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LECTURES

ON

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, Sam: Miller.

AN ESSAY ON

CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE AND SELF-DENIAL:

BY THE LATE

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PRINCIPAL OF MARISCHAL COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR.

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LECTURES

ON

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

LECTURE XIV.

THE subject of the present lecture is remarks on the origin, the nature, and the consequences of the controversies, that, in the early ages, arose in the church, and on the methods that were taken to terminate them by diocesan synods, and ecumenical councils. Though this may, at first sight, appear a digression from the examination of the Roman policy, exercised in raising the wonderful fabric of spiritual tyranny, yet, on a nearer view, it will be found to be intimately connected with that policy, insomuch, that the progress of the latter is, without a competent knowledge of the former, scarcely intelligible.

I observed, in my last prelection, that for several centuries almost all our theological dis-

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putes originated among the Greeks: that to this sort of exercitation their national character, their education, and early habits, conspired to inure them. They spoke a language which was both copious and ductile to an amazing degree. Let me add, that the people in general, especially since they had been brought under a foreign yoke, were become extremely adulatory in their manner of address, abounding in titles and complimental appellations. To this their native speech may be said, in some respect, to have contributed, by the facility wherewith it supplied them with compound epithets, suited to almost every possible occasion, and expressive of almost every possible combination of circumstances. This peculiarity, in the genius of their tongue, gratified also their taste both for variety and for novelty; for they were thereby enabled to form new compositions from words in use, almost without end; and when they formed them analogically, were not liable to the charge of barbarism.

Hence sprang up the many flattering titles they gave to their saints and clergy, ἱερομαρτυρ, ἱεροψυχος, τρισαμωρ, τρισμακαριωρ, τρισμακαριςος, τρισμεγιςος, αξιομακαριςωρ, θεοφιλος, θεοφορωρ, θεοδιδακτωρ, θεοπρεπεςατος, θεομακαριςοτατος, χριςοφιλος, χριςοφορωρ, χριςοκινητωρ, and a thousand others. The same mode of adulation they introduced into

into their public worship; for though no terms can exceed, or even equal, the majesty and perfections of the Supreme Being, the practice of loading their addresses with such epithets, betrayed but too evidently their tendency to think God such a one as themselves, to be gained by fair speeches and pompous titles: for it is a common and just observation, that they are the greatest flatterers who love most to be flattered. An exuberance of inadequate and vain words does but injure the simplicity and the dignity of worship. In their explanations of the mysteries, as they were called, and in their encomiums on the saints, they abounded in such terms, and were ever exercising their invention in coining new ones.

The genius of the Latin tongue, on the contrary, did not admit this freedom; nor had the people, who spoke it, to do them justice, so much levity and vanity as to give them the like propension. What they afterwards contracted of this disposition, they derived solely from their intercourse with the Greeks, and the translation of their writings. Indeed, in their versions from the Greek, as the translator was often obliged, in order to express in Latin such compound epithets, to recur either to circumlocution, or to some composition, which the analogy of the language could hardly bear, those things appeared

awkward and stiff in a Latin dress, which in a Grecian habit moved easily and agreeably.

Now several of the early disputes, it may be remarked, took their rise from the affectation of employing these high-sounding titles. Hence, in a great measure, the noise that was raised about the terms ὁμοουσιος, ὁμοιουσιος, ὑποστασις, υποσταλικος, θεοτοκος, χριστοτακος, when first introduced into their theology. To these terms the Latins had no single words properly corresponding. Augustin, one of the most eminent of the Latin fathers, seems to have been so sensible of this defect in discoursing on the trinity, (L. v, c. 9,) that he apologizes for his language, and considers the expressions he employs, as only preferable to a total silence on the subject, but not as equally adapted with the Greek. "Dictum est," says he, "tres personæ, non ut illud "diceretur, sed ne taceretur." The truth is, so little do the Greek terms, and the Latin, on this subject, correspond, that if you regard the ordinary significations of the words, (and I know not whence else we should get a meaning to them) the doctrine of the east was one, and that of the west was another, on this article. In the east it was *one essence and three substances*, μια ουσια, τρεις υποστασεις; in the west it was *one substance and three persons*, "una substantia, tres personæ." The phrases τρια προσωπα, in Greek, *tres substan-*

tiæ,

tiæ, in Latin, would both, I imagine, have been exposed to the charge of *tritheism*. But which of the two, the Greek or the Latin phraseology, was most suited to the truth of the case, is a question I will not take upon me to determine. I shall only say of Augustin's apology, that it is a very odd one, and seems to imply, that on subjects above our comprehension, and to which all human elocution is inadequate, it is better to speak nonsense than be silent. It were to be wished, that on topics so sublime, men had thought proper to confine themselves to the simple but majestic diction of the sacred scriptures.

It was then the extravagant humour of these fanciful and prating orientals, assisted by their native idiom, which produced many of the new fangled and questionable terms I have been speaking of; the terms produced the controversies; and these, in return, gave such consequence to the terms that gave them birth, and created so violent an attachment in the party that favoured them, that people could not persuade themselves that it was possible, that the doctrine of the gospel should subsist, and be understood or conveyed by any body without them. Men never seemed to reflect, that the gospel had been both better taught and better understood, as well as better practised, long before this fantastic dress,

borrowed from the schools of the sophists, was devised and adapted to it. However, the consequence which these disputes gave to the Greek terms, occasioned an imitation of them in the less pliant language of the occidentals. Hence these barbarisms, or at least unclassic words, in Latin, *essentialis*, *substantialis*, *consubstantialis*, *Christipara*, *Deipara*, and several others of the same stamp, to be found in the writings of the ecclesiastic authors of the fifth and following centuries. All those subtle questions, which so long distracted and disgraced the church, would then, we may well believe, both from the character of the people, and from the genius of the tongue, much more readily originate, as history informs us that they did, among the Greeks than among the Latins. Indeed the latter were often slower than we should have expected in coming into the dispute. For this we may justly assign, as one principal reason, the general ignorance of the Latins at that time. Letters had, long before Constantine, been in their decline at Rome; insomuch, that at the period I allude to, when those controversies were most hotly agitated, the greater part, even of men in respectable stations, understood no tongue but their own. If they had studied any other, doubtless it would have been Greek, which was become the language of the imperial court now at Constantinople; and not

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only of Greece itself, but of almost all the east, particularly of all the men of rank and letters in Asia, Syria, and Egypt. And if even Greek was little understood in Rome, we may safely conclude, that other languages were hardly known at all.

Yet that it was very little known in the fifth century, in the time of pope Celestine, when the controversy betwixt Cyril and Nestorius broke out, is evident from this single circumstance: When Nestorius wrote to the pope, sending him an account of the contest, together with a copy of his homilies, containing his doctrine on the point in question, all in Greek, his mother tongue; not only was the pontiff himself ignorant of that language, but, it would seem, all the Roman clergy, consisting of many hundreds, knew no more of it than he. And, though we cannot suppose, that there were not then many in Rome who understood Greek, yet there seem to have been none of that consideration, that the pope could decently employ them in a business of so great consequence. Accordingly, he was obliged to send the whole writings to Cassian, a man of learning, a native of Thrace, who then resided at Marseilles in Gaul, to be translated by him into Latin. This delay gave Cyril no small advantage; for though he wrote to the pope after Nestorius, yet knowing better, it would

seem, the low state of literature at that time in Rome, he prudently employed the Latin tongue, in giving his representation of the affair; and, in this way, produced a prepossession in the mind of the pontiff, which it was impossible for Nestorius afterwards to remove.

Perhaps, too, it may have contributed to make the Latins less disposed, at first, to enter with warmth into the controversies which sprang up, that the terms whereby the Greek words, on both sides of the question, were latinized, rather than translated, appeared so uncouth and barbarous, that they had little inclination to adopt them. But when time had familiarized their ears to them, we find they could enter into the subject as passionately as the Greeks.

When controversies once were started, the natural vanity of the disputants, together with the conceived importance of the subject, as relating to religion, (an importance which every one, in proportion to the resentment contracted from the contradiction he had met with, was disposed to magnify) inflamed their zeal, and raised a violence in the parties which the world had never witnessed before. In whatever corner of christendom the controversy originated, the flame came by degrees to spread throughout the whole, so that the Latin as well as the Greek churches never failed, sooner or later, to be involved

volved in the dispute. As the former, however, for the reasons above-mentioned, came almost always last into the contest, they had previous opportunity of knowing both on what side those who, for learning, parts, and piety, had attained the highest reputation, declared themselves, and to what side the people generally swayed. With these advantages, the Latins, though less intelligent in philological and metaphysical disputes, yet being more united among themselves, a consequence, in a great measure, of their ignorance, which made them more implicit followers, (these I say) when they did declare in favour of a side, commonly, by their number, decided the question, thereby ascertaining what was orthodox, and what was not.

