and the same communion. They acknowledge one another for brethren, they assist at the same altars, they call upon the same saints, and yet nevertheless, as M. Daille relates, they write one against another after the most passionate and violent manner in the world. One sort of them say of their adversaries, "That they were infected with heresies, and were enemies of the apostolic see, and that their opinion was full of heresy and perfidiousness; that it was presumptuous, injurious to the state of the religious, and that it savoured of Calvinism; and to speak plainly, that it was erroneous in the faith, that it openly stifled the word of God and the authority of the fathers, that it was blasphemous against Jesus Christ and all the saints, plainly and evidently heretical, and contrary to the Council of Trent." The others say on the contrary, "That the propositions which they have laid down were false, rash, presumptuous, pernicious to all faithful people; that they were erroneous and injurious to the bishops, tending to overthrow or disturb the hierarchy; and that some were even contrary to the word God and the au-

thority of the councils." They add that a certain book of their adversaries was full of propositions "that were dangerous, seditious, impious, schismatical, blasphemous, with some openly heretical." See here what M. Daille has set down immediately after the examples of St. Cyril, St. Jerome, Stephen, and St. Cyprian, in which it had been well if the author of the Prejudices would have satisfied us, for he cannot be ignorant that we could urge this matter a great deal further than M. Daille has done, and that he who would make up a collection of all the injurious things that these gentlemen say of one another, would make a very strange vocabulary. But he has judged that he ought to pass over this article in silence, and that it was more fit for his purpose to answer only upon Saint Cyril, Saint Jerome, Stephen, and Saint Cyprian.

Howsoever it be, it seems to be clear to me, by what I have said, a very ill prejudice in matters of religion, to make the judgment that we ought to make of a doctrine to depend upon that that we may make of the persons, instead of judging it by the doctrine itself, and by the word of God; and the author of the Prejudices may suffer us, if he pleases, to say to him on the part of our first reformers, what Saint Augustin said on the part of the orthodox to Cresconius: "Since you are not the judge of the inward motions of our heart, set yourselves only to know whether we fight for, or against the truth. For if we teach the truth, if we refute error, when our intentions should not be good, and if we should seek either for secular advantages or vain-glory, those who have a love for the truth will not avoid joining with us, since it would be the truth that would be always declared, after what manner soever it were so."\*

But besides these two remarks which I have made, I must further take notice in the third place, that the reasoning of the author of the Prejudices is founded upon another suppo-

\* Aug. contr. Crescon. lib. 1. chap 7.

sition, which is not less unjust, nor less rash, than those other two which I have examined. For it is founded upon this principle, That we ought to judge of persons merely by that ill which appears in them; whereas in order to the making an equitable judgment, we ought at least to consider the good with the ill, and after having made an exact discernment of the one and the other, to approve of that good that may be seen, and to blame that bad that may be found there. It was after this manner that Zuinglius and Calvin passed their judgments on Luther, and that we judge him also; we discover a great many excellent things in him, an heroic courage, a great love for the truth, an ardent zeal for the glory of God, a great trust in his providence, extraordinary learning in a dark age, a profound respect of the holy Scripture, an indefatigable spirit, and a great many other high qualities. We see that he was in his time one of the first who had their eyes opened to consider the errors and abuses that were then current in the Latin Church, that he earnestly applied himself to it, that his example excited divers others to do the same, that he endured upon that account very great persecutions, under all which his heart never failed, and that by his cares and learned labours he recovered divers people out of the superstition wherein they were buried. Observing these things, we cannot but give him the just praise which we believe he merits; and because we know that God is the Author of every perfect gift, as Saint James says, (*ch.* 1. 17.) we attribute all the good that we see in Luther to his grace and his Holy Spirit, and all the happy successes of his preaching to the divine benediction, looking upon him as a servant of God, and an instrument which he made use of for the work of the Reformation. But because there is no person in the world who has not his excesses and his faults, amidst that which Luther had worthy of praise, we see also a great many things which we know not how to approve. We believe that he had not light enough about the matter of the eucharist; we

find that he was very much prepossessed about the real presence; we acknowledge that his style was too impetuous and too violent; and we make no scruple to say, that he has not well enough distinguished his various opinions, so as to be able to support them without breaking the bond of communion with those who could not tolerate them, which makes him fall into a great piece of injustice in respect of us. Thus far, methinks, we may go without impugning Christian charity: if any one among us have pushed his judgment further, and would needs have penetrated into the heart of Luther, to impute his actions to the principles of jealousy, of pride, and hatred, as the author of the *Prejudices* says that *Hospinian* has done, it is what we do not approve. For there is nothing in the world wherein we are more easily deceived than in the judgments which we pass upon the internal principles of any one's actions. We may say, This action is good, This action is not good; but when one action may proceed from divers differing principles, we ought to judge with charity, or if there be no place for a judgment of charity, the surest way is not to judge at all, but to leave it to the judgment of God.

If the author of the *Prejudices* had followed this rule, he had never attributed, as he has done, our carriage towards Luther and the Lutherans, to a piece of human policy: he had said on the contrary, that it was the effect of a just discernment, which we could not tell how to hinder ourselves from making without being culpable. We blame in Luther and in the Lutherans what we judge to be blamable, we commend that which we judge to be commendable; we bear with that which we believe to be tolerable without approving it; and if there be any excess either in that praise, or blame, or toleration, we are ready to amend it, when they shall make us to perceive it. Notwithstanding, we choose rather to incline towards the side of charity than towards that of rigour; and we would be much rather in a state wherein, by the influence of the grace of God, all sharpness, animosity, harsh ex-

pressions, accusations, and complaints, might be for ever banished, than that we should banish our praises and toleration. We will always preserve towards the Church of Rome, the same charity and the same justice, as much as it shall be possible for us to do ; but in observing that equality, we are grieved to see that we cannot but form very different opinions of her, and of those of the confession of Augsburg, and which produce contrary effects in us. These latter are in difference with us only about the point of the real presence, and about some questions of the schools which we cannot yet impute to their whole body ; and as for the rest, they reject with us the invocation of saints, religious worship of images, human satisfactions, indulgences, purgatory, worship of relics, the public service in an unknown tongue, the merit of good works, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, the supremacy of the Pope, the opinion of the infallibility of the church, and the principle of blind obedience to the decisions of councils. They acknowledge the Scriptures to be the only rule of faith ; they carefully practise the reading of them ; they own their sufficiency ; they believe their authority, independent of that of the church, in regard of men ; they distinctly explain the doctrine of justification, and that of the use of the Law, and its distinction from the Gospel ; they do not conceive amiss of the nature of faith, and that of good works ; and as for popular superstitions, we can scarce see any reign among them. Would to God the Church of Rome were in that condition, and that we could purchase it at the price of our blood and our lives. But alas ! we are very far from seeing any likelihood of success to that wish. All those points that I have set down, are so many differences which we have with her ; and in our judgments, there are so many errors and so many abuses in her, and we are so far from any reasonable hope of their correction, that we see on the contrary that they strengthen themselves in them every day, and that they discover every day more and more signs of their aversion for, or contempt of,

a reformation. Who therefore can think it strange that upon the business of religion we place a great difference between those of the Roman Church, and those who are called Lutherans? The one appears to us as a body spread all over with a great many boils, which all together put a stop to the functions of life; and the other, as a body that has only one or two, which do not hinder its life or its action. In a word, we do not believe that those who have imbibed the tenets of the Roman Church, where we differ from them, and who practise them, are in the way of salvation, as well by reason of the quality of the greatest part of those tenets, as by reason of their number. But as to the errors which remain yet among the Lutherans, we do not pass the same judgment, either as to their quality or their number. I say as to their quality; and the reason that we allege is very solid, whatsoever endeavours they have used to elude it: for although the opinion of the Lutherans about the real presence be erroneous, though we are so far from approving of it, that we oppose it as much as possibly we can, yet while they shall make a profession, as they do, to distinguish in the sacrament the substance of bread from that of the body of Jesus Christ, we cannot say that their error compels them actually to adore the mere creature of bread, for the same body of Jesus Christ that is hypostatically united with the word: we can very well say that they deceive themselves in imagining that the body of Jesus Christ is in a place where it is not, but we cannot tell them that they take another subject for the body of Jesus Christ, which really and in effect is not so. They do not therefore deceive themselves in regard of the object of their adoration, for they do not take the one for the other; I would say they do not take the substance of bread for the body of Jesus Christ, but they deceive themselves in regard of the place wherein they conceive the body of Jesus Christ to be, for they conceive it to be in the bread, and it is not there. But this error about the place, how gross soever it be, does not, notwithstanding, in-



clude idolatry; for, as I have said, they do not take one subject for another, the substance of bread for the body of Jesus Christ. But it is otherwise in the Church of Rome; for if she deceives herself, she does it not only as to the place wherein she conceives the body of Jesus Christ, but also as to the subject that she takes for the body of Jesus Christ, since it is in effect but the substance of bread. There is actually and really in the sacrament but one only substance; the Church of Rome does not distinguish it from the object of her adoration, on the contrary she believes it to be the body of Jesus Christ, and she adores it under that quality: it is then manifest that she deceives herself in believing that she adores the body of Jesus Christ, when she adores that which is really the substance of bread. It is to no purpose therefore that the author of the Prejudices says, “That it is false that the Catholics adore the sacrament in taking that word for an external veil:” that makes nothing to the question. Whether they adore or do not adore the accidents of bread, that is to say its figure, colour, roundness, is a thing by itself, whereof we do not now dispute; we speak now of the substance which the priest holds in his hands. But it is yet nothing to the purpose what he further adds, “That although the bread should remain there, as the Lutherans hold, yet we could not accuse the Catholics of adoring it; their adoration terminates upon Jesus Christ alone, whom they believe to lie hid under those sensible species.” This is an ordinary fallacy of their missionaries, fit only to deceive children. I distinguish: we cannot accuse those of the Church of Rome of believing that they adore the bread, or of being willing to adore it, or of having an intention to adore the bread; I grant it, for they believe that it is no longer bread, they believe that the substance of bread is changed into that of Jesus Christ; so that they can never be accused of believing that they adore, or that they are willing to adore, or that they have an intention to adore, the bread. They defend themselves in that whereof nobody ac-

cuses them. But if the bread remain in effect no bread, I deny that we cannot accuse them of adoring that which is actually and in the truth of the thing bread, in believing that it is the body of Jesus Christ; and a man must be of a very bad faith not to see it. For if I should imagine, for example, that a tree, that a rock, that a flower, was a God hid under the form of a tree, a rock, a flower, and if I should adore it under that quality of a God which my imagination gave it, it would be past all doubt that I should adore a tree, a rock; a flower, in believing myself to adore God.

But besides that, we are, in regard of the Lutherans, on very different terms from those wherein the Church of Rome would have us that we should be with her: for in respect of the Lutherans, the business is only about a mere toleration, which we give to those among them who desire it, with a spirit of charity, waiting till it shall please God to dissipate their error: but the Church of Rome, that calls itself infallible, would have us not only to have a mere toleration for her, but that we should make a profession of believing all that she believes; for when she separated herself from us, she anathematized all those who did not believe all that she had decided in her Council of Trent. The matters therefore are not equal between the Roman and the Lutheran communion in respect of us. To put them into an equality, it is necessary that the Roman Church should openly put herself into the state wherein the Lutherans are; that she renounce the invocation of saints, religious worship of images, human satisfactions, indulgences, purgatory, the worshipping of relics, the public service in an unknown tongue, the merit of good works, transubstantiation, adoration of the sacrament, the sacrifice of the mass, the papal supremacy, the pretension of infallibility, the blind obedience that she would have us give to her decisions. It is necessary that she should acknowledge the Scriptures to be the only rule of faith and manners, that she should carefully recommend the reading of them to the people, that she should confess their sufficiency without the

help of tradition, that she should believe the authority of that Scripture, independent (even in respect of us) on that of the Church, that she should distinctly lay down the doctrine of justification, and that of the distinction of the Law and the Gospel, that she should form a just idea of faith and of good works, and that she should take care to abolish all the popular superstitions which we behold among them. When she shall have done all that, with some other things which the Lutherans have done also, although she do retain the point of the real presence after the same manner that they do, we shall not fail to offer her the same toleration which we yield to the Lutherans, and the same conditions which we give to them; which is, that we should not engage ourselves to believe that presence, that we should always protest against it as an error, and that they shall do nothing to force us to embrace it. When the Church of Rome shall be in that condition which I have set down, if we do not make her these offers, if we do not even make them with all the ardour imaginable, we will be very well contented, in that case, that they should accuse us of human policy, and that they should tell us that we are a sort of men without any conscience, justice, and charity. But till then, we will take God and men to witness, that there is not the least equity in those invectives; and that it is to oppress our innocency, to ascribe that, as the author of the Prejudices has done, to an interested policy, or a capricious humour, which is but too well founded upon the things themselves.

See here what I had to say upon the Twelfth Chapter of the author of the Prejudices. It may now be judged of what force his accusations are. We should after that pass on to his Thirteenth Chapter. But as that chapter is but a sending us to a book of Monsieur Arnaud's, entitled, *The Overthrow of the Morals of Jesus Christ by the Calvinists*, I shall also content myself with referring my readers to the answer which I hope to make him. It shall suffice for the present to say, that the doctrine of the saints' perseverance,

as the Synod of Dort has laid it down, is a doctrine of the Scripture, and that all the pretended consequences which Monsieur Arnaud would draw from it, are of the same nature of those which profane persons draw from all the doctrines of religion, when they would abuse them to their ruin.

---

## CHAP. VIII.

THAT OUR FATHERS, IN THEIR DESIGN OF REFORMING THEMSELVES, WERE BOUND TO TAKE THE HOLY SCRIPTURE ALONE FOR THE RULE OF THEIR FAITH.

IT is now necessary to examine by what principle, or upon what rule, our fathers proceeded in their reformation. But before we go any further, we shall do well to weigh what the author of the *Prejudices* says, who has made an express chapter upon this matter.\* The argument of that chapter is framed in these words: “That the way which the Calvinists propose to instruct men in the truth, is ridiculous and impossible.” After having entered upon his subject, “As the matter is,” saith he, “about the promise which they make of discovering divers truths of the faith to the Catholics, which are in their judgments obscured and quite altered in the Church of Rome, there will be nothing more just, or more natural, than in the first place to inquire into the way which they would take to perform it, to the end that we may judge by the very nature of that way what we may justly expect. For if it be found that they would engage us in an infinite way, and which could not come to an issue, there could not be a more lawful excuse to hinder us from hearkening to

\* Chap. 14.

them, nor a more evident conviction of the rashness of their enterprise." Behold here, methinks, two declarations of that author sufficiently express, concerning the means which we propose to instruct men in the truth; the one, That it is a ridiculous and impossible way, and the other, That it is an infinite way, &c. and which can come to no issue: for we may easily perceive that that periphrasis of expression, "If it be found that they would engage us in an infinite way, &c." made use of in the beginning of a disputation, means, that it will be so found in effect; and that it is as much as if it had been positively said, they would engage us in an infinite way, and which has no end; there being no other difference between those two expressions, unless that this latter is the more plain, and that the other has more of the air of the philosophical method of those gentlemen. After that preamble, the author goes on: "It is true," says he, "that if we will hear them speak upon this subject without any more deep searching into that which they say, we shall have reason enough to be satisfied. For they boldly promise to lead us to the faith, by a short, an easy, and a clear way, without confusion, without danger of wandering aside; and this way, say they, is the examination of the articles of the faith by the Scripture, which is the only rule that God has given us for the deciding of the differences of religion, and assuring us of what we ought to believe, all others being subject to error." This is the explication of the way which we propose, which is to take the holy Scripture for the only rule of our faith. He adds, "But because in a matter of this importance we should take the greatest care to avoid dazzling our sight with words that would have more of show than solidity, it will be good to inform ourselves more exactly whether this way is so easy as they represent it, whether there do not occur some obstacles that hinder our passing further, and whether it be not of so excessive a length, that we ought not rationally to hope to come to the end of it, whatsoever diligence we use; whether it be fitted to all the world, and whether there be

not any person who may not, going on faithfully in it, arrive to the end whither it leads." Behold here another conclusion against our way, inwrapped under a *so*; to wit, "that it is of a length so excessive, as we ought not rationally to hope ever to get to the end, whatsoever diligence we use, and that, at least, it is not fitted to all the world." In what follows, he fills his chapter with the objections and difficulties that tend to turn away men from the Scripture, and to make them conceive that in effect it is "that infinite way which has no issue at all," of which he had spoke, "and that way of so excessive a length that we could never come to the end of, whatsoever diligence we should use." But the meaning of that is, that according to him, the way to be assured of the articles of the faith by the Scripture, is absolutely unprofitable to all men, of what order soever they be, and for what truth soever it be. For an infinite way which has no issue, and the length of which is so excessive that we could never with all the diligence we should use come to the end of it, is equally unprofitable to all, as well to the learned as the ignorant. And moreover, the greatest part of the difficulties that render it infinite, according to him, being not to be found in some obscure passages, but in the Scripture in general, it follows that we can never be assured by that means of any truth. So that behold here, according to the author of the *Prejudices*, the Scripture absolutely unprofitable, and that for all sorts of men, and all sorts of truths. In one word, as the title of his chapter bears, it is "a ridiculous way, and impossible to instruct men in the truth."

Whatsoever prejudice there has been in the Church of Rome against the Reformation, I cannot believe that it would not be shaken at so scandalous and unchristian a proposition. For to treat the holy Scripture, which is the oracle of Christians, and the word of God, as a ridiculous way, and to reject it as absolutely unprofitable, and improper to instruct men in the truth, without distinction, without limitation, as much for one sort as for another, as much for one truth as for ano-

ther, is methinks a new Gospel, which we have not yet heard spoken of; for there was never any thing spoke so high till this, or to say better, none were ever yet carried out to such excesses. We have read in Pamelius and some others, with indignation and horror, “That the Scripture is a nose of wax, which may be turned which way we please, and that it is far more easy to wrest it to profane and impious things, than it is to make use of half the verses of Virgil to compose epithalamiums.”\* We have seen in Pighius and elsewhere, that the Scripture is “a dumb rule, a dumb witness, a dead and lifeless thing, a sword that cuts with both edges,”† and such other expressions, injurious to the Scripture; but nobody, that I know of, ever went so far yet as to make it “a ridiculous way for the instructing of men in the truth.”

There are enough in the world who know that these gentlemen, of whose number is the author of the *Prejudices*, write nothing but for one and the same interest, and with the same spirit. I may therefore, methinks, with very good reason, make use, for this occasion, of what the author of the translation of the New Testament of Mons has wrote in his preface, to oppose it to the author of the *Prejudices*, to shew him that the spirit that animates them is an unequal spirit, that blows both cold and hot. For behold what that preface carries in it; “We hope that not only the souls of the more learned, but even of the simpler sort, may find here” (that is to say, in the translation) “that which shall be necessary for their instruction, provided that they read it with an entire simplicity of heart, and address themselves humbly to the Son of God, in saying to him, with Peter, Lord, to whom should we go? It is thou who hast the words of eternal life, and it is thou alone who canst make us learn. They must go to him, as those in the Gospel, of whom it is said that they came to

\* Pamel. ex Quintino annot. 237. in prescript. Tertul.

† Pighius contr. 3. Franchisi. Cordub. de Eccles. cap 82. Charon verit. 3. cap. 2. art 8.

hear him, and to be healed of their diseases.” And a little lower, “The holy Scripture is like to a great river, saith St. Gregory, which has always slid along, and which will do so unto the end of the world. The great and the small, the mighty and the feeble, may find there that living water which rises up even unto heaven; it offers itself to all, and is fitted to all; it has a simplicity that descends even to the souls of the most simple, and a height that exercises and elevates the most exalted; all may draw there indifferently: but it will be far from being able to be drawn dry by filling us; we may always lose ourselves in the bottomless depths of learning and wisdom, that we may adore without being able to comprehend. But that which ought to comfort us in that obscurity, is, that according to St. Augustine the holy Scripture sets before us, in an easy and intelligible manner, all that which is necessary to us for the conduct of our lives, which she explains and makes clear herself, in telling us clearly in some places that which she said obscurely in others.”

This language is very different from that which they hold in the book of the Prejudices: the one says, that we shall find in the Scripture all that which is necessary for our instruction; and the other assures us, that the way of the Scripture is ridiculous, and impossible to instruct men in the truth. The one declares that the Scripture proposes to us after an easy and intelligible manner all that is necessary for the conduct of our lives, which it explains and makes clear herself; and the other says, that it is a way of so excessive a length that we ought not rationally to hope ever to come to the end, whatsoever diligence we should use. The one makes it a means of instruction, proper not only for enlightened souls, but even for the simpler sort, for great and small, for strong and weak; and the other, in making it an infinite way which has no issue, makes it improper not only for the simple, but even for the most learned. The one extends its use unto all that is necessary for instruction and the conduct of life, and the other, in heaping up of general difficulties, makes it un-



profitable to instruct us in the least truths. What judgment can we make of this diversity, unless this, that the language of these gentlemen changes according to the difference of times and interests, as one has said of them elsewhere? When the case is about gaining credit to their translation of the New Testament, they speak as advantageously of the Scripture as it is possible for them to speak; and when the business is to oppose a reformation made according to the rule of the Scripture, but which notwithstanding has not the happiness of their agreement, you see what they say of that same Scripture. The Scripture shall then, to speak properly, be only to be commended by the interest of their translation; and as long as that interest shall remain, shall be “the collection of the divine teachings of our Lord, the testament that assures us of the inheritance of our father, the mouth of Jesus Christ, who although he is in heaven speaks continually upon earth; not only the nourishment of sound souls and those who are established in grace, as the body of the Son of God, but even the consolation of sinners, the light of the blind, the remedy of the sick, and the life of the dead.”\* For these are the titles that the preface gives it; but whenever that interest shall cease, those praises shall do so too, and it shall be nothing but “a ridiculous way, and impossible for the instructing of men in the truth.” I would therefore very fain know of these gentlemen, whether it were only upon the sight of their translation, that St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory, wrote that which the preface relates, or whether those fathers did not consider the Scripture in itself. For if it be the first, they forgot to tell us that they only spake out of a prophetic spirit of that translation; and if it be the second, why have they entertained us with that admirable proportion of the Scripture to great and small, to the strong and weak, and that easy and intelligible manner wherewith it proposes to us all that is necessary for the

\* The same Preface of the N. T. of Mons.

conduct of our life, since that, without the translation of Mons, it is an infinite way, which has no end, a ridiculous way, and impossible to instruct men in the truth?