It may also account in part for their greater unanimity, that they had fewer leaders. There were several eminent sees in the east, which were a sort of rivals to one another, for not to mention the exarchal sees of Ephesus and Cesarea, there were the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, each considerable enough to be a check upon the rest. In the west, there was no see whatever that could cope with Rome. But it must be owned, that there was not only a closer union, but in general more steadiness, among the Latins, than among their rivals, the Greeks. This may be accounted for partly from the

the same causes, partly from the difference of national character. The Romans were as remarkable for their gravity, as the Greeks for their levity. Indeed, the Roman pontiffs, who were the chief leaders in the west, did not often renounce a cause, in favour of which they had once declared themselves. I say they did not often; for that they acted this part sometimes, is unquestionable. However far, therefore, this argument may go, in support of the policy of Rome, it cannot be urged in support of her infallibility, as it admits several glaring exceptions. Nothing is more notorious than Rome's desertion of the side which she had long maintained, on the ridiculous question about the three chapters: in regard to which, pope Vigilius, as is observed by Maimburg *, shifted sides no fewer than four times. It is well known, that pope Honorius was, after his death, by a council holden at Constantinople, towards the end of the seventh century, commonly called the sixth general council, condemned as a heretic, and an organ of the devil, for holding the doctrine of the Monothelites. To this judgment the then reigning pope Agatho consented, not only by his legates, but by the reception and approbation he gave to the decrees of that assembly. Also Leo the second,

* Traité Historique de l'Église de Rome, chap. vii.

Agatho's

Agatho's successor, declared his concurrence in the anathema pronounced by the council against pope Honorius.

Were it necessary to produce an instance of change in the same pontiff, beside Virgilius above mentioned, Liberius furnishes a most apposite example. This pope, about the middle of the fourth century, when the Arian controversy was at its heighth, intimidated by the power of the reigning emperor Constantius, whom he knew to be a zealous disciple of Arius, declared publicly in favour of that party, and excommunicated Athanasius, whom all the orthodox regarded as the patron and defender of the catholic cause. This sentence he soon after revoked, and after revoking it, his legates, at the council of Arles, overawed by the emperor, concurred with the rest in signing the condemnation of Athanasius, yielding, as they expressed it, to the troublesome times. Afterwards, indeed, Liberius was so far a confessor in the cause of orthodoxy, that he underwent a long and severe banishment, rather than lend his aid and countenance to the measures which the emperor pursued for establishing arianism throughout the empire. But however firm and undaunted the pope appeared for a time, he had not the magnanimity to persevere, but was at length, in order to recover his freedom, his country, and his bishopric, induced to retract

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his retractation, to sign a second time the condemnation of Athanasius, and to embrace the Arian symbol of Sirmium. Not satisfied with this, he even wrote to the Arian bishops of the east, excusing his former defence of Athanasius, imputing it to an excessive regard for the sentiments of his predecessor Julius; and declaring, that now, since it had pleased God to open his eyes, and show him how justly the heretic Athanasius had been condemned, he separated himself from his communion, and cordially joined their holinesses, (so he styled the Arian bishops) in supporting the true faith. Before he returned from exile, meeting with the emperor, who was by this time turned semiarian, the pliant pontiff, impatient to be again in possession of his see, was induced to change anew, and subscribe the semiarian confession.

This apostacy of Liberius, which has given infinite plague to the prostitute pens employed in support of papal usurpations, whose venal talents are ever ready for the dirty work of defending every absurdity, that can gratify the views of their superiours, this, which in their hands has proved a copious source of sophistry, chicane, and nonsense, whilst, as Bower well expresses it, like men struggling for life in deep water, and catching at every twig, they flounce in vain from quibble to quibble, and from one subterfuge to another;

another; this apostacy, I say, was acknowledged and lamented by all the contemporary fathers, who take occasion to mention these transactions, even by those who have since been canonized, and are, at this day, worshipped in the Romish church, as saints of the first magnitude. A plain proof, that the plea of infallibility had not then been heard of. Jerom, Athanasius, Hilarius, all in one voice, accuse this pope of giving the sanction of his name to heresy. The last of these, St. Hilarius, cannot refrain, when he mentions him, from anathematizing him, and all his perfidious adherents. All the ancient historians concur, in like manner, in attesting, that he apostatized from the faith.

Moreover, the same Liberius afterwards admitted to his communion, being, probably, ignorant of their sentiments, the Macedonians, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Last of all, after the death of the Arian emperor, and the accession of Julian, commonly called the apostate, who, though not a christian, professed to be a friend to toleration, the venerable, the infallible head of the church universal, as the partizans of Rome now denominate their pontiff, made one change more, and returned to orthodoxy.

To give but one instance more, pope John the twenty-second, in two sermons, (for even so low

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as the fourteenth century, popes sometimes preached) maintained, that the saints departed are not admitted to the beatific vision till after the resurrection. This doctrine gave great and general offence. One Wallis, an Englishman, was the first who ventured to preach publicly against it. This he did in Avignon itself, where the pope then resided. Wallis, for his uncommon audacity, was thrown into prison, and condemned to live on bread and water. Afterwards the question was canvassed by several theologians of character, particularly by those of the university of Paris, with all the bishops and abbots then in that metropolis, and also by a synod assembled at Vincennes, who unanimously condemned the pope's opinion as repugnant to scripture, and heretical. Philip, the sixth king of France, sent the pontiff an authentic copy of this decision, signed by twenty-six eminent divines, requiring his holiness to acquiesce in their judgment, and (if cardinal d'Ailly may be credited) threatning, that in case he did not, he would cause him to be burned for heresy. The pope at first attempted to vindicate his doctrine, but finding, soon after, that the dissatisfaction, and even scandal, which it had given, were almost universal, he was induced to declare, in a public consistory, that he never intended to support any tenet contrary to the scriptures and the

the catholic faith; but that if he had inadvertently dropt any such thing in his sermons, he retracted it. This, though not an acknowledgment of his errour, was a plain acknowledgment of his fallibility. In his last illness, however, a few hours before his death, he made a public and solemn retractation of his erroneous doctrine, in presence of all the cardinals and bishops then at Avignon, called together on purpose, declaring, that the saints departed were admitted to the sight of God's essence, (such was the jargon of the time) as soon as they were purged from their sins; and retracting whatever he had said, preached, or written, to the contrary. His successor, Benedict the twelfth, that his own orthodoxy might not be suspected, took an early opportunity of preaching on the beatific vision; and, in his sermon, showed his sentiments to be the reverse of those which had given so much scandal in his predecessor. Not satisfied with this, he caused the point to be discussed in a consistory, to which he invited all who had adopted pope John's opinion, that they might produce what they had to offer in its defence. Afterwards he published a constitution, wherein, without naming his predecessor, he expressly condemned his doctrine, commanding all to be prosecuted as heretics, who should thenceforth obstinately maintain or teach it. I might pro-

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duce another instance from the same pope John, who maintained, in a decretal, that the Franciscan friars had property, in direct contradiction to a decretal of his predecessor Nicolas the fourth, affirming, with other popes, that they had none, and was not less zealous for the side he took in this profound controversy than if the whole of christianity had depended on it; commanding the inquisitors to extirpate, by all possible means, the contrary, pestilential, erroneous, heretical, and blasphemous doctrine.

But to return to our subject, it is certain that the bishops of Rome cannot be accused of having often acted so weak a part as pope Liberius, pope Vigilius, or pope John. Besides the case of the first, and that of the church, in his time, were particular. Heterodoxy had then a powerful and bigotted prince for its protector, who stuck at no means by which he could accomplish the extirpation of the faith of Nice, and the establishment of Arianism in every part of his dominions; and, in fact, what with persuasion, what with compulsion, the defection was become universal, insomuch, that before the death of that violent antitrinitarian persecutor, there was, in the whole church, but one orthodox bishop who kept possession of his see, Gregory of Elvira, in Andalusia. However justly, therefore, the versatility of Liberius may be considered as totally

totally subversive of the plea of infallibility, it does not invalidate what has been said in regard to the profound policy and address generally maintained by that watchful power. The case of Vigilius was, in some respects, similar.

We have seen with what steadiness, and at how great a risk, the re-union of the eastern church and the western was so effected as to give a very considerable ascendancy to the latter, which she had never enjoyed before. The manner of conducting the measure did but too manifestly show, that it was a matter of no consequence to her, whether the Greeks were orthodox or heterodox, whilst they continued independent of her authority, and did not dread her displeasure. These, at least the greater part of their doctors, were a race of quibbling sophists, engrossed with the imaginary importance of their unintelligible speculations, and futile disquisitions, who did not conceive a nobler object of their pursuit, than that their particular explanations and phraseology should be adopted into the system and language of the church.

Though the Greeks taken together were, in all literary matters, an overmatch for the Latins, yet, as the latter kept pretty close united, whilst the former were split into parties, eternally disputing and squabbling, the Latins derived hence an inconceivable advantage. For however much

the Greeks in general affected to despise them as rude and illiterate, compared with themselves, no sooner did they take a side in any controversy, than they were sure to gain over that party of the Greeks whose side they took; the general rivalship between Greeks and Latins was swallowed up in the love of victory, so natural to professed combatants, and in the particular emulation that each entertained against a hated antagonist in the controversy. Though both nations were greatly degenerated from what they had been in the Augustan age, the vestiges of their original and respective national characters, as described by the prince of Latin poets, were still discernible:

> Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra:
> Credo equidem: vivos ducent de marmore vultus:
> Orabunt causas melius: cœlique meatus
> Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent.
> Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,
> (Hæ tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem;
> Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.
>
> ÆN. L. 6.

That the Romans, by their valour, their public virtue, and their immense superiority in the art of war, should have raised an empire over the undisciplined surrounding nations, who were all, except the Greeks, so much their inferiours in every thing but animal courage and brute force,

is not so very astonishing, as to a careless eye it may at first appear. But that after their extraordinary success had enriched them with the spoils of all nations; after their riches had introduced luxury, effeminacy, and indolence; after they had, by their vices, become, in their turn, a prey to the barbarians they had formerly subdued; after the empire came to be torn to pieces by Goths, Vandals, Huns, and Lombards; when the sun of science was now set, and the night of ignorance, superstition, and barbarism, was fast advancing; that out of the ruins of every thing great and venerable, there should spring a new species of despotism never heard of, or imagined before, whose means of conquest and defence were neither swords nor spears, fortifications, nor warlike engines, but definitions and canons, sophisms and imprecations, and that by such weapons, as by a kind of magic, there should actually be reared a second universal monarchy, the most formidable the world ever knew, will, to latest ages, afford matter of astonishment to every judicious inquirer.

Of the numerous controversies wherewith the church was, for several ages, pestered, some related only to things ceremonial. Of this sort was the contention about the time of the observance of Easter, which, so early as the second century, raised a flame in the church. Others,

doubtless, concerned essential articles in the christian theology. Such were the Arian controversy and the Pelagian. Whether Jesus Christ was a divine person, and existed from eternity, or a mere creature, and had a beginning; whether by grace in scripture we are to understand advantages with regard to us properly external, such as the remission of sins, the revelation of God's will by his Son, the benefit of the examples of Christ and his apostles, the promises of the gospel, and the gifts of Providence, or whether we ought also to comprehend, under that name, as things equally real, certain internal benefits conferred on the mind by the invisible operation of the Holy Spirit; are momentous questions, which nearly affect the substance of christian doctrine.

But from this fund many other questions may, by men more curious than wise, be easily started, which no modest man will think himself capable of answering, and no pious man will think it his duty to pry into. Such are some of those that have been moved in regard to the manner of the spirit's operation, in regard to the generation of the second person of the trinity, and the procession of the third. To this class may be added, those impertinent inquiries which have sometimes produced as great a ferment as the most momentous would have done. Of this sort

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is the question concerning the natural corruptibility of the body of Christ, and that about the palpability of the bodies of the saints after the resurrection.

There is a fourth set of questions, which are mere logomachies, in regard to which the different combatants have either no fixed meaning to the words they employ, or mean precisely the same thing under different expressions. In this last case, the controversy is either absolutely nonsensical, or purely verbal. Nor has this been the least fruitful source of contention in the church. What could be a more flagrant example of this than the question which created, in the time of pope Hormisdas and some of his successors, so much animosity and strife? The point was, whether we ought to say, "One of "the trinity suffered in the flesh," or, "One "person of the trinity suffered in the flesh." On this pretty puzzle there were four different opinions. One set approved both expressions, a second condemned both, a third maintained the former expression to be orthodox, the latter heterodox, and a fourth affirmed the reverse. In this squabble, emperors, popes, and patriarchs, engaged with great fury. The then reigning emperor Justinian was as mere a dotard on all the sophistical trash then in vogue among the theologians, as any scholastic recluse, who

had been inured to wrangling from his cradle, and had nothing else to mind. Luckily, however, no council was convened to discuss the point, and give it sufficient importance. In consequence of this cruel neglect it died away.

The dispute with Nestorius, though equally frivolous, being treated differently, took deeper root. The point in debate at first was, Whether the Virgin Mary might be denominated more properly the mother of God, or the mother of him that is God? It is plain, that there could not arise a question which might be more justly said to turn merely on grammatical propriety. Both sides admitted, that Jesus Christ is God as well as man; both sides admitted, that his human nature was born of the Virgin, and that his divine nature existed from eternity; both sides admitted the distinction between the two natures, and their union in the person of Christ. Where then lay the difference? It could be no where but in phraseology. Yet this notable question raised a conflagration in the church, and proved, in the east, the source of infinite mischief, hatred, violence, and persecution. It is reported of Constantine Copronymus, in the eighth century, that he one day asked the patriarch, "What harm would there be in calling "the Virgin Mary the mother of Christ?" *God preserve your majesty*, answered the patriarch,

arch, with great emotion, *from entertaining such a thought. Do you not see how Nestorius is anathematized for this by the whole church?* "I only asked for my own information," replied the emperor, "but let it go no farther." A few emphatical strokes like this are enough to make the people of that age appear to those of the present as not many removes from idiocy. Had Nestorius, whose correctness of taste (for opinion is out of the question) made him sensible of the irreverence of an expression, which seemed greatly to derogate from the divine majesty, and tended manifestly to corrupt the religious sentiments of the vulgar, who are incapable of entering into metaphysical distinctions; been but a better politician, (for to do him justice, Rome herself cannot accuse him of the most unclerical sin of moderation) and, consequently, had he been a more equal match for his adversary St. Cyril, the decision of the church had infallibly been the reverse of what it was, and we should at this day find Cyrilianism in the list of heresies, and a St. Nestorius in the calendar of the beatified. On such accidental circumstances it often depended, whether a man should be deemed an heresiarch or a saint, a devil or an angel. "I shall "only remark," says a modern Roman Catholic author, (Richard Simon, not Father Simon of the Oratory, Des cérémonies et coutumes des

chrétiens orientaux, Ch. 7,) "that some might "infer, that nestorianism is but a nominal "heresy, and that if Nestorius and St. Cyril "had understood one another, they might have "reconciled their opinions, and prevented a "great scandal in the church. But the Greeks "were always keen disputants, and it was by "them that most of the first heresies were "broached. Commonly their disputes consisted "in a sort of metaphysical chicanery on ambi-"guous phrases. Hence they drew inferences "after their manner, and, from inferences, pro-"ceeded to personal abuse, till the parties at "last became irreconcileable enemies. Had "they but coolly explained their thoughts, they "would have found that, in most cases, there "was no scope for the imputation of heresy on "either side. This is what some allege to "have happened in the affair of Nestorius and "St. Cyril." True, indeed, Mr. Simon, and for a specimen of their spirit and coolness, let us but hear the final judgment of the council of Ephesus in this famous cause. "Our Lord "Jesus Christ, against whom the most wicked "Nestorius has levelled his blasphemies, de-"clares him, by the mouth of this council, de-"prived of the episcopal dignity, and cut off "from the communion of the episcopal order." The note bearing this sentence was thus directed:

"To

"To Nestorius, a second Judas." In every thing they were guided by Cyril, whom, in respect of meekness, they might, with equal truth, have denominated a second Moses.

Nobody is at a loss to perceive the opinion of the French author above quoted in regard to this affair. Yet we may observe in passing, in what an indirect manner he is obliged to express it. *Some might infer* and *some allege.* And no wonder that he should take this method of suggesting a principle totally subversive of the doctrine of the infallibility, wheresoever placed; a doctrine which now, among the learned of that communion, seems to be regarded as purely of the exoteric kind, that is, as proper, whether true or false, to be inculcated on the people, as an useful expedient in governing them. This Frenchman's principle plainly subverts the pope's pretensions; for Celestine freely acceded to the sentence, condemning Nestorius as a most pestilent heretic. It subverts the pretensions of an ecumenical council, which that of Ephesus, however disorderly and tumultuous, has always been acknowledged by the Romanists to be. It subverts the pretensions of the church collectively, which did, for many ages, universally (the not very numerous sect of Nestorius only excepted) receive the decrees of that synod. This Ephesian council was one of the four, concerning

cerning which pope Gregory, who is also called St. Gregory, and Gregory the Great, declared, that he received them with as much veneration as he did the four gospels.