What can the author of the *Prejudices* say to defend himself from this manifest contradiction which he discovers between him and his colleague? Will he say that the Scripture is in truth a good means for the instruction of men, but that it is so only with the interpretations of the fathers? But the author of that preface speaks for Scripture alone, separated from the interpretation of the fathers, such as its translation is; for he excuses himself in that he had not made a collection of notes and explanations drawn out of the writings of the holy fathers, and he does not fail to say that in his translation, as plain as it is, not only the souls of the more learned, but of the more simple also and unlearned, may find that which will be necessary for their instruction. Will he say that he does not mean to exclude the learned from the use of the Scripture, but only the more simple, for the instruction of which former, he does not deny but that it would be a most proper means. But besides that his brother speaks formally of the instruction of the more simple, why has the author of the *Prejudices* made it a ridiculous and impossible way, an infinite way which has no issue, a way which is of so excessive a length that one can never rationally hope to come to the end of it, whatsoever diligence one should make? Will he say that the Scripture ought to be joined with tradition, and that without tradition, it cannot give a perfect instruction? But the preface says expressly that they will find in that translation all that will be necessary for instruction. Will he say that in order to the Scripture's instructing one, the sense of the Church ought to be added to it? But the preface says, that according to Saint Augustine the Scripture lays down all that is necessary for the conduct of our lives after a most easy and intelligible manner, and that she explains and makes clear herself. Will he say that in order to the Scripture's being ca-

pable to instruct us, we ought at least to read it with dependence upon the Church, and to take it from her hand? But wherefore then would these gentlemen have the people to read their translation, since they are only private doctors, and not the Church? Wherefore, when the prelates raised to the highest dignities have forbid the reading of it by their ordinances, have we seen printed writings maintain, on the contrary, that there was in those ordinances "a threatening of the will and commandment of God, who would that we should hear his Son, and not that we should suppress his Gospel; a contradiction to the holy Scripture, which was set down in writing for no other end but to be heard and practised by all nations of the world; a contradiction of all the councils which have always taken the Scripture for the judge of the belief of the Church, and of all the difficulties and questions that can arise in the doctrine of faith or manners; a contradiction of all the holy fathers, who advised the faithful above all things continually to read the word of God."\* Why has one introduced two lay-men parishioners, Saint Hilary Montanus, saying one to another, "The bishops cannot take away from us the Gospel that Jesus Christ has given us, that God spoke to all his people, when he said, To-day if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts. A bishop cannot take away our eyes from us, to hinder us from seeing and considering our way: we should see Jesus Christ our Saviour, our Pastor and our great Bishop, who goes before us in his Gospel. But if a bishop would turn us away from, if an apostle, if an angel from heaven, would stop up this way, and would go about to lead and guide us in another, we ought not to believe him."† Why has he made us see those parishioners holding, "That there is nothing more contrary to the Gospel than a prohibition to read and have it; that bread

\* Dialog. of the two Parish. of St. Hilary Montanus. Dial. 1. pag. 23.

† Dial. 1. pag. 2.

and nourishment is not more necessary to preserve the life of the body, than the word of God is to maintain life in our souls;\* that all Christians have a natural right that cannot be taken from them, of instructing themselves by the word of God, and labouring to understand it;† and that the Holy Scriptures were given to the whole church, and not only to the bishops, who have no right to deprive the faithful of them.‡ That this is,” say they, “what the devil would preach up if he were visible, and transfigured into an angel of light, and in the shape of a preacher in the chair of truth; and what else would he persuade the faithful to, but that the faithful ought to take very great heed not to read the holy Scripture, and not to meditate day and night upon the words of life that the Spirit of God has dictated to the prophets, and which God the Father has given to his Son for the instruction of his church, and to draw it from the corruption of the world, to render it holy and without spot to his Father, who gave it to him. Jesus Christ was the Word of God, and lived by that word; and to make his church live, he gave it his word in an intelligible tongue, out of his own mouth, and by his disciples: ‘Search,’ says he, and examine carefully, ‘the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me.’”  
John 5. 39.

Thus it is that they speak of it sometimes; Jesus Christ gave his Scripture to the faithful, with a commandment to read it, to examine it carefully, and to hear it. It was the judge of the belief of the Church, and the difficulties and questions that arose in the doctrine of faith and manners. The parishioners made use of it against their bishops, they encountered even their ordinances by passages out of that Scripture, they maintained that the use of it belonged to all Christians by a natural right, and that to go about to deprive them of it, was to do an action of the devil. But

\* Dial. 1. pag. 3.

† pag. 25.

‡ Dial. 2. pag. 9.

§ pag. 17.

now-a-days they speak no more after that manner, for they tell us on the contrary that it is a ridiculous and impossible way to instruct men in the truth, an infinite way which has no issue, and which is of so excessive a length, that whatsoever diligence we should use, we can never arrive to the end; and they labour to heap difficulties upon difficulties, to drive them back, and to make a labyrinth full of circles and confused ways, that so out of a fear of those confusions, the world should take heed of entering into it.

For my own part, I freely acknowledge that I can comprehend nothing in all that. For if, before one can assure one's self of one only passage of Scripture, whatsoever it be, we must needs go through a thousand tedious ways, and overcome a thousand obstacles that arise from the question about the canonical books, about the conformity of the translations with the originals, about the different manner of reading the passages, and about the difference of interpretations, as the author of the *Præjudices* would have it, according to his ordinary exaggeration, to what purpose is it to give the public a translation, which, after the manner that it was given and received, cannot but be subject to the greatest part of those difficulties; and yet notwithstanding, they put it into all men's hands, as well the ignorant as the learned, as well of the simple as the more enlightened, as well to women as to men. The Church of Rome has not declared it authentic, two bishops and a doctor have approved it, but two archbishops and a cardinal have forbidden it; and yet one has not failed, notwithstanding those prohibitions, to maintain that all the world ought to read them, and that that forbidding them is "a violence, a novelty, an unexampled enterprise, a bold attempt upon the liberty that God has given to the Church, ransomed at the price of the blood of his own Son, that it is an usurpation, and the introducing of a tyrannical authority that was never exercised in the Church until this day; and that every one is bound not only not to obey that ordinance, but even to have an horror for it, and to resist it as much as

he can.”\* What will then become of those difficulties, and those unconquerable confusions, which hinder them, according to the author of the Prejudices, so that they cannot assure themselves of one single passage of the Scripture, through the uncertainty wherein a man is of the unfaithfulness of the translations; through the ignorance wherein we are of the different manner of reading those passages; and through the necessity of consulting interpreters? Is it because they would expressly engage the people “in an infinite way and which can come to no issue, and in a ridiculous way, and which is impossible for the instructing of any in the truth?” or is it rather because they did not propose to themselves in that translation to instruct men in the truths of the faith, but only to satisfy their curiosity, and to make them read good French? The author of the Prejudices may acknowledge therefore, if he pleases, that the heat of disputation has carried him beyond the bounds of right and reason, and the respect which he ought to have for the word of God, and that in endeavouring to have troubled us, he has done it for himself and his friends; for if that which he has proposed were true, they would give us a ground to accuse those who have published the translation of Mons, of rashness and imprudence. And it will be nothing to the purpose to say that they published it for those persons who were already instructed in the truths which the Church believes, that therein they might receive a confirmation and increase of the faith, by the conformity which they should find the doctrines of the Church have with it, and that it was necessary for that that they should go through all the difficulties which the author of the Prejudices has marked, since the sole conformity of it with the doctrines of the Church, would be sufficient to assure them that it was truly the word of God. I say that answer will not satisfy; for besides that it is an injury to the word of God to make the efficacy that it has in

\* Dial. 1. pag. 30.

our souls to depend upon the conformity which it has with the doctrine of the Church, whereas on the contrary the efficacy of the doctrine of the Church ought to depend on its conformity with the word of God; besides that, the author of the preface says expressly, "That the souls of the simpler sort may find that in his translation which is necessary for their instruction." He says not those who shall be already instructed in that which the Church teaches, but he says, the simpler sort; he does not say that they would be confirmed in the instruction which they had already, but that they would find that which should be necessary for their instruction. And elsewhere he says, "That the word of God," that is to say in his translation, for it is about the subject of that translation that he speaks, "is the light of the blind, and the life of the dead;" which signifies that it gives by itself the first impressions of the spiritual life. So that it was not in the view of the knowledge that the simple might have of the doctrine of the Roman Church, that he published that translation, if we believe the parishioners of Saint Hilary Montanus; but on the contrary, in the view of that ignorance under which they were held. For see how they speak: "Our Lord said, 'I have compassion on the multitude, for they have nothing to eat;' and you see the complaint that the prophet made, 'The children ask for bread, and there is none to give unto them.' It were a small matter if they would content themselves with the not giving them the bread of the Gospel; they will not suffer them to take it, and if they take it, they snatch it out of their hands; they do not instruct them, and they would hinder them so that they should not instruct themselves out of the word of God, and that that prophecy should not be accomplished, *Erunt omnes docibiles Deo—and they shall be all taught of God.*" John 6. 45.

I thought myself bound to make these preliminary reflections, to shew the injustice and inequality of these men that we have to do with. *Nihil est*, says Cicero, *quod minus*

*ferendum sit, quam rationem vitæ ab altero repossere eum qui non posset suæ reddere.* Notwithstanding, after having a little cooled that impetuous motion of the author of the Prejudices, I shall not fail to justify our fathers touching the principle upon which they made their reformation.