Yet so little of consistency in speculations of this sort is to be expected from either popes or councils, that when so late as the pontificate of Clement the eleventh, in the beginning of the present century, some affected to style St. Ann the grandmother of God, (no doubt, with the pious view of conferring an infinite obligation on her) his holiness thought fit to suppress the title, as being, in his judgment, offensive to pious ears. Yet it is impossible for one, without naming Nestorius, to give a clearer decision in his favour. For what is the meaning of *grandmother?* Is it any more than saying, in one word, what *mother's mother*, or *father's mother*, expresses in two? To say then of Ann, that she was the *mother of the mother of God*, which they admit, and to say that she was *God's grandmother*, which they reject, are absolutely the same. The sole spring of offence is in the first step; if that be admitted, the propriety of such expressions, as God's grandmother or grandfather, uncle, aunt, or cousin, follows of course. The second council of Nice, with greater consistency, in quoting the epistle of James, do not hesitate to style the writer *God's brother*, Καὶ

τον αδελφοθεον Ιακωβον, are their very words. Only from this more recent circumstance, we may warrantably conclude, that if the phrase, *mother of God*, had never been heard till the time of Clement the eleventh, it had fared well with the author, if he had not been pronounced both a blasphemer and a heretic. What made the case of Nestorius the harder was, that he was, in no respect, the innovator. He was only shocked at the innovations in language, if not in sentiments, of the new-fangled phrases introduced by others, such as this, of *the mother of God*, and *the eternal God was born; the impassible suffered; the immortal and only true God expired in agonies.* I have seen a small piece, called, if I remember right, "Godly riddles," by the late Mr. Ralph Erskine, one of the apostles and founders of the Scotch secession, written precisely in the same taste. "There is nothing "new," says Solomon, "under the sun." In the most distant ages and remote countries, kindred geniuses may be discovered, wherein the same follies and absurdities, as well as vices, spring up and flourish. To men of shallow ununderstandings, such theologic paradoxes afford a pleasure not unlike that which is derived from being present at the wonderful feats of jugglers. In these, by mere slight of hand, one appears to do what is impossible to be done; and in those,

those, by mere slight of tongue, (in which the judgment has no part) an appearance of meaning and consistency is given to terms the most self contradictory, and the incredible seems to be rendered worthy of belief. To set fools a staring, is alike the aim of both. I shall only observe, that of the two kinds of artifice, the juggler's and the sophister's, the former is much the more harmless.

To proceed; the contention that arose soon after, on occasion of the doctrine of Eutyches, appears to have been of the same stamp. The whole difference terminated in this, that the one side maintained, that Christ is *of* two natures, the other, that he is *of* and *in* two natures, both agreeing, that in one person he is perfect God and perfect man. Yet this dispute was, if possible, conducted with more fury and rancour than the former. Much need, in those days, had the rulers of the church, who called themselves the followers and ministers of the meek and humble Jesus, to go and learn what this meaneth, (2 Tim. ii, 14,) *Charge them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.* They acted, on the contrary, as if they could not conceive another purpose for which a revelation had been given them, but to afford matter of endless wrangling, and to foster all the most malignant passions of human nature.

ture. Had they so soon forgotten the many warnings they had received from inspiration, of the mischievous tendency of such a conduct, that profane and vain babblings would increase to more ungodliness, that their pitiful logomachies, their oppositions of science, falsely so called, their foolish and unedifying questions and vain janglings, could only gender strife? Is it possible they could be so blind as not to see their own character, as well as the consequences of their conduct, so distinctly delineated in these words of the apostle: *If any man consent not to wholesome words*, practical and useful instructions, not idle speculations, *even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine that is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, who think that gain is godliness?* Could they read these things and not be struck with so bright a reflection as they exhibited of their own image? We must think, that at that period, these things were but little read, and less minded.

From the fifth century downwards, it became the mode, in all their controversies, to refer to the councils and fathers, in support of their dogmas, and to take as little notice of sacred writ,

writ, as if it no way concerned the faith and practice of a christian. But their despicable and unmeaning quibbles (to say the truth) were not more remote from the doctrine of the gospel, than the methods whereby they supported their dogmas were repugnant to the morals which it inculcates. Let us hear the character given of their councils, their procedure, and the effects produced by them, by a contemporary author, a bishop too, who spoke from knowledge and experience. St. Gregory Nazianzen, writing to Procopius, thus excuses his refusal to attend a synod, at which his presence was expected: "To tell "you plainly, I am determined to fly all con-"ventions of bishops; for I never yet saw a "council that ended happily. Instead of les-"sening, they invariably augment the mischief. "The passion for victory, and the lust of "power, (you'll perhaps think my freedom in-"tolerable) are not to be described in words. "One present as a judge, will much more "readily catch the infection from others than "be able to restrain it in them. For this reason "I must conclude, that the only security of "one's peace and virtue is in retirement." Thus far Nazianzen. How a man, who, in the fifth century, could talk so reasonably, and so much like a christian, came to be sainted, is not, indeed, so easily to be accounted for.

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On the whole, when one seriously considers the rage of dogmatizing, which, for some ages, like a pestilential contagion, overspread the church; when one impartially examines the greater part of the subjects, about which they contended with so much vehemence, and their manner of conducting the contest, especially in those holy convocations, called synods, it is impossible not to entertain a low opinion of their judgment and abhorrence of their disposition. At the same time, it is but doing them justice to remark, that in cases wherein their imaginations were not heated by controversy and party-spirit, when they kept within their proper sphere, the making of regulations or canons for maintaining order and discipline in the church, they did not often betray a want of judgment and political capacity. On the contrary, they frequently give ground of admiration to the considerate, that the same persons should, in the one character, appear no better than sophisters and quibblers, fanatics and furies, and, in the other, no less than prudent statesmen and wise legislators.

But it is time to return from this digression, if it can be called a digression, about councils, to the policy of Rome, and the means by which she rose to the very pinnacle of worldly prosperity and grandeur. I thought it of consequence to

to give in passing a slight sketch of the general nature, and rise, and consequences of those disputes, which constitute so essential a part of ecclesiastical history. I shall, in my next, proceed in tracing the causes and maxims which contributed to the establishment of the Roman hierarchy.

LEC-

LECTURE XV.

IN my last discourse, I gave you a general account of the nature, rise, and progress, of those controversies, which continued for many ages to disturb the peace of the church, and which were, in a great measure, the consequence of a defection from the genuine spirit of the gospel, from the primitive simplicity of its doctrine, and purity of its morals, and no less evidently the cause of still greater corruptions, and a more flagrant apostacy, though men still retained the abused name of christian. I took notice also of the methods taken to terminate those disputes by synods and councils, a remedy which commonly proves worse than the disease; rather, I should say, a prescription of that kind, which, instead of curing, inflames the distemper, and renders it epidemical; nay, is often productive of several others. The very convoking of such numerous assemblies, from all the corners of the empire, for the discussion of such senseless debates, as the greater part of them manifestly were, gave, in the eye of the world, a consequence to their logomachies, and drew

an attention to them, which it was impossible they should ever otherwise have acquired. Besides, the sophistry and altercatione mployed by both parties in the controversy naturally gave birth to new questions, insomuch, that they sprang up faster on every side, than it was in their power to terminate them. What the poets feigned of the hydra was here verified. By lopping off one of the heads of the monster, they gave rise at least to two others. "Reges "ignari (says Le Clerc, Ars Crit. p. 2, s. 2, c. 5,) "nec inter bonos principes numerandi, "convocarunt Græculos, qui linguæ acuendæ "per totam vitam operam dederant, rerum ip-"sarum ignaros, contendendi studiosos, perpe-"tuis rixis inter se divisos; et bardos aliquot "homines ex occidente, rudiores quidem illis, "sed non meliores; iique post pudendas con-"tentiones, obscurissima quædam dogmata, ver-"bis sæpe parum aptis, auctoritate sua firmant; "quæ stupidi populi sine examine adorent, "quasi divinitus accepta. Non ficta me loqui "norunt qui synodorum historias legerunt; nec "certe vanus erat qui dixit:

Ουδε τι πω συνοδοισιν ὁμοθρονος εσσομ' εγωγε
Χηνων ἠ γερανων ακριλα μαρναμενων
Ενθ' ερις, ενθα μοθος τε ἠ αισχεα κρυπλα παροιθεν
Εις ἑνα δυσμενεων χωρον αγειρομενα.

"Nun-

"Nunquam ego sedebo in synodis anserum aut "gruum temere pugnantium. Illic contentio, "illic rixa, et probra antea latentia sævorum "hominum in unum locum collecta." I shall make a supposition, which may at first appear extravagant, but which will, I hope, on examination, be found intirely apposite to the case in hand. Suppose that a single province in the empire had been visited with the pestilence, and that the distemper raged with so much violence, that few in that neighbourhood escaped; suppose further, that the ruling powers had, in their great wisdom, determined to summon, from all the provinces infected and uninfected, the whole medical tribe, physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries, sound and diseased indiscriminately, in order to consult together, and fix upon the most effectual method of extirpating the latent poison; would it have been difficult to foresee the consequences of a measure so extraordinary? The diseased in that assembly would quickly communicate the infection to the sound, till the whole convention, without exception, were in the same wretched plight; and when all should be dispersed and sent home again, they would return to their respective countries, breathing disease and death wherever they went; so that the malignant contagion which had, at first, afflicted only a small part, would, by such

means, be rendered universal, and those who ought to have assisted in the cure of the people, would have proved the principal instruments of poisoning them. Exactly such a remedy were the decisions of councils, to the plague of wrangling, at that time not less terrible, if its consequences were duly weighed.