I say then in the first place, that they could not, in that state wherein things were, take the Church in their days for the rule of their faith, without renouncing common sense. The Church in their days, or to speak better, that which they would call the Church, was made up of three sorts of persons: the Court of Rome, the prelates and the other clergy, and the people. The Court of Rome was the source of all evil, it was that which had spread abroad all the errors and superstitions in the Latin Church, or that had at least fomented and maintained them when they took their rise elsewhere. Her usurpations, and the disorder of her government, was one of the complaints of our fathers. They complained of her principles, her maxims, and some decisions of the faith which she had caused to pass in councils that were servilely subjected to her will and her interests. She was therefore a resolute party in this affair, evidently interested, and by consequence incapable of judging. It is true that she called herself the mother and the mistress of all churches, and that one of her pretensions was infallibility in the faith. But that very thing was one of the errors of which our fathers required a correction, whatever probability she had of ascribing it to herself. Adrian the Sixth acknowledged a great part of the disorders of that court, in his instructions to his nuncio whom he sent to the Diet of Nuremberg, as we have already seen, and the general voice of the whole Church, which demanded a long time ago a reformation *in capite & membris*, make it known enough to leave us out of all doubt. Moreover, the Court of Rome did so loudly and vehemently declare herself against a reformation, that it could not be any further hoped for; and why should our fathers have taken her for the rule of faith, since not only



the Gallican Church, who lived in communion with her, maintained that she was not, but even the experience of many years had very evidently shewed that she could not be. Does not Tertullian, turned Montanist, testify that Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome, had received the prophecies of Montanus, of Priscilla, and Maximilla, and that he had already wrote letters of communion to the churches of Asia and Phrygia which were Montanists, and that those letters should have their effect, although Praxeas had not made them to be recalled, in relating false things concerning those churches and their prophets? \* And has not the Sixth General Council condemned Pope Honorius as a Monothelite heretic, with Sergius Patriarch of Constantinople, and some others? I know that some have said that that council was deceived in the business of Honorius; but without entering upon that question, in which it is certain that they deceived themselves, (as not long since P. Louis Thomassin, Priest of the Oratory, in his dissertation about that Sixth Council, has acknowledged,) it is enough that that council condemned Honorius for a heretic, and that it proscribed his name and his memory. For that condemnation, after what manner soever it happened, is an authentic declaration that a general council has held that Popes may err, and by consequence that they are not the rule of faith. And it is nothing to the purpose to say, as P. Thomassin has done, that Honorius erred only in the quality of a private man and not as Pope, or to speak more properly, that he did not err, but only that he had a mind to make use of a dispensation for the procuring the peace of the Church, which was divided about the question whether there were two wills and two operations in Jesus Christ, or whether there was but one, and that he desired that they would be silent about that point. Which side soever they choose, it will always follow from that example of Honorius, that the Bishops of

\* Tertull. advers. Prax. Cap. 1.

Rome are not the rule of faith. For to make a rule of faith, it is not enough to be exempt from error, either in quality of Popes, or even in the quality of private men, it is further necessary that they should be always in a state of not fomenting or entertaining heresy, but of opposing it on the contrary, of condemning it when it has made any progress, and of maintaining the true faith. But this is that which they cannot say of Honorius, in respect of the heresy of the Monothelites. That heresy had over-ran all the East, the Patriarchates of the East were infected with it, the Emperor Heraclius had established it by a public edict, a council itself held at Constantinople had confirmed it. Whether therefore they say that Honorius embraced heresy in quality of a private man, or whether they say that by a false dispensation he would only have imposed silence on the orthodox, which way soever they take, it is manifest that he was not in a state under the quality of Pope to put a stop to the course of heresy, nor to succour the true faith. For what likelihood is there, that as Pope he should have condemned himself as a private man; or that in quality of Pope, or as they speak, *ex cathedra*, he should have published the truth that ought to be held, while his own private opinion was that he should hold his peace about it and suppress it? It is therefore a mockery to make a rule of faith of such a Pope, who through his own private heresy, or his imprudent dispensation, could not hinder Monothelism from triumphing. And it cannot be a less one, if they should pretend that the Church of Rome should be the true rule of faith, while such Popes are her head, since she can do nothing without them, and since they might render her incapable to defend the truth.

I pass over in silence a multitude of other things, which sensibly shew us the falseness of that pretence of Rome; such are the lapses of Marcellinus and Liberius, the contradictory decisions of divers Popes, their inconstancy, their capricious humours, their interested judgments, and I know

not how many other characters incompatible with a true rule of faith. It is sufficient to know that that pretence has never been publicly received in France, and that our kings and our parliaments have always most vehemently opposed it.

As to the prelates and the other ecclesiastics, after the sad descriptions that we have given of their state in the days of our fathers, and many ages before them, there is no likelihood that they can yet further, with the least shadow of reason, propose them as a just rule of faith, which way soever they are considered, whether in general or in particular, whether separated or assembled together. Their ignorance, their negligence in spiritual things, their sinking into vices, their excessive love of the world, and in a word all that which we have seen in them, will not permit us to believe that we should be bound to trust absolutely to their word, about the subject of the Reformation. They had given but too many marks that they were subject to error, since the greatest part of those things which were to be reformed came from them, or from those who went before them. And besides that they were themselves express parties in that affair, considering the complaints that they made of them, and that they were engaged to uphold the superstitions in which they had held the people, we are not ignorant that they had a servile dependence on the Court of Rome, to which they were bound by oath that they would not stir, nor speak, nor act, but according to her inspirations and her orders, as experience has justified it to us in the Council of Trent. In fine, their prelates were men, and such men as had made the Church to fall into that lamentable corruption, out of which our fathers sought to escape; and how could they take them for an infallible rule?

As for that which respects the people, if the author of the *Prejudices* is, as is reported, the author of the *Treatise of the Perpetuity of the Faith*, he would it may be fain make them pass with us for infallible, and give them to us to be the rule

of our faith. But we have shewn him often enough already that he is deceived in his opinion. What was there more liable to deceive them, and more to incline them to abuses and superstitions, than the people, and above all a people ignorant of the mysteries of the Gospel, such as was for a long time that of the Latin Church? How could a people that ought themselves to undo the false prepossessions with which they had been imbued, serve for the rule of a reformation?

But some will say, If there had been nothing in the body of the Church capable of being a rule of faith, why did your fathers demand a council to hear their complaints, and give them a remedy? I answer that our fathers demanded a council, not such a one as that of Trent, made up of the creatures of the Pope, "who waited for the Holy Ghost's coming from Rome in a cloak-bag," as the Roman Catholics have reproached them; but such a free council as wherein they might yet have hoped that God would have presided, and his word have been heard. They demanded it not as the rule of faith, blindly to submit their consciences to all that which should be there determined, for they well knew that they owed that submission only to God; but as a human ordinary means in the Church that Christian charity and the love of order made them desire, to try if they could not by that way re-establish the purity of the Gospel in the West by the way of the Scripture. I acknowledge that there had lain a great difficulty in the choice of persons; but if yet notwithstanding they would have proceeded sincerely in it, and in the fear of God, without letting the interests of flesh and blood enter in, the difficulties were not unconquerable. Passion, contention, a spirit of division, were not as yet generally spread over all, they were not as yet so obstinate in error as they have been since. All the learned men that were then in it, acknowledged the necessity of a reformation, and desired it. They had therefore a ground to demand a free council; and those

who know history, are not ignorant that to elude that demand, which appeared to all the world to be so just and reasonable, the Court of Rome thought it needful to make use of the most deep and imperceptible piece of its policy. But howsoever it be, there is a great difference between a council that should submit itself to, and rule itself by, the word of God, and between a rule of faith. Our fathers might very well demand the first, and expect to obtain it, although the state of the Church was then extremely corrupted; for there were yet some good desires, which without doubt would have wrought some effect, if they had not been stifled or turned aside. But it does not follow from thence, that they must after what manner soever have taken that Church for the sovereign and infallible rule of their religion.

They would not have more reason to say, that we ought to turn to the side of *tradition*, which the Council of Trent has raised to the same honour and authority with the Scripture; we shall quickly see which ought to have been believed. It shall suffice to say here, that although the greatest part of the Roman traditions are new, as the Protestants have often demonstrated them to be, yet that in the age of our fathers, which was as it were the sink of the foregoings, there was scarce any error or any superstition, how gross soever, that they did not labour to defend, under the pretence of *tradition*; so that *tradition* is so far from being able to serve for a rule, that it ought itself to be corrected and regulated according to that maxim of Jesus Christ, *From the beginning it was not so.*

As to the ancient fathers, I confess that their writings may be of great use to learned men, to furnish them with a great measure of knowledge; but they can never have authority sufficient to serve for a rule of faith. The fathers were men subject to error, to prejudices, and oversights, as well as other men, and there appear but too many signs of it in their writings. They have submitted themselves to the authority of the Scripture: they have called it “the balance and exact rule of all things, a sure anchor, and foundation of the

faith:"\* they have taken, in their controversies, Jesus Christ speaking in his Gospel, for their Judge:† they have exhorted their hearers and their readers to believe them only so far as their words should be found confirmed by proofs drawn from the Scripture:‡ they have said that they did not care for "the testimony of men. but that they would confirm what they said by the voice of God, which was more certain than all demonstrations, or to say better, the only demonstration."§

It is evident, therefore, that our fathers could not take any other rule of the faith, or principle of the reformation, than the holy Scripture. In effect, the Scripture is the word of God, the law of our sovereign Lord, according to which we must all be judged, pastors and people, great and small, learned and ignorant. It contains the foundations of divine revelation, without which there is neither faith, nor a good conscience, nor peace of mind, nor hope of salvation; and if they would consider these things a little more carefully than they ordinarily do, I am persuaded they would make no difference with us about this article. All Christians are agreed that the word of God is the only source of all the mysteries that are necessary to our belief, in order to our salvation; and that his will is the only rule of our worship: this is a maxim about which there is no dispute between us and those of the Church of Rome; for they know with us, that faith comes out of the word of God, and that it is in vain to honour God, when we follow the commandments of men. Rom. 10. 17. Mat. 15. 8. All our difference consists but in the knowing where that word and that will is; we restrain it to the Scripture, our adversaries extend it further; for they would have it to be found in traditions, in the writings of the fathers, in the decisions of the Popes, in the determinations of the councils, and in all that which they call the belief of the Church, not only while those things are conformable to

\* Chrysost. hom. 13. in 2. Cor.

† Athanas. in Synops. Optat. lib. 5.

‡ Cyril. Hieros. illum. cat. 4.

§ Cleiz. Alex. Serom. lib. 7.

the Scripture, but also while they are contrary to the Scripture.

But as for the decisions of the Popes and councils, our adversaries themselves confess, that God gives them not any new and immediate revelation, that discovers new objects of faith to them, or new ways of worship; and that since Jesus Christ and his apostles, God has not given the like revelations to men, either in these latter or the preceding ages. "It is certain," says Monsieur du Val, his words being set down by Monsieur Arnaud in his Second Letter, "that the Holy Ghost does not assist the Pope, in the decisions of points of faith, by an immediate and express illumination, as well because that illumination would be miraculous, and that there would be no necessity of establishing such a miracle, as because that no Pope ever attempted to prove that when he would decide any matter, he should be immediately and expressly enlightened by the Holy Spirit. A council also," adds he, "has not the like illumination, or ever had: and if ever any had had it, it would have been without doubt the first of all, which the apostles held at Jerusalem, at a time wherein the Holy Ghost visibly descended upon the faithful. And yet notwithstanding, the apostles in that council did not determine any point of difference about the legal ceremonies by an express and immediate illumination, but after a long debate and discussion."\*

It is therefore an unquestionable truth, that there is no new and immediate revelation in the Church, and that revelation ceased in Jesus Christ and his apostles. From whence it evidently follows, that all that is to be found, either in the decisions of the Popes, or in the definitions of the councils, or in the writings of the fathers, or in the belief of the Church, or in that which they call *tradition*, or, in a word, in all that proceeds from the mouth and hands of men, whatsoever denomination they may pass under, is not the

\* Duvallius de Supr. summi. Pontif. pot. Part. 2. Quest. 5.

word of God, but as far as it may be found conformable to that revelation of Jesus Christ and his apostles.