What an ecumenical council is, has never yet been properly ascertained. If we are to understand by it an assembly, wherein every individual church is represented, there never yet was such a council, and we may safely predict, never will be. There was so much of independency in the primitive churches, before the time of Constantine, that at first their provincial and diocesan synods (for they had not then any general councils) claimed no authority over their absent members, or even over those present, who had not consented to the acts of the majority. Thus they were, at first, more properly, meetings for mutual consultation and advice, in what concerned the spiritual conduct of their flocks, than societies vested with legislative powers, even over the members of their own community. In proportion as the metropolitans rose above the suffragans, and the patriarchs above the metropolitans, the provincial synod, in concurrence with the metropolitan, and the

diocesan synod, in concurrence with the patriarch, acquired more authority and weight.

But when, after the establishment of christianity, ecumenical councils, or what, in a looser way of speaking, were called so, were convoked by the emperor, (which continued for ages to be the practice in the church) if the patriarchs, or exarchs themselves, were divided, as each was commonly followed by the bishops of his diocese, there was no one person of weight enough to unite them. Sometimes, indeed, the emperor, when bigotted to a side, interfered in their debates; and when he did, he rarely failed, by some means or other, to procure a determination of the dispute in favour of his opinion. But this, though commonly vindicated by those who were, or who chose to be of the emperor's opinion, was always considered by the losing side as violent and uncanonical, notwithstanding that his right to convene them was allowed on all hands. However, as it never happened, even in their most numerous councils, that every province, nay, that every civil diocese, or exarchate, I might say, that every christian nation had a representation in the assembly, so there was not one of those conventions which could, with strict propriety, be called ecumenical. With those who were not satisfied with their decisions, there were never wanting arguments, not only

specious, but solid, against their universality, and, consequently, against their title to an universal submission.

Certain it is, that no party was ever convinced of its errors by the decision of a council. If the church came to an acquiescence, the acquiescence will be found to have been imputable more to the introduction of the secular arm, that is, of the emperor's authority, who sometimes from principle, sometimes from policy, interposed in church affairs, than to any deference shown to the synodical decree. Accordingly, when the imperial power was exerted in opposition to the council's determination, as was frequently the case, it was, to the full, as effectual in making the council be universally rejected, as, on other occasions, in making it be universally received. I may say further, that this power was equally effectual in convoking councils to establish the reverse of what had been established by former councils. In what passed in relation both to the Arian and to the Eutychian controversies, and afterwards in those regarding the worship of images, these points are, to every intelligent reader, as clear as day.

Indeed, the doctrine of the infallibility of councils is, comparatively, but a novel conceit. Those of the ancients, who paid the greatest deference to their judgment, did not run into this

this extravagance. What was St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion of the matter, may be learnt from the quotation I gave you from that author in the preceding prelection. But the futility of recurring to this method for terminating disputes is what the whole christian world, Greek and Latin, Protestant and Papist, seems now to be sufficiently convinced of, insomuch, that without the spirit of prophecy, one may venture to foretel, that, unless there is a second dotage which the church has yet to undergo, the council of Trent will remain the last under the name of ecumenical, assembled for the purpose of ascertaining articles of faith.

But to return to the steps and maxims by which the papal power arose. I have already mentioned two things very remarkable in the Roman policy; one is, the steadiness with which they pursued a measure once adopted, the other, the sacrifice they always made of every other consideration to the advancement of their authority and grandeur. In the controversies that sprang up, I have observed the advantages the Latin church derived from the following circumstances, to wit, that they were commonly later than the Greeks, in becoming acquainted with the subject in debate, had much less of a controversial genius, and were more united among themselves.

In many of the disputes, especially the earlier disputes, we cannot say of one of the two opposite tenets more than of the other, that it tended to advance the hierarchy. Several of them, as we have seen, were either mere verbal cavils, or such jumbles of ill-adapted ideas, into the form of propositions, as were quite incomprehensible, and no otherwise connected with practice than in the general, but very strong tendency they had, to divert men's attention and zeal from what was essential and useful, to what was intirely imaginary and frivolous. Nevertheless in these, however unimportant in themselves, it was of great importance to Rome, for the advancement of her authority, that her explicit declaration on either side should prove decisive of the question. In the latter controversies, indeed, such as those concerning purgatory, image worship, transubstantiation, indulgences, the indelible character, the efficacy of the *opus operatum*, that is, the exteriour of the sacramental action, and some others, we may say with truth, that ecclesiastical authority was clearly interested on one side of the question. It would even imply an uncommon degree of stupidity not to discern how much in those questions the victorious side, or that which obtained the sanction of catholicism, tended to exalt the priesthood. But before these controversies came upon the carpet,

carpet, the power of Rome was so far advanced, that she had not the same occasion as formerly for reserve and caution in making her election. Accordingly her election was invariably on the side which most advanced her power. It is for this reason that the very origin of such doctrines, as well as the methods she employed in supporting them, are not improperly imputed to priestcraft.

In regard to the maxim abovementioned, (which is, indeed, of the essence of priestcraft, namely) to make every consideration give way to the aggrandizement of her priestly authority, we have already produced one strong evidence of it, in the manner wherein the peace was affected, after what is called the great schism of Acacius, or the first schism of the east. But in nothing does this Roman maxim appear more glaring, than in the encouragement invariably given to those who, from any part of the world, could be induced to appeal to the Roman pontiff. For many centuries, always indeed till the right of receiving such appeals came by custom to be firmly established, it was the invariable maxim of the Roman court, without paying the smallest regard to the merits of the cause, often without examining it, to decide in favour of the appellant. No maxim could be more unjust. At the same time for a power which had, by her opulence

opulence and arts, and some peculiar advantages, become so formidable, no maxim, ere the practice of appealing to her judgment had taken root, could be more politic, or more effectually tend to encourage and establish that practice.

That ye may be satisfied I do not wrong the Romish hierarch, do but examine a little how the case stood in some of the first causes that were in this manner brought before his tribunal. Indeed, in the very first of any note, his holiness was rather unfortunate in following the maxim I have mentioned. The appeal I allude to was that of the heresiarch Pelagius, and his disciple Celestius, from the sentence of an African synod, by which their doctrine had been condemned, and they themselves, and all the teachers and holders of their tenets, had been excommunicated. From this sentence they appealed to Rome. Zozimus, then pope, agreeably to the maxims of his court, immediately, but very unfortunately for himself, declared in their favour, vindicated their doctrine, and, in a letter directed to the African bishops, upbraided these prelates in the strongest terms for the temerity of their procedure, ordered the accusers of Pelagius and Celestius, within two months, to repair to Rome, to make good their charge before him, declaring, that if they did not, he would reverse the sentence which had been pronounced. And

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as to Heros and Lazarus, who had taken a principal part in the prosecution; men who, if we may credit the testimony of St. Prosper and St. Jerom, (for Rome is in this confronted by her own saints) were eminent for the purity of their lives, as well as for their faith and zeal; the pope, in a summary manner, without so much as giving them a hearing, or assigning them a day for offering what they had to plead in their own defence, deposed and excommunicated them. The steadiness of the Africans, however, co-operating with other causes, at last compelled the pontiff not only to relax, but totally to change his style and conduct. Though neither the bishops, nor Paulinus the accuser, whom the pope had summoned by name, paid the least regard to his summons, or to his declared intention of having the cause tried anew at Rome, they gave it a rehearing in another, and a very numerous African synod, convened at Carthage, wherein, without showing any deference to the sentiments of the Roman bishop, they unanimously adhered to their former judgment.

The ardour of the pontiff to favour an appellant did manifestly, in this instance, carry him beyond the bounds of prudence. The condemnation of the Pelagian doctrine had been, in some respect, ratified by his predecessor Innocent. Two African synods, and one Numidian synod,

synod, assembled at Milevis, had with one voice condemned it. Celestius, after his condemnation in Africa, having taken refuge in Ephesus, was soon driven thence in consequence of the general odium which his opinions raised, and had afterwards no better treatment in Constantinople, when he thought proper to betake himself thither. Besides, the emperor Honorius, without waiting the judgment of Rome, was induced by a deputation from the African synod, not only to approve their decrees, but to enact a very severe law against the Pelagians, ordering all that should be convicted of this heresy, to be sent into exile. Add to all this, that the two greatest lights of the Latin church, Jerom and Augustin, whose judgment was of very great weight all over the west, had openly declared against them.

The pontiff therefore discovered, though late, that he had been precipitate, and had (through an excessive attachment to what in the main would be admitted by politicians to be a wise maxim) engaged in a desperate cause, and had so many and powerful enemies to encounter, as the papacy, in so early a period, was not a match for. It was become, therefore, absolutely necessary for him to retreat, lest, by grasping unseasonably at too much, he should lose every thing, and even be deserted by those who, on other

occasions,

occasions, firmly supported him. This he endeavoured to do with the best grace he could; but to do it with a good grace was impossible. Accordingly, he was at length under a necessity to anathematize as impious, what he had formerly, in the most explicit terms, pronounced innocent. In the whole affair, Rome evidently showed the truth of an observation I formerly made, that with her, doctrine was ever but a matter of secondary consideration, the primary object was invariably power.