But that being so, as it is without any difficulty, how can they be certain of that conformity, but as they refer to and compare things with the Scripture? They say that there are certain articles of that revelation, which the apostles have delivered down in trust from their own living voice, alone to their successors, and which from hand to hand have come down to us. . But besides that that very thing is a matter of history, about which we cannot have any certainty of faith, and upon which by consequence we can build nothing firmly, what certain sign can they give us to know those pretended apostolical traditions by, or to discern the true by, when they should be mingled with the false? From the first rise of Christianity, heretics would say, as may be seen in St. Irenæus, to gain credit to their errors, “that what they had were the secret mysteries which the apostles taught not to all in common, but to the perfect in particular.”\* Papias himself, as Eusebius testifies, had made “a collection of fables and new doctrines, under the title of *Unwritten Traditions*, which he had learned from the mouths of those who had seen the apostles and conversed familiarly with them.”† St. Irenæus speaks of a certain tradition,‡ which had passed current in his time in Asia, as immediately coming from the Apostle St. John, to wit, That Jesus Christ taught after his fortieth year; which is notwithstanding now held to be false by all chronologers. They do not hold the opinion of the Millenarians to be less false, which divers ancient fathers have approved and maintained, as a tradition proceeding from the apostles.

The churches of Asia who have the feast of Easter celebrated precisely on the fourteenth day of the moon’s age after the vernal equinox, boast for that purpose of the tra-

\* Iren. lib. 3. cap. 2, 3.

† Euseb. lib. 3. cap. 33.

‡ Iren. lib. 2. cap. 39.



dition of St. John and St. Philip; and the rest of the church hold, on the contrary, by apostolical tradition, that it ought to be celebrated on the Sunday of our Lord's resurrection. The Greeks, Nestorians, Abyssines, Latins, Armenians, have their contrary traditions; for tradition changes its face and form, according as the nation changes: one sort hold for a tradition the necessity of three immersions in baptism, and that of the use of leavened bread in the sacrament of the eucharist; and the other mock at it and reject it: the one sort believe a purgatory by tradition; the others believe it not: the one by tradition circumcise their children; the others hold that practice in horror, as being a relic of Judaism: the one sort fast by tradition upon the Saturday; the rest have that fasting in execration: one sort by tradition sacrifice lambs at this day after the manner of the Jews; the rest detest that custom. Who can say justly, in so great a confusion, This is apostolical, and this is not so?

Moreover, there are a great many ancient traditions, which public use heretofore authorized, and which time has so abolished, that there remains not the least shadow of them among the Latins; as that of not baptizing, without a case of necessity, but only at the solemn feasts of Easter and Whitsuntide; of giving of milk and honey to the baptized; of administering the eucharist to little children after baptism; of praying standing upon the Lord's day, and from Easter till Whitsuntide; of celebrating the communion on the evening of fast-days; of every one's carrying home with him a piece of the bread of the communion; of distributing the cup to all the faithful communicants; of receiving the communion not on one's knees, but standing; of mutually kissing one another before the communion; and divers others, which the Latins have abrogated. On the other side, how many Latin traditions are there which the use of the Church of Rome authorizes at this day, of which we cannot find the least trace in the primitive Church, and

which from thence visibly discover themselves to be new, and by consequence false and not apostolical; as the worshipping of images; invocation of saints; transubstantiation; adoration of the host; use of altars; that of lights or tapers; masses without any communion; the divine service in a tongue not understood by the people; the sovereign authority of the Church of Rome over all other churches; auricular confession; the number of the seven sacraments; and as many more, that the primitive Church, which came nearest to the apostles, never knew, as we have often proved, from whence it follows, that they are not apostolical, and descending from that only and last revelation, without which there is no word of God. There is therefore nothing more improper to be the rule of faith than that pretended tradition, which is not established upon any certain foundation, which serves for a pretence to heretics, which is embraced *pro* and *con*, which changes according as times and places do, and by the favour of which they may defend the greatest absurdities, by merely saying that they are the traditions which the apostles transmitted from their own mouths to their successors.

In a word, if they would have us to believe a mystery with a divine faith, if they would that we should practise a worship with a persuasion that it is agreeable to God, they ought to shew us that that mystery and that worship proceed from the revelation of Jesus Christ and his apostles; for without that, all that is in the world is of men's invention, since after Christ and his apostles there has been no revelation, as we are both agreed. But they can only shew us that by these two ways, either by that of the Scripture in shewing us that those mysteries and that worship are conformable to it, or by that of transmission *viva voce*. But as to that transmission *viva voce*, we are so far from being able to have a divine certainty, that we cannot have so much as a human, for the reasons which I have alleged: which are, that from the beginning of Christianity heretics have boasted

of them, and yet they were not believed for them: that the orthodox themselves were deceived in them, alleging them in false and vain things, which the following ages have rejected; that the schismatical churches allege them against the Latins, and the Latins against the schismatics, without one side having any better ground than the other; that the Church of Rome sets them before us for those new things, which the first ages never knew. It remains therefore that the way of the conformity to the Scripture, upon which we are all agreed, is that in which the divine revelation is contained.

---

---

## CHAP. IX.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE OBJECTIONS WHICH THE  
AUTHOR OF THE PREJUDICES MAKES AGAINST THE  
SCRIPTURE.

BUT “this way of the Scripture,” according to the author of the Prejudices, “is infinite, ridiculous, impossible; it has such confusions and length that we cannot come to the end of it, with all our diligence. The principle of the Calvinists,” says he, “includes all these maxims, without which it cannot subsist. 1. That the Church is not infallible in its decisions concerning the faith. 2. That traditions do not make any part of the rule of the faith. 3. That the Scripture contains in general all the points of faith, and so that whatsoever is not contained in the Scripture, cannot be of faith. 4. That it contains them clearly, and after a manner that is fitted to the understanding of all the world. So that the certainty of that way, and the hope that we can rationally conceive of it, must depend upon the certainty of these maxims.” Upon that, we must note, 1. That it is not here questioned

whether the Scripture be divine or not, but that supposing that it is so, he says only, "That he must demand of us those formal and decisive passages that prove those four propositions:" and that, when we do propose any one, we must, 1. be assured that it is taken out of a canonical book, and to that effect, we must examine the controversy of the canonical books, and see by what rules they may be known. 2. We must be certain that that passage is conformable to the original, and to that effect we must consult the originals. 3. We must be certain that there are not different ways of reading it, that may weaken the proof. 4. That we must narrowly see into the sense of the passage, not to give it too great a latitude, nor to blind ourselves with an appearance. 5. That we must see whether there are no expressions, or contrary passages, which force us to take the passage in another sense. 6. That we ought to consult the interpreters of one side and of the other, and to know what they say upon that passage. 7. That after this, we must come to the distinction of fundamental points, and those that are not fundamental, and prove it by Scripture. 8. That we must examine the passages which each sect produces in its favour. That lastly, after all this, it is necessary that a man should trust his own eyes and his own memory, which failing to go through all the former reasons, and preserving only a confused idea of them, will not further allow him to make a just judgment of things. He concludes from thence, that this way is not only interrupted with unconquerable difficulties and obstacles, but that it is of a length so little proportioned to men's minds, that it is evident that it cannot be that which God has chosen to instruct us in the truths by which he would lead us to salvation. "For," says he, "if they themselves who make a profession of spending all their lives in the study of divinity, ought to judge that examination to be above their abilities, what will become of those who are obliged to spend the greatest part of their time in other occupations? What will become of judges,

magistrates, tradesmen, labourers, soldiers, women, children, who have as yet a very weak judgment? What will become of those who do not understand so much as any of the languages into the which the Bible is translated? What will become of the blind who know not how to read? What will become of those who have no understanding, nor any readiness of mind? How can all those people examine all those points, the discussion of the least of which, notwithstanding, is evidently necessary to make them rationally determine?"

It is easy to see that all this heap of objections and difficulties which the author of the *Prejudices* has proposed against the way of the Scripture, tends only to lead men to the authority of the Church of Rome, to the end they should subject themselves to that as a sovereign and infallible rule. But as the doctrine of the sovereign authority of that church is not one of those first principles which the light of nature dictates to all men, since of thirty parts of our known world there are at least nine and twenty which do not acknowledge it, and as they cannot also say that it is one of the first and common notions of Christianity, since of all those who profess themselves to be Christians there are three parts which reject it, the author may freely give us leave, if he pleases, that we should first demand of him upon what foundation he would build that doctrine, to make us receive it as a point of divine faith? I say of *divine* faith; for if we should hold it only as a matter of *human* faith, he himself would see well that we could not believe the things which the Church of Rome should teach, in virtue of its authority, otherwise than with a human faith, since the things which depend upon a principle, cannot make an impression in us different from that which the principle has made. To the end therefore that I should believe with a divine faith that which the Church of Rome should teach me by its authority, it is necessary that I should also believe its authority with a divine faith. Thus far methinks we should not have any controversy.

Let us see therefore upon what foundations of divine faith he would pretend to establish this proposition, "The authority of the Church of Rome is sovereign and infallible." He can only do it by these three ways: the first is, by a new revelation that God should have made to us of this truth; the second, in shewing that it is one of the articles that is contained in the revelation of the apostles; and the third, in shewing us the characters of divinity and infallibility impressed upon the Church of Rome, even after the same manner as every thing proves itself by the marks that distinguish it: and thus it is that we pretend that the Scripture forces the acknowledgment of its own divinity. The first of these ways is nullified, since they agree with us that since Jesus Christ and his apostles there has been no new revelation, and that there must not be any expected. The second would be proper, and necessarily supposes a recourse either to tradition or the Scripture; for there are but these two channels in which we can seek for the revelation of the apostles. But that of the Scripture is forbidden us by the author of the Prejudices, by reason of the unconquerable difficulties which he discovers there. "It is," says he, "a way full of obstacles and difficulties; and even those who profess to spend all their days in the study of divinity, ought to judge that examination to be above all their abilities." He must therefore content himself with the way of tradition. But before he can make use of that, he must be first assured, and that with a certainty of divine faith, that that which that tradition contains is come down from the revelation of Jesus Christ and his apostles, or at least that this particular point of the authority of the Roman Church, in the state wherein it is at present, must have proceeded from thence; that the apostles must have transmitted it *viva voce* down to their successors, and that their successors must have received it and transmitted it down to those who descended from them, in the same sense, and every whit the same, as the apostles had given it to them. If he cannot be

assured of that transmission, all that he would build upon it will be uncertain; and if he cannot be assured of it with a divine faith, that which he would build upon it will not be more so. But how can he be assured of that? He has no more that living voice of the apostles to represent it to us, he must rely upon testimonies; would it therefore be the Roman Church that must assure us? But her divine and infallible authority is as yet in question; and while it shall be questioned, it remains suspended, it cannot be believed any further than with a human faith. Shall it be the Scripture that must give testimony to that tradition? But “there are so many difficulties in that way,” says the author of the *Prejudices*, that it is “evident that it is not that which God has chosen to instruct us in his truths.” Must we learn it from that tradition itself? But to decide that point, whether that tradition came from the apostles or no, tradition itself can be yet no other than a human testimony. I mean that the successors of the apostles declare to us that they have received such and such doctrines from the apostles  *viva voce*, and that they have received them in the same sense in which the apostles gave them to them; we cannot at the most have more than a human faith for them, for they are men as well as others. Hitherto therefore there cannot be had a divine faith concerning the point of the sovereign and infallible authority of the Roman Church, and nothing, by consequence, that can assure the conscience, and set the mind of man at rest.

Let us therefore pass over to the third means, which is that of examining the characters of divinity and infallibility, that may be seen in the Roman Church. It is, in my judgment, in the sight of this, that they give us certain *external marks*; and we have already seen that the Author of the *Prejudices* establishes upon this, that authority about which we dispute. “The most eminent authority,” says he, “that can be in the world, is easily discovered to be in the Catholic Church, because though there are sects that dispute

with it the truth of its tenets, yet there are none that can with any colour contend with it for that eminence of authority which arises from its *external marks*.\* But without entering here far into the controversy touching those *marks*, I say, that he is very far from being able to establish such a certainty upon them, as we ought to have of a principle of religion; and this will appear from these *three reasons*: the *first* is, That the greatest part of those marks are common to false societies, and even to schismatical churches, which not only are not infallible, but which are actually in error, as I have shewn in the First Part of this Treatise. The Greek Church, for example, in its greatest contests with the Latin, was always a Catholic Church; she was of as great antiquity as the Roman; she had an uninterrupted duration from many ages ago; she had her large extent, and her multitude, as well as the Roman; she had a personal succession of her bishops down from the apostles; she gloried in a conformity to the doctrine of the fathers; she had her members united among themselves, and with her patriarchs; she did no less than the Roman affirm her doctrine to be holy, and her word to be efficacious, and that her authors were holy men; she has yet at this day her miracles, of which she boasts; she had her prophets and temporal prosperity; in a word, she might affirm all that which the Church of Rome alleges. The Ethiopian Church, on her side, may do it as much, and yet nevertheless those *marks* no ways conclude a sovereign and infallible authority for them; they do not therefore conclude it for the Roman Church. The *second reason* is, That of all those pretended marks, some are disputed with the Church of Rome, others are fallaciously attributed to it, and others conclude nothing less than that which they pretend. We dispute with her, her conformity to the fathers, the unity of her members between themselves and with their head, the holiness of her doctrine, and the efficacy of her

\* In his Preface.



word. It is true that she boasts of these advantages; but if we should come to examine them, we should find they would have nothing of solidity in them; she fallaciously ascribes to herself the name of the *Catholic*; the antiquity and holiness of her authors, miracles, prophecy, and the personal succession of her bishops; for before they can make any advantage of those marks, they ought to shew that she is a Catholic not only in name, but in deed; that she has changed nothing in the ancient doctrine, nor in the ancient worship; that she has in nothing degenerated from her first authors; that she is conformable to her first Christians, whose miracles and prophecies are beyond all question; that her bishops are the successors of the mind and doctrine, as well as of the sees, of the ancient bishops; and unless they do so, those marks are an illusion. She produces others, which conclude nothing less than that which she should conclude, as the multitude of her children, or the largeness of her extent and temporal prosperity; which are worldly advantages, more proper to denote a corruption than an infallibility. The *third reason* is, That there are contrary characters in the Church of Rome, which note, not only that she has been, and that she is yet, subject to err, but that she has actually erred; and we have proposed some in the beginning of this Treatise, which it may be deserve to be better considered. No man can therefore establish any thing of certainty upon those pretended external marks; and in general that principle of the sovereign and infallible authority of the Church of Rome cannot be a matter of divine faith, on which side soever he takes it, nor by consequence can any of those things be so, which depend upon that authority.

See here then the obligation which lies upon those in the Roman communion to the author of the Prejudices, for having thus abolished all manner of divine faith, for those things which that church teaches by her authority, in shutting up, as he has done, the way of the Scripture, with his *obstacles* and *unconquerable difficulties*: he has reduced all to mere

conjectures, or almost all, to human testimonies. Is it therefore after that manner that he would have us believe transubstantiation, the real presence, purgatory, and the sacrifice of the mass? Is it upon foundations of that nature that he would have us to invoke saints, that we should worship images, that we should adore the host, and receive the indulgences of the Pope, and absolutions of their confessors? But he has done yet worse; for it is not only the laity and private men from whom he has taken away a divine faith, he has torn it away even from the whole body of his church, from her prelates, her popes, and her councils, since if this point of their sovereign and infallible authority is founded upon nothing but conjectures and human testimonies, they can neither have a divine faith for those conjectures and those human testimonies, nor for all those other things which depend upon them. Have they a revelation, an immediate illumination that instructs them? There is no such thing either for the Popes or councils. Should they have it from the Scripture? The author of the Prejudices has told them, that it is an "infinite, a ridiculous way, to instruct men in the truth, a path which we cannot know how to find an end of, whatsoever diligence we use." But it may be he says that only for the laity, and not for the clergy. Let us see his words: "Even those," says he, "who profess to spend their whole lives in the study of divinity, ought to judge that examination to be above all their abilities." The Church of Rome, the body of her prelates, the councils, cannot at furthest but be made up of those men who profess to spend their whole lives in the study of divinity, and that examination is above all their abilities. He ought not to say that they can altogether do that which it would be impossible for each one to do in particular. For when they go about to decide the matters of faith by their sovereign authority, as they pretend that councils should do, each particular man ought to be assured by himself of the truth, and not to refer himself to the knowledge of his brethren. With what conscience therefore

can they exercise their authority? With what conscience can they decide the points of the faith, and propose them to be believed as points of a divine faith? With what conscience can they retain men in their dependence? And with what conscience can men remain therein?

The author of the *Prejudices* may disentangle this business with his church, as it shall please him; we have no peculiar interest in it, but only to let him see more and more the truth of that which I have said elsewhere, that he does not sufficiently consider what he has wrote. Let us grant him that there is no necessity of a divine faith for the establishing of that article of the sovereign and infallible authority of the Roman Church, let us yield, if he will have it so, that he may be contented with the having a human certainty, such as he may have; it is clear that whether he takes the way of *tradition*, or that of the examination of the *external marks*, we shall find the same difficulties there, the same obstacles, the same hinderances, the same length, that the author of the *Prejudices* pretends to have discovered in the way of the Scripture: and as the external marks themselves cannot be otherwise justified than by tradition, it shall suffice to shew what I have said in the way of tradition; for all will be reduced to that.

1. It is certain that we ought not to take all sorts of traditions to be true, indifferently, since we have already seen that there are some false and apocryphal; so that we must learn plainly to distinguish it by itself, the good and the authentic from the others, and to that effect to know certainly the rules by which we ought to make that distinction, always remembering that the authority of the Church of Rome is not here of any use, because it is in question, and that it is that authority which we are treating of in that search. See here already no small confusion; for we must, for this, turn over a great many books, be well read in histories, pass a great many judgments, which cannot be very easy to a man who will not help himself with the authority of the Scripture.

2. After we have set aside apocryphal tradition, and it being restrained to the true, we must enter upon the examination of the question that is controverted, to wit, Whether the authority of the Church of Rome, as it pretends at this day, be taught in that tradition? And to this effect, he must see whether the passages that are brought to prove it are faithfully related, and for that he must consult the originals, and compare them with the translations, which requires a great knowledge of the tongues, or at least, as the author of the Prejudices says, that one should refer himself to a sufficient number of fit persons, to have no occasion to doubt of the fidelity of their relations. And as the number of ancient books is not small, that consultation could not but be long enough.

3. He must not forget also to inquire, whether there be not divers ways of reading the passages that may weaken that proof. For since the author of the Prejudices would have us observe this precaution to assure ourselves of one only passage of *Scripture*, why would he not have it observed to assure himself of the passages of that *tradition*? It will therefore be necessary to consult the manuscripts of libraries, or, at least, to read the notes which the critics have made upon the books out of which those passages shall be taken; this would be yet a matter of further labour.

4. But must he not also be bound to examine narrowly the meaning of the passages, not to give them too great a latitude; and avoid being blinded with a mere appearance? For if there are in the *Scripture*, as the author of the Prejudices assures us, "passages that appear clearly to contain certain truths, and which do not in effect contain them, but are an occasion of deluding those who are too easily led by that appearance which at first sight presents itself,"\* why must it not be so in tradition also? They ordinarily allege that passage of St. Irenæus in favour of the particular Church of

\* Chap. 14. pag. 341.

Rome, *Ad hanc Ecclesiam propter Potentioſiorem Principa-  
litatem neceſſe eſt omnem, convenire Eccleſiam hoc eſt eos  
qui ſunt undique Fideles, in qua ſemper ab his qui ſunt  
undique, Conſervata eſt ea quæ eſt ab his Apoſtoliſ Traditio.\** Theſe words ſeem clear to the partisans of the Court of Rome, for the eſtabliſhing a neceſſity of being united with the particular Church of Rome, and living in dependence upon it; and yet if we look a little narrowly into them, we may ſee that they ſignify nothing leſs than that which they pretend they ſignify, and that Irenæus would only ſay thus much, That the faithful came from all parts to the Church of Rome, by reaſon of the imperial power which drew all the world thither, and that from thence it was that they all together preſerved the doctrine that the apoſtles had left, without their having any conſiderable difference between them. That this was the meaning of St. Irenæus, appears from the connexion of his diſcourſe, wherein he propoſes to prove that the pretended traditions of heretics could not come from the apoſtles; and his reaſon is, that if they could have come from them, they would have been yet found in his time in the churches which they had inſtituted, and particularly in the Roman, which was in a manner an abridgment and compoſition of all others, by reaſon of the concurrence of all nations to Rome. So that to ſhew that the Church of Rome in thoſe times did not own any of the tenets of thoſe heretics, was at once to ſhew that they were traditions unknown to all the churches, and by conſequence falſe and not apoſtoliſ. This example therefore ſhews us that one ought not to let himſelf be dazzled by the firſt appearances of a paſſage, but that it ought to be narrowly examined; and that, as every one may ſee, requires time, and is not altogether ſo eaſy to be done.

5. To carry on that examination well, in reſpect of the paſſages of the Scripture, the author of the Prejudices would

\* Iren. lib. 3. cap. 2.

that we should carefully consider the like expressions and contrary passages, to see whether we should not be bound by them to give another meaning to those passages which we gather. He says, "that common sense dictates this rule, and that it is full of equity and justice." I see not therefore how he can exempt his catechumeni from it, in regard of the passages of tradition. It is requisite that he should carefully remark the ways of speaking in the fathers, in divers matters, in order to the making them mutually give light to one another. It is necessary that he should look after the contrary passages of the ancients, and that he compare them one with another, to draw out clear observations from them. But this will be yet further no small business; for it is very well known that there are things enough in the ancients directly opposite to the pretensions of the Church of Rome.

6. But not to detain the readers much longer upon so clear a matter, all the intricate perplexity which he pretends to find in the way of the Scripture, falls back again upon the way of tradition, when they would by this, without the aid of the Scripture, be fully satisfied concerning the authority of the Church of Rome. It is necessary to discern a true tradition from a false one; it is necessary to consult the originals; it is necessary to know the different ways of reading passages; it is necessary to search out the meaning with great diligence; it is necessary to examine the like expressions, and contrary passages; it is necessary to see divers interpretations of both sides; it is necessary to know why the Roman Church distinguishes between points which every faithful man is bound to believe with a distinct faith, and those which it is enough to believe upon the faith of the Church; it is necessary to examine that, which each sect that does not acknowledge the Roman Church, says against her; and after all that, it is necessary that every one should mistrust his own eyes, and the defects of his memory, and that he should be always recollecting his first thoughts, to keep himself from passing a wrong judgment.