The conduct of Zozimus, on the appeal of Apiarius, a presbyter of Sica, in Africa, who had been deposed and excommunicated for several heinous crimes, was very remarkable. The pope, without so much as hearing his adversaries, restored him not only to the communion of the church, but to the rank from which he had been degraded. The vile arts of lying and forgery, which, on this occasion, were employed by the holy see, never weakly scrupulous about means, and the compromise which the African bishops, though not deceived by papal artifices, were, for peace sake, compelled to make; the second deposition of that irreclaimable profligate, his second appeal to Rome, and his second hasty restoration by pope Celestine, without hearing his accusers, the methods taken by Rome to patronize and reinstate him, and the defeat of those methods, by the

the explicit confession, which, in an African synod, the culprit made, of the most atrocious crimes, to the unspeakable confusion of the pope's legate, sent to defend his innocence; all these, I say, furnish a scene, wherein the very arcana of Roman policy may be thoroughly penetrated by the discerning mind. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate, than did the conduct of Rome in the whole transaction, that she paid no more regard to guilt or innocence, in the judgments she pronounced, than she did to truth or falsehood, in the means she employed. With no person or state did the maxim, ascribed by Suetonius to Julius Cæsar, more exactly quadrate than with the see of Rome. "Si violandum est "jus, regnandi gratia violandum est, aliis rebus "pietatem colas." With her all was just, and all was true, that promoted the great object, POWER; all was false, and all was criminal, that opposed it. Indeed, the black confession which Apiarius publicly made, of crimes judged too shocking to be recorded, tended to give but a very unfavourable impression of the decisions of a tribunal, since called infallible. For let it be observed, that this man at Rome was twice absolved as guiltless, (both times indeed without a trial) first by pope Zozimus, then by pope Celestine, both now worshipped as saints by the Romanists.

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It were easy to show, were it proper to descend into more particulars, that the conduct of Leo, on occasion of the appeal of Celedonius, of Besancon, from the diocesan synod of Arles, in reversing their sentence, restoring the deposed bishop, and the procedure of the pontiff soon after against Hilarius, bishop of Arles, and exarch of the seven Narbonnese provinces, who had presided at the synod above mentioned; whom he not only cut off from his communion, and, as far as in him lay, degraded, but every where defamed by his letters, were equally precipitate, unjust, and scandalous. In this attempt, however, on the rights of the Gallican church, Rome seems to have been more successful, through a peculiar felicity in the juncture, than in those formerly made on the churches of Africa. The prince then upon the throne, Valentinian the third, was both weak and credulous, and one over whom the pontiff appears to have had an unlimited influence. The pope, therefore, on this occasion, glad to recur to the secular arm, easily obtained from the emperor a rescript, exactly in the terms he desired, confirming all that he had done, commanding all the Gallican bishops to yield implicit obedience to the decrees and awards of the pontiff, and enjoining the magistrates of the several provinces to interpose their authority, in compelling those who

who should be summoned to Rome to obey the summons. Many attempts were used by Hilarius to effect a reconciliation; but he found it was utterly impracticable, except on such conditions as an honest man will ever account totally unworthy of regard, the sacrifice of truth, and the surrender of those rights and liberties of his church and people, with which, as a most sacred depositum, he had been entrusted. In this state, therefore, which surely a modern papist would think desperate, unreconciled to Christ's vicar, and as a rotten member cut off from the body of the faithful, being cut off from all connection with the church's visible head, died the famous Hilarius, bishop of Arles. And what shall we say of Roman consistency, when we reflect, that this very excommunicated, cursed, anathematized Hilarius, (I cannot say by what strange oversight) as well as pope Leo, who, to the last, treated him in the manner we have seen, are both at present first rate saints in the Roman calendar? What account can the Romish church give of this? If ye be curious to know, ye may consult Baronius, or any other of the hireling writers of that communion, whose business in brief it was to explain nonsense, darken facts, confound the judgment, and reconcile contradictions.

In what further concerns the matter of appeals, I shall only, without multiplying instances, refer

you

you to what happened in the cases of Talia, bishop of Alexandria, charged with simony and perjury; the two Gallican bishops, Salonius and Sagittarius, who had been convicted, before a synod at Lyons, of the crimes only of murder, adultery, robbery, and house-breaking, but whose merit in appealing to the apostolic see cancelled all in an instant, and procured, without further inquiry, a declaration of their innocence, and restoration to their bishoprics; and who, (I speak of the two last) in confidence of their security under the pope's protection, soon relapsed into the same enormities, were deposed a second time, and shut up in a monastery to prevent a second recurrence to Rome. Ye may observe, also, the case of Hadrian, bishop of Thebes, in Thessaly; of Honoratus, archdeacon of Saloni, in Dalmatia; that of John, bishop of Lappa, in Crete; and that of Wilfrid, of York, in England. For many centuries ye will find, that the judgment of the apostolic see, as it affected to be styled, in contradistinction to others, was uniformly in favour of the appellant.

If history had given us no information about the persons, or cases, there would still be a strong presumption that, in so considerable a number, some had deserved the treatment they had received from the provincial, diocesan, or national synod, to which they had belonged. As the

 matter

matter stands, there is the clearest historical evidence, that the far greater part of them had been justly degraded, and could never have obtained the patronage or countenance of any power, which did not make every consideration of religion and equity give way to her ambition.

What but this favourite maxim can account for the many falsehoods and forgeries, to which she so often recurred, in support of her exorbitant claims. The ignorance and superstition of the dark ages that ensued, (for those I have had occasion to refer to in this, and my two preceding lectures, are but as the evening twilight, compared with those which followed) soon gave scope for attempting the very grossest kinds of imposition. And the friends and patrons of the hierarchy were not remiss in using the opportunity while it lasted. The fruits of their diligence, in this way, were fictitious councils as well as canons, and fictitious decrees of real councils, false deeds of gift, such as the instrument of donation of Rome and all Italy, made, as was pretended, by the emperor Constantine to pope Sylvester, and his successors in the popedom, the decretal epistles of the popes, not to mention the little legerdemain tricks of false miracles, and other such like artifices. For the lying spirit, which had gotten possession of the head, quickly

diffused itself throughout the members; and every petty priest supported his particular credit among the people by the same arts, exhibited, as it were, in miniature, which were on a larger scale displayed by the pontiff, for the support of the great hierarchal empire. It must be owned, the greater part of their forgeries, especially Constantine's donation, and the decretal epistles, are such barefaced impostures, and so bunglingly executed, that nothing less than the most profound darkness of those ages could account for their success. They are manifestly written in the barbarous dialect, which obtained in the eighth and ninth centuries, and exhibit those poor, meek, and humble teachers, who came immediately after the apostles, as blustering, swaggering, and dictating to the world in the authoritative tone of a Zachary, or a Stephen.

But however gross the artifices were, they were well suited to the grossness of the people, in times wherein almost all vestiges of literature and arts were buried in the ruins of the fallen empire. These acts and decretals had accordingly, for several centuries, a powerful effect in imposing on mankind; an effect which continued, whilst its continuance was of principal moment, when all the little remains of knowledge in the world were in the hands of those,

who considered it as their interest to deceive the people, and keep them in ignorance. Thus the progress, as well as the coming, of this power, has been indeed after the working of Satan, in signs and lying wonders, and all deceiveableness of unrighteousness.

Indeed, such sacrifices of truth to what was called the cause of the church have always been regarded as among the most harmless of their innumerable expedients. The term *pious fraud* was, in most places, and for several ages, not introduced sarcastically, as it is used with us at present; nor was it imagined to connect ideas incompatible with each other; but employed to denote an artifice not only innocent but commendable. The patrons of sacerdotal power had every advantage therefore: their tricks, when undiscovered, wrought powerfully in their favour; and when discovered, (such was the woful superstition of the times) were, on account of the supposed holy purpose to be effected by them, easily excused by all, and highly approved by many.

It is true, that now, since the restoration of letters, men's sentiments, on these subjects, are very much altered. Those graceless devices have been, for the most part, fully detected and exposed; insomuch, that all the learned and ingenuous

nuous part, even of Roman catholics, quite ashamed of them, have long since abandoned their defence. But Rome may now laugh at a detection, which can never restore things to the state they were in before those frauds were employed. What has been at first produced solely by imposture, comes, through the slow but sure operation of time and immemorial custom, to acquire a stability totally independent of its origin. When that is the case, the discovery is not able to shake the fabric, to which the imposture originally gave a being. Antiquity supplies the place of truth. Custom rules the world, and is the principal foundation of obedience in all the governments that are, and ever were, upon the earth. It is but one of a thousand that is capable of examining into the origin of things: the remaining nine hundred and ninety-nine have no reason to assign for their obedience but custom, or what they are wont to see exacted on the one hand, and complied with on the other. A set of customs, gradually established, may, in like manner, be gradually abolished; but the discoveries of the learned (though not totally ineffective) have not a very sudden, and a very sensible effect upon them.

I shall, in my next lecture, proceed to illustrate, in other instances, the particular attention

which Rome invariably gave to the great object, POWER; and consider how far the very best of her pontiffs sacrificed every other consideration to its advancement.

LECTURE XVI.

I PROCEED, in this lecture, to illustrate, in other instances, the particular attention which Rome invariably gave to the great object power. The proof that I am now to produce is different in kind from the former, but still corroborative of the same capital point in her policy, which was to make every consideration of truth and right give place to her ambition.