In fine, we will also demand of the author of the Prejudices whether he would not give the Scripture this honour, to reckon it for one part of tradition, since it contains the first sermons of the apostles, from whence we may draw a great deal of light for the deciding of the question upon which we are, which is that of the authority and infallibility of the Church of Rome? For how can any man rationally determine himself, upon a point of that weight, without consulting the first and the most ancient piece of tradition? But that being so, we see here how we are fallen back into the difficulties and perplexities which the author of the Prejudices pretends to be unconquerable. And as those gentlemen are liable enough to be beaten with their own weapons, we will only turn against him the conclusions that he pretends to draw against us from his principles, and demand of him, “Whether he believes this way very proper for those who are obliged to spend the greatest part of their time in other employments? Whether he believes it proper for judges, magistrates, tradesmen, labourers, soldiers, women, children, for those who do not understand any of the languages into which the fathers are translated, for the blind who cannot read, and for those who have no quickness of understanding?”

If I only proposed to myself to refute this author, I might content myself with what I have said, and wait with patience for what he should have to propose, to disentangle his catechumens from the difficulties and lengths whereinto he himself has plunged them. But because I desire also to satisfy men’s consciences, I think myself bound to answer directly to his objections. Let us therefore see those four maxims which he says our principle includes, and without which he is certain it cannot subsist. As to the *first*, we shall tell him that it does not belong to us to lay down the proofs of this proposition, “That the Church of Rome” (for this is that we are about) “is not infallible in her decisions concerning the faith,” she is naturally subject to be deceived: if she

pretends to have a privilege that exempts her from a weakness common to all men, it belongs to her to shew it, and to convince the world of it; but till then we shall always have a ground to presume that she is subject to that general law, and that is sufficient, without any other proof, to hinder us from acknowledging her for the rule of faith.

As to the *second*, which is, “That *traditions* do not make up any part of the rule of faith,” we shall tell him that it is not necessarily incumbent on us to bring a passage of Scripture to exclude *traditions*; that common sense is enough for that, because it dictates to all men, even to the most simple, if they would take heed, that after sixteen hundred years, or thereabouts, which are gone since the apostles’ days, tradition cannot but be a very confused and uncertain thing; and that being so vague as it is, after its having passed through the hands of an infinite number of men, naturally unsettled and changeable, it is not imaginable that they should not have altered, increased, lessened it, since that happens through a long tract of time to all other things; and by consequence, that it could not at present but be out of a condition to serve for a rule of faith. Thus far the most simple are within the limits of nature and general experience. If they pretend that tradition ought to be exempted, it does not belong to us to shew that it is not, it is their part who make that pretension to produce their reasons; and yet for all that, it must be presumed on the side of nature and general experience.

It appears therefore already, that the two first propositions which our hypothesis includes, according to the author of the *Prejudices*, to wit, “That the Church of Rome is not infallible in its decisions concerning the faith,” and “That *traditions* do not make up any part of the rule of faith,” do not give us the least difficulty, but they give an infinite one to our adversaries: for they ought solidly to prove the contrary propositions, not only to the learned and knowing persons, but to the most simple also, to tradesmen, to labourers, to



soldiers, to women, and generally to all; or otherwise they abuse their credulity; retaining them without reason and without justice in their communion, in which they cannot remain with a good conscience, unless they are assured of the truth of these two articles, "That the Church of Rome is infallible in her decisions of faith," and "That traditions make up a part of the rule of faith." But how can those people have that certainty?

As for what respects the *third* proposition, to wit, "That the Scripture contains all the points of the faith generally," it has no more need than the others to be proved by passages of Scripture. It is sufficient to establish it, to see that we cannot be assured of the faith, either by the decisions of the Church, or tradition. For that thing itself necessarily leads all Christians to the Scripture alone, there being nothing besides the decisions of the Church, and *tradition*, that can dispute a part with it.

There remains therefore only the *fourth* proposition: which is, "That the Scriptures generally contain all the points of faith, after a manner fitted to the understandings of all the world." But this proposition, so framed, is not ours, neither is it included in our hypothesis. We only say, that that which the Scripture contains, in a manner fitted to the understanding of all the world, concerning the faith and manners, is sufficient for salvation, provided that moreover they have not errors that hinder that effect. But there is no need of proving this proposition by texts of Scripture: it sufficiently proves itself, as well by the very nature of the things that the Scripture clearly teaches, as by the light of common sense and the first notions of the conscience. For those first notions dictate to all Christians, that although God be free in the dispensation of his call, he is notwithstanding in good earnest towards all those to whom his call is addressed, and that there being among those the weak as well as the strong, the simple as well as the learned, it must necessarily be concluded that he would not render his salvation

inaccessible or impossible to the simpler sort, provided that they seriously applied themselves to it according to their call. The author of the *Prejudices* himself acknowledges this principle, and he calls it "a principle of common sense."\* He draws ill consequences from it; but the true consequence that must be drawn is, Those things which the Scripture clearly teaches, and after a manner fitted to all the world, are sufficient to salvation.

The author of the *Prejudices* may choose therefore, whensoever it shall please him, other propositions to exaggerate the pretended difficulties of the Scripture. But what choice soever he should make, and what side soever he should take, it is certain that those *unconquerable difficulties*, which according to him render the way of the Scripture *ridiculous and impossible* to the simpler sort, are nothing else but the visions and dreams of fancy, which admits or would create changes; and that he can say nothing more vain and chimerical than that which he has displayed in the 14th and 15th Chapters.

This is what will manifestly appear, if we consider that the Scripture is the rule of faith two ways; for it is so either to form the faith to a degree of perfection and completeness, as much as a man is capable of it in this life; or to form it to a degree of mere sufficiency for salvation. In the former respect, it is the rule of faith not only for the things which it clearly contains, but generally for all that which it contains, whether in express terms or in equivalent, whether by near consequences or remote; in a word, after what manner soever it be. In the second, it is the rule of faith merely for the things that are essential to religion, which it clearly contains, and after a manner fitted to the understanding of all the world. To make a just and right use in regard to the first, I confess that we must necessarily go over a great many obstacles, and conquer a great many

\* In his Preface. Pag. 11.

difficulties. We must weigh the words exactly, examine the style, consider the reasons, compare it with like expressions, consider the passages that seem contrary to it, penetrate into the true sense of ambiguous and obscure places, look to the connexion of the discourse, to the matter treated of, and to the end and design of him who speaks. To this effect, it is necessary to know how to distinguish the *apocryphal* books from the *canonical*, to understand the original tongues to judge of the translations by, and even to consult interpreters. All that requires, without doubt, a great deal of care, earnest application, a great deal of study; and it is very true, that to acquit one's self well of it, the whole life of a man is not too long. I shall even say that it is too short, and that human abilities are too weak to exhaust the Scripture, which is an infinite depth of mysteries and heavenly truths; and therefore it is that the author of the Preface to the New Testament of Mons has very well said, that "we may always lose ourselves in the abysses of learning and wisdom, which we adore without being able to comprehend." Notwithstanding, it is our duty to advance in that knowledge as far as we can, and it would be but a very bad reason for dispensation in that case, to allege the lengths and difficulties of it; for however we cannot attain to an entire perfection, yet we may notwithstanding make a considerable progress, and the more a man advances in that study, the more joy and comfort he has.

But as to the second way in which the Scripture is the rule of the faith, to wit, to form the faith in a degree of mere sufficiency for salvation, through the essential things which it clearly contains; in this regard, I say, its use is freed from all those lengths and all those difficulties, and accommodated to the capacity of the meanest, requiring nothing else but good sense and a good conscience, which God gives to the least of his children.

*First*, There is no necessity that a man should study the question of the apocryphal and canonical books; for that

discussion which is necessary when they would penetrate into the abstruse things of the Scripture, which may be drawn from it by remote consequences, or by a close examination of its terms, and the structure of the discourse, because those particular things do not carry so sensible a character of their divinity with them as the rest; that discussion, I say, which is necessary in that case, is not so when they restrain themselves, as the simpler sort do, to the essential things which the Scripture clearly teaches, because those things make themselves sensibly to be owned to be divine, and by consequence canonical, which is sufficient for the certainty of their faith, if they remain in that degree.

*Secondly,* They have no need either to consult the original tongues, or the different ways of reading, because that those exact observations which are necessary when we would make use of the Scripture in the first degree, are not so, when we would do it in the second. Imperfect translations sufficiently contain those clear things that make up the essence of religion, and the different ways of reading do not make any difference. These things are neither in one only passage, nor in one only book: they are so abundantly spread over the whole body of the Scripture, that the faults of translators, or varieties of manuscripts, cannot hinder us from finding them there. And if sometimes it happens that the boldness and unfaithfulness of a translator should go so far as on set purpose to falsify any place of Scripture, as Veron has done not long since, in reference to a passage in the Acts, which says "that the apostles served the Lord," and which Veron has translated, that "they said mass in the Lord;" or as the authors of the translation of Mons have done, who have inserted into that same passage, that the apostles "sacrificed to the Lord;" and another in the Epistle to Philemon, wherein St. Paul says that he trusted to be given to the faithful "through their prayers," where they have translated it, that he trusted he should be given to them "through the merit of their prayers;" when that I

say should fall out, there would be found enough persons in the Church, who would not fail to advertise the people of such unfaithfulness, that they might take heed of them.

*Lastly*, I say that it is not necessary that the simpler sort should consult the interpreters of the Scripture, to assure themselves of its true meaning; for the objects of their faith are so clearly explained, they are laid down in so many places, they are so well connected with one another, they are there in a manner that provides so well for all that is necessary for the instruction of the mind, for the consolation of the conscience, and the sanctification of the soul, that with the grace of God which accompanies them in his elect, they have no need of any thing but their simple presence to insinuate and enter into their hearts, and to form therein a true faith.

To dissipate in a few words all that the author of the Prejudices has set down in his 14th and 15th Chapters, I shall only tell him, that he can require but these *four conditions* in the objects of faith, to render them capable of forming a true and saving faith even in the hearts of the most simple: the *first* is, That they be sufficient for the salvation of the most simple; the *second*, That they be fitted to their capacity; the *third*, That they should have a certainty great enough to form a true persuasion in their souls; and the *fourth*, That they should form a pure faith, and free from all damnable errors. But all these conditions may be found in the object we are speaking of, which are clearly proposed in the Scripture. They are sufficient for salvation: for who will dare to deny that it is not sufficient for the salvation of the most simple, to know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one only Eternal God, wholly perfect, the Creator and Preserver of the world, the Absolute Disposer of all events, the Sovereign Lord of all things, Author of all, Judge of men and angels, and to form an idea which inspires, in an infinite degree, respect, love, obedience, trust, invocation, and acknowledgment of what we owe to him, and which makes

up the sole object of our religion? To know the profound misery of man, his natural corruption, his ignorance, his sin, his damnation, his impotency to get out of that misery wherein he is, and to form an idea that excites humility, horror at his own state, fear of God's judgments, and those holy inquietudes of conscience which Jesus Christ calls hunger and thirst after righteousness? To know that Jesus Christ the Son of God is our only Remedy, who out of love to us was made Man, who died for our salvation, who is risen again, who is ascended up into heaven, who reigns there now over all things, who intercedes before God for us, and who from the height of heaven sheds abroad his Holy Spirit into the souls of his faithful ones; and to have those thoughts which make us run to him, to place all our hope in him, to do nothing that may displease him; to do on the contrary all that he commands us, to imitate him, and to glorify him as he deserves, as much as we are able? To know the mercy of God which pardons our sins through Jesus Christ, which gives us heaven, with all necessary graces to carry us thither, and to have sentiments that carry us out to repentance, to confession, to prayer, to thankfulness for the favours which he communicates to us, to patience in afflictions, to trust, to charity as well towards God as toward our neighbour, to justice, to goodness, to compassion towards those who are in misery, to forgive those injuries that are done to us, and to hold a religious and brotherly society with those who have the same sentiments with our own? Who can doubt but that these things, well known and well practised, as we have laid them down, are not sufficient to the salvation of the most simple?

But, says the author of the *Prejudices*, it is not enough that these things should be sufficient for the salvation of the most simple, it is further necessary, for the quiet of their consciences, that they should know that they are sufficient. But they cannot know that, without scrupulously examining the question of the fundamental points, and the not-funda-

mental, which requires a long and difficult discussion. This objection is vain; for if those articles which I have before set down in general are alone sufficient for the salvation of the most simple, it is impossible that a good soul of that order should not understand their sufficiency, since those objects satisfy all the just and natural desires of the conscience. In effect, they make the most simple know the God whom they ought only to serve, they discover to them their own misery, they mark out their remedy and the means of their delivery, they inspire into them piety, holiness, justice, charity, repentance, consolation in their afflictions, and the hope of a life to come; and they furnish them with necessary motives to the love of God and their neighbour, which is "the fulfilling of the law," or as Saint Paul speaks elsewhere, "the end of the commandment."

It is not therefore necessary to the establishing the quiet of the conscience of a man, for him to enter upon the question of the fundamental, and the not-fundamental points, nor that he should engage himself in the difficulties and distinctions that study and meditation might furnish the learned with on that subject. That peace is sufficiently established by the things themselves which I have mentioned; and provided that one believes and practises them well, they will never fail to appease the troubles of a soul, and of settling in it a firm hope of its salvation.

But, says the author of the Prejudices, yet further, the Roman Church and the Greek Church deny that all the tenets necessary to salvation should be restrained to the things that are clearly contained in the Scripture, so that of necessity they must enter into the examination of this point; "for the authority of the Church of Rome well deserves that we should not, without examination, prefer the rash affirmation of a minister before it." I answer, that the sentiment of a good conscience, which contents itself with the things clearly contained in the Scripture, finding itself upheld by these two reflections, the one, That God has not any more made the

souls of the mere simple, than those of the most learned, to be deluded with the inventions of the human understanding, under the pretence of tradition, or of the decision of the Church; and the other, That God has not made his salvation inaccessible to them, well deserves to be preferred without any further examination, before all the interested pretensions of the Roman prelates, and all the superstitious reveries of the Greeks. And after this manner it will not be necessary to enter into any dispute upon that subject. They may dispute of it as much as they please in the schools; the simpler sort need not do it, they are sufficiently contented to hold to all that which they find to be clearly expressed in the Scripture.

We must therefore pass on to the *second* condition, and see whether those things which I have noted are not clearly to be found in the Scripture, and that in a way fitted to the capacity of the most simple. But it is certain that they are to be found there, and that they are laid down with sufficient evidence not to surpass the reach of their understandings, and that they are few enough as to number not to exceed the strength of their memories.

But the author of the Prejudices demands of us what clearness we mean, when we say that all the things that are necessary to salvation are clearly contained in the Scripture? "For," says he, "if Mr. Claude means such a clearness as will convince all well-disposed and ill-disposed persons, and that no prejudice can darken it, so that he acknowledges nothing necessary to salvation but what is expressed in the Scripture in that manner to be necessary to salvation, I will maintain to him that his proposition is impious, that it manifestly tends to make Socinians and Arians to be received into the Church, and almost all heretics, since it banishes out of the number of the articles of the faith all the tenets which those heretics dispute, and which they do not see in the Scripture." But it is not very difficult to satisfy that demand. I speak of such a clearness as will convince a



sincere person, who does not blind himself either by passion, or malice, or interest, or prejudice, but lets his reason and his conscience act in good earnest. This is nearly the answer that the author of the *Prejudices* would make, if we asked him the same question touching the clearness which he pretends there is in *tradition*, or in the infallible voice of the Church; for his justice is so great, that he does never propose any difficulties of our principle to us, which are not common to the principle of the Church of Rome, and which, by consequence, he would not be bound to answer himself, as well as we. Notwithstanding, I shall tell him that he grossly deceives himself, if he imagines that we will only acknowledge those things for articles of faith which are clearly contained in the Scripture. It is true, that we acknowledging them only for the articles of faith which are “necessary to the salvation of the most simple,” does not hinder, but that other things which are contained in the Scripture with less evidence may also be articles of the faith, although not absolutely necessary; for all that which is in the Scripture, after what manner soever it be contained there, is of faith. He does not less deceive himself, if he imagines that although the articles which the Socinians and Arians, and other heretics, dispute, were of the number of those which are not so clearly contained in the Scripture, and the knowledge of which is not absolutely necessary to the salvation of the simple, yet that we ought to receive those heretics into the Church. There is a great difference between simple persons who do not conceive a fundamental truth otherwise than under a general notion, and indistinctly, without going any farther, and those going so far as a distinct idea of the truth, expressly deny it, and substitute a false and deceitful idea in its place. The first may be in a state of salvation, and ought to be received into the Church; whereas the second sort ought to be banished, as persons infected with a pernicious error. A peasant may be made to believe in good earnest that Jesus Christ is God, and that the Father, the

Son, and the Holy Ghost, are but one only God, without going any farther; because he will not understand the terms of *nature, essence, person, hypostatical union*, and others that are made use of upon that subject; and he will also be ignorant of the subtle and frivolous distinctions of the heretics. Who can deny that such a man holds the truth under a general idea? And who will not yet place a very great difference between him and a Socinian, who very well knowing what these propositions mean, "Jesus Christ is God by his essence; The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three persons and one only divine nature;" will deny them, and substitute in their places these other propositions, "Jesus Christ is God only by the dignity of his office, and glory of his exaltation; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, being only so by denomination." It would be a very hard case in my judgment to exclude the former from the Church, but it would be a sin to admit the latter; and this shews us, by the way, the falschood of the reasoning of the author of the *Prejudices*.

But we ought to resume our discourse. I say therefore the same thing of the *third* condition, as of the two former, The things whereof we treat impress themselves, and make themselves to be perceived as true and divine, as well by the weakest as the strongest. For although the weaker are not in a condition to render a reason exactly of their persuasion as a learned man would do, yet notwithstanding we must not doubt but they are rightly persuaded. A tradesman, a peasant, a labourer, know not how to explain either the rules of right reasoning, or the mediums that logic affords to discover the faults of sophistry or false reasoning, and yet nevertheless they do still apprehend a just reasoning, and reject a bad. It is the same thing of a good doctrine and a false; the weaker sort may receive the one and reject the other, when it shall be presented to them, and they would make that discernment by the mere judgment of their consciences, though they should not be capable of explaining their reasons well. For

there are two ways of being persuaded of a truth, and knowing a falsehood: the one is, by a simple apprehension, and the other, by reflection; the first comes from a mere impression of the objects, that make themselves to be discerned by their very nature, and the other comes from meditation and study, through the application of certain rules. I confess that there is more confusion in the first, but that has also sometimes more force and more certainty than the second.

As for that which regards the *fourth* condition, which is, That the faith should be pure, and free from every damnable error; besides that which I have said, that the mere sentiment of conscience is enough for the weaker sort to make them discern the good from the bad, and by consequence to reject the false doctrines that shall affect their salvation; besides that, I say, it is certain that damnable errors, that is to say, those which are incompatible with a true and saving faith, have a natural repugnancy with the truths that are essential to religion, wherewith the simpler sort are endowed; so that those truths alone are sufficient for the rejection of errors, without any absolute necessity that they should have a greater stock of learning. For example, the principle of the adoration of one only God, in the souls of the weakest sort in our communion, is sufficient to make them reject a religious worship paid to creatures, without their laying under a necessity of entering further into the controversy which we have with the Church of Rome upon that subject. The principle of confidence in God alone, is sufficient to make them reject invocation of saints and angels, and a confidence in their merits. The principle of the one only sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross for the expiation of our sins, is sufficient to make them reject human satisfactions, purgatory, and the indulgences of the Pope. The principle of the mediation of one only Jesus Christ, is sufficient to make them reject the intercession of saints and angels. The principle of the truth of the human nature of Jesus Christ like unto us in all things except sin, is sufficient to make them reject the real

presence, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, and the adoration of the host. And that which is yet further considerable is, that as the essential truths of religion are so linked with one another, that there is not any one that may not be, as I may so speak, the centre of all the rest, that is to say, which may not have reference to all the rest, and immediate connexion, and which all the others may not serve to prove and uphold, which makes out divers ways or manners of establishing them in the minds of the most simple; even so those errors that are destructive are so repugnant to those truths, that there is not any one which may not be opposed not only by all in general, but even almost by each one in particular, which shews that there are divers ways of overthrowing them and destroying them in the minds of the weakest, and when they shall escape one of those ways, they will be sufficiently overthrown by another. For example, transubstantiation, which is repugnant to the integrity of God, is also repugnant to the truth of the human nature of Jesus Christ; to the formation of his body of the substance of the Blessed Virgin; to the state of that glory wherein he is at present; to the article of his ascension, and of his existence in heaven; to the manner in which he dwells in us, which is by his Spirit, and by our faith; to the nature of that hunger and thirst which we should have for his flesh and for his blood, which is spiritual; to the character of both the sacraments, wherein there never is any transubstantiation made; and to the perpetual order that God observed when he wrought miracles, which was to lay them open to men's eyes and senses: so that when a man should not be capable of perceiving any of those repugnances, he would perceive the others which would produce the same effect, and which would be sufficient to make him reject those errors.

See here then all the conditions that are necessary for the forming of a true faith, even in the souls of the most simple; behold them found in the Scriptures, and by consequence behold the Scriptures remaining the rule of faith, in spite of

all the endeavours of the author of the Prejudices. It is in vain that he so strongly opposes it, it will always be what God has made it, that is to say, the fountain and only source of the truth of religion, or as St. Irenæus speaks, “the foundation and pillar of our faith,”\* which only can give us quiet of mind, and peace of conscience. The difficulties which the author of the Prejudices forms against the Scriptures have these three characters: the one, That they may be turned against himself; that is to say, that as he has made them upon the subject of the Scriptures, we may also make them upon the subject of tradition and the Church of Rome, to which he would send us back; the other, That in regard of the Scriptures they are null and to no purpose; and the third, That in regard of tradition and the Roman Church, they are solid and unconquerable; and this is what will appear, if what I have said in this and in the foregoing Chapter be well examined.

\* Iren. lib. 3. cap. 1.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.













1 1012 01145 2226