For this purpose, I shall not recur to those pontiffs, who were far from reaching even the low standard of virtue, recommended in the latter part of the Julian maxim, *aliis rebus pietatem colas.* And that there were popes, who, in no part of their conduct, showed that they either feared God, or regarded men, all persons, popish and protestant, who have the least acquaintance with church history, will readily admit. But I shall recur to one, who was thought, as much as any that ever sat in the papal chair, to mind the better part of the apophthegm, and was observant of piety, equity, and charity, in cases which

did not interfere with the favourite pursuit; and shall clearly evince, that he was not a less rigid observer of the former part of it, *regnandi gratia jus violandum est;* that he did not hesitate at any means, falsehood, and injustice, the prostitution of religion, and of the most sacred rites of humanity, when these could be rendered instrumental in promoting the primary papal object, POWER.

The pope I intend to produce as an example, is no other than Gregory the first, a man at present adored in the church of Rome, as one of her most eminent saints, and respected as one of her most learned doctors. The Greeks, I know, were wont to style him, (as it would seem) contemptuously, Gregory Dialogue, on account of some silly dialogues which he wrote. Yet even those are not inferiour to some of the productions of their own approved authors in the same period. His pontificate commenced towards the end of the sixth century, and extended to the beginning of the seventh.

Who knows not the extraordinary zeal which this pope manifested against the Constantinopolitan patriarch, who in those days began to assume the title of universal bishop? For who is so great an enemy to the pride and ambition of others as the proud and ambitious! That a relentless jealousy was at the bottom of the violence which

which he showed on that occasion, there was no considerate and impartial person who did not discern then, and there is none of this character who does not discern still. It were unnecessary here to mention all the odious epithets, by which he stigmatized that obnoxious appellation. Suffice it to observe, in general, that he maintained strenuously, that whoever assumed that heretical, blasphemous, and infernal title, (so he expressly terms it) was the follower of Lucifer, the forerunner and herald of Antichrist, and that it neither did nor could belong to any bishop whatever. He had nothing, it appears, of the prophetic spirit, else he would have spoken more cautiously of a title so soon afterwards assumed by some of his own successors. It must be owned, indeed, that in this conduct the Grecian patriarch was the precursor of the Romish. If, thereby, the pope is rendered antichrist, it is a deduction from pope Gregory's reasoning, and not from mine.

Gregory, when that title was first assumed at Constantinople, was quite indefatigable in his applications by letter, and by the intervention of his nuncios, with the patriarch himself, and with the emperor, to effect the suppression of it. But all was to no purpose. The matter could never be made appear to them as of that moment, which Gregory was so immoderately solicitous

to

to give it. They considered it only (like most of the titles then conferred on the potentates of the church) as a complimental and respectful manner of address, well befitting the bishop of the imperial city. Rome's remonstrances were accordingly made light of. The other patriarchs, particularly the Antiochian and the Alexandrian, Gregory endeavoured, by all possible means, but to no purpose, to engage in the quarrel. The bishop of Alexandria, probably with a view to mollify his incensed brother at Rome, gave him a title, which he thought would be deemed equivalent, calling him universal pope. But his holiness had proceeded too far to be taken in by so simple a device, and therefore he did not hesitate to reject it with disdain, as being in the same way derogatory, with the other title, to the whole episcopal order. He did more: for, in order to show how different a spirit he was of, he assumed, for the first time, (and herein he has been followed by his successors) this humble addition, *the servant of the servants of God*: servus servorum Dei. We have heard of people's making humility the subject of their vanity, and mortification the ground of their pride. The pharisees were ostentatious of their dirty and disfigured faces when they fasted, and there are even some christian sects who seem to make the pharisees, in this respect, their pattern. The pope always since,

since, to this day, introduces his bulls with the modest title assumed by Gregory. One would expect from it, that they should consist only of entreaties, and lowly petitions, to those whom he acknowledges to be his superiours, and his masters. Instead of this, ye find him commanding imperiously, even with menaces, denunciations, and curses. Is this like a servant to his masters? If we could consider the title, therefore, as any thing but words, we should pronounce the using it as a sort of refinement in the display of power; adding insult to tyranny, like those despots, who, when they are inflicting tortures on their slave, mock him with the title of sovereign and lord.

About this time the emperor Mauricius, whom the pope could by no arts prevail on to enter into his views, nay, whom he found rather favourable to the use of a title, by which an honourable distinction was conferred on the bishop of the imperial residence, was first dethroned, and then murthered, by a centurion, one of his subjects and soldiers, who usurped his throne. The usurper Phocas (for that was his name) was a man stained with those vices, which serve most to blacken human nature. Other tyrants have been cruel from policy, and through want of regard to justice and humanity; the cruelties of Phocas are not to be accounted for, but on the hypothesis

thesis of the most diabolical and disinterested malice. Witness the inhuman manner wherein he massacred five of his predecessor's children, all that were then in his power, before the eyes of the unhappy father, whom he reserved to the last, that he might be a spectator of the destruction of his family before his death. The slaughter of the brother, and of the only remaining son of the emperor Mauricius, with all the patricians of any name who adhered to his interest, the methods by which Phocas got the empress Constantina, and her three daughters, into his power, with the murder of whom he closed the bloody scene, manifest a mind totally corrupted, incapable of being wrought upon by any principle of religion, sense of justice, or sentiment of humanity.

Unluckily for the Constantinopolitan patriarch, the innocent consort of his late sovereign, with the three princesses, her daughters, had taken refuge in one of the churches of the city. The prelate, moved partly by compassion to the royal sufferers, partly by the reverence of the place, would not permit them to be dragged by force from their asylum; but defended them, whilst there, with great spirit and resolution. The tyrant, one of the most vindictive and inexorable of mankind, and who could therefore ill brook this spirited opposition from the priest, thought it

it prudent then to dissemble his resentment, as it would have been exceedingly dangerous, in the beginning of his reign, to alarm the church. And he well knew how important and even venerable a point it was accounted, to preserve inviolate the sacredness of such sanctuaries. He desisted, therefore, from using force; and, by means of the most solemn oaths, and promises of safety, prevailed at length upon the ladies to quit their asylum. In consequence of which, they soon after became the helpless victims of his fury, and suffered on the same spot whereon the late emperor, and five of his sons, had been murdered a short while before.

Now what should we expect would be the reception, which the accounts of this unnatural rebellion, the dethronement of Mauricius, the horrid butchery of the whole imperial family, the usurpation and coronation of such a sanguinary fiend as Phocas, would meet with at Rome, from a man so celebrated for piety, equity, and mildness of disposition, as pope Gregory? Look into his letters of congratulation on the occasion, and ye will find them stuffed with the most nauseous adulation. Were we to learn the character of Phocas only from St. Gregory, we should conclude him to have been rather an angel than a man. But if we recur to facts, if we take our Saviour's rule, and judge of the tree

by

by the fruits, (and I know no rule we can so safely follow) we shall rather conclude him to have been a devil incarnate. The actions, on which this judgment is founded, are not only incontrovertible, but uncontroverted. Ye may read the account that is given of the earliest and the principal of these murders, by Gregory himself, in the preamble to the eleventh book of his epistles; where, to say the truth, they are recited with as much coolness, as though they were matters of the utmost indifference, and as though religion and morality could be nowise affected by such enormities.

Observe, then, in what manner the sanctity of a Gregory congratulates the blood-thirsty, but successful, rebel, regicide, and usurper. I shall give you a specimen of his manner in his own words. (L. 11, Ep. 36.) The classical scholar will make the proper allowances for the low latinity of the seventh century. "Gregorius "Phocæ Augusto." His exordium is, "Gloria "in excelsis Deo, qui juxta quod scriptum est, "mutat tempora et transfert regna: et quia hoc "cunctis innotuit, quod per prophetam suum "loqui dignatus est, dicens. Quia dominatur "excelsus in regno hominum, et cui voluerit, "ipse dat illud." After this preamble, he observes, that God, in his incomprehensible providence, sometimes sends kings to afflict his people, and

and punish them for their sins. This, says he, we have known of late to our woful experience. Sometimes, on the other hand, God, in his mercy, raises good men to the throne for the relief and exultation of his servants. Then applying his remark to the present juncture, he adds, "De "qua exultationis abundantia, roborari nos citius "credimus, qui benignitatem pietatis vestræ ad "imperiale fastigium pervenisse gaudemus."—Then breaking out in a rapture, no longer to be restrained, he exclaims, "Lætentur cœli et ex-"ultet terra, et de vestris benignis actibus, uni-"versæ reipublicæ populus nunc usque vehe-"menter afflictus hilarescat. Comprimantur "jugo dominationis vestræ superbæ mentes hos-"tium. Releventur vestrâ misericordia contriti "et depressi animi subjectorum." Proceeding to paint their former miseries, he concludes with wishing, that the commonwealth may long enjoy the present happiness. A few instances, and but a few, of the benignity, and piety, and mercy, of this emperor, here so highly extolled by Gregory, may be learnt from the treatment above related, given to his predecessor's family. Another letter to Phocas, written soon after, the pope begins in this manner. (Ep. 43.) "Considerare "cum gaudiis et magnis actionibus gratiarum "libet, quantas omnipotenti Domino laudes "debemus, quod remoto jugo tristitiæ ad liber-

"tatis

"tatis tempora sub imperiali benignitatis vestræ "pietate pervenimus." His not having a nuncio at Constantinople, at the time of the emperor's accession, he excuses from the insupportable tyranny of the former reign, and concludes in this manner: "Sancta itaque Trinitas vitam "vestram per tempora longa custodiat, ut de "bono vestræ pietatis quod tarde suscipimus, "diutius gaudeamus."

"As a subject, and a christian," says Mr. Gibbon *, "it was the duty of Gregory to ac-"quiesce in the established government; but "the joyful applause with which he salutes the "fortune of the assassin, has sullied, with inde-"lible disgrace, the character of the saint. The "successor of the apostles might have incul-"cated, with decent firmness, the guilt of blood, "and the necessity of repentance: he is content "to celebrate the deliverance of the people, and "the fall of the oppressor; to rejoice that the "piety and benignity of Phocas have been "raised by Providence to the imperial throne; "to pray that his hands may be strengthened "against all his enemies; and to express a wish, "that, after a long triumphant reign, he may "be transferred from a temporal to an everlast-"ing kingdom." He proceeds: — "I have

* History, chap. xlvi.

"traced

" traced the steps of a revolution, so pleasing, " in Gregory's opinion, both to heaven and " earth; and Phocas does not appear less hate- " ful in the exercise than in the acquisition of " power. The pencil of an impartial historian " has delineated the portrait of a monster, his " diminutive and deformed person, &c. Igno- " rant of letters, of laws, and even of arms, he " indulged, in the supreme rank, a more ample " privilege of lust and drunkenness; and his " brutal pleasures were either injurious to his " subjects, or disgraceful to himself. Without " assuming the office of a prince, he renounced " the profession of a soldier; and the reign of " Phocas afflicted Europe with ignominious " peace, and Asia with desolating war. His " savage temper was inflamed by passion, har- " dened by fear, exasperated by resistance or " reproach. The flight of Theodosius, the only " surviving son of Mauritius, to the Persian " court, had been intercepted by a rapid pursuit, " or a deceitful message: he was beheaded at " Nice; and the last hours of the young prince " were soothed by the comforts of religion, and " the consciousness of innocence."

Now that we may be satisfied, that all Gregory's fulsome and detestable flattery was not without a view, we need only peruse the congratulatory letter to the empress Leontia, immedi-

 ately

ately following; for, by this channel, he thought it most prudent to suggest, for the first time, the distinguishing favour he expected they would show, in return, to the see of St. Peter, as the popes had now, for some centuries, affected to denominate the church planted at Rome. He begins this, as the other letters above-mentioned, with such high strains of praise and thanksgiving, as suited only the birth of the Messiah: his expressions are generally borrowed from those used in scripture, in relation to that memorable event; and he never forgets to contrast the present happiness with the evil times which had preceded. "Reddatur ergo creatori omnium "ab hymnidicis angelorum choris, gloria in "cœlo, persolvatur ab omnibus gratiarum actio "in terra, &c."

His manner of applying to this lady is indeed very artful. After recommending to her, and her most pious lord, the see of the blessed apostle Peter, he signifies his persuasion, that what he had said was quite unnecessary, that their own piety must have suggested the same thing to them before. He takes notice of the great prerogatives of Peter in such a manner, (which was now become common at Rome, though no where else in the church) as though they had been his peculiarly; namely, the founding of the universal church, the power of the keys, the power of retaining

retaining sins, and of remitting them, or of binding and loosing; whence he takes occasion indirectly, but with great address, to insinuate, that their hopes of those favours, which none but Peter could bestow, must be in proportion to their zeal for his honour. "Unde nobis dubium non "est, quam forti amore ad eum vos stringitis, "per quem solvi ab omnibus peccatorum nexi-"bus desideratis. Ipse ergo sit vestri custos "imperii; sit vobis protector in terra, sit pro "vobis intercessor in cœlo." It was then from Peter only they were to expect remission. To his guardianship their government was recommended, and their persons to his protection on the earth, and intercession in heaven. There is (ye must know) much less word of the providence and protection of God, and of the intercession of Jesus Christ, now that people had got themselves so liberally provided in guardians, protectors, and intercessors, among the saints. The abuse thrown with such an unsparing hand on the unfortunate emperor, who had preceded, as though he had been one of the worst of tyrants, naturally leads one to enquire into his character. The fault, of which he is principally accused by contemporary historians, and which, doubtless, proved the cause of his untimely fate, was too much parsimony: than which, no vice could render him more odious to the soldiery, who

were, in those degenerate times of the empire, lazy, undisciplined, debauched, rapacious, and seditious. As the government was become military, the affection of the army was the principal bulwark of the throne. It was ever consequently the interest of the reigning family, to secure the fidelity of the legions as much as possible. This, in times so corrupt, when military discipline was extinct, was to be effected only by an unbounded indulgence, and by frequent largesses. These the prince was not in a condition to bestow, without laying exorbitant exactions on the people. For levying these, the army were, as long as they shared in the spoil, always ready to lend their assistance. Hence it happened, that among the emperors, the greatest oppressors of the people were commonly the greatest favourites of the army. The revolt of the legions, therefore, could be but a slender proof of mal-administration. It was even, in many cases, an evidence of the contrary.

But it is more to our present purpose, to consider the character, which this very pope Gregory gave of Mauricius, when in possession of the imperial diadem. For if the former and the latter accounts, given by the pontiff, cannot be rendered consistent, we must admit, that, first or last, his holiness made a sacrifice of truth to politics. Now it is certain, that nothing can be

more contradictory than those accounts. In some of his letters to that emperor, ye will find the man, whom he now treats as a perfect monster, extolled to the skies, as one of the most pious, most religious, most christian princes, that ever lived; and withal, (which deserves particular notice) as the most gracious and bountiful. In proof of this, I could adduce a variety of passages from several letters of the pontiff, written at different times, some earlier, and some later. Take a few for a specimen. Let the first be (L. 5, Ep. 63,) to Mauricius. "Inter armorum curas et innumeras sollicitudines, quas "indefesso studio, pro christianæ reipublicæ "regimine sustinetis, magna mihi cum universo "mundo lætitiæ causa est, quod pietas vestra "custodiæ fidei, qua dominorum fulget imperium, præcipua sollicitudine semper invigilat. "Unde omnino confidò, quia sicut vos Dei causas religiosæ mentis amore tuemini, ita Deus "vestras majestatis suæ gratia tuetur et adjuvat." Here the emperor's pious zeal, solicitude, and vigilance, for the preservation of the christian faith, being such as no public cares, no tumults of war, could ever divert his attention from, are represented as the glory of his reign, as a subject of joy, not to the pontiff only, but to all the world. Again, (L. 6, Ep. 30,) to the same, he concludes in these words:—"Omni-

"potens autem Deus serenissimi domini nostri "vitam, et ad pacem ecclesiæ, et ad utilitatem "reipublicæ Romanæ, per tempora longa custo- "diat. Certi enim sumus, quia si vos vivitis, "qui cœli dominum timetis, nulla contra veri- "tatem superba prævalere permittitis." Could any man suspect, that one who writes in so earnest a manner, did not entertain the highest opinion of the emperor's piety and zeal, as well as the most fervent wishes for his welfare. I shall produce but one other example (L. 8, Ep. 2,) to the same. The subject of the letter is thus expressed in the title: "De denariis sancto Petro trans- "missis." After the warmest expressions of gratitude, on account of the pious liberality and munificence of his imperial majesty, and after telling how much the priests, the poor, the strangers, and all the faithful, were indebted to his paternal care, he adds, "Unde actum est, ut "simul omnes pro vita dominorum concorditer "orarent, quatenus omnipotens Deus longa "vobis et quieta tempora tribuat, et pietatis "vestræ fælicissimam sobolem diu in Romana "republica florere concedat." Yet he no sooner hears, which was not long after, of the successful treason of Phocas, in the barbarous murder of his sovereign, and his family, an event, the mention of which, even at this distance, makes a humane person shudder with horror, than he exclaims,

claims, with rapture, "Glory to God in the "highest." He invites heaven and earth, men and angels, to join in the general triumph. How happy is he, that the royal race is totally exterminated; for whom, but a little before, he told us, that he poured out incessant and tearful prayers, (*lachrymabili prece* is one of his expressions) that they might, to latest ages, flourish on the throne, for the felicity of the Roman commonwealth. Surely truth and sincerity had no part in this man's system of morality.

An honest heathen would at least, for some time, have avoided any intercourse or correspondence with such a ruffian as Phocas; but this christian bishop, before he had the regular and customary notice of his accession to the purple, is forward to congratulate him on the success of his crimes. His very crimes he canonizes (an easy matter for false religion to effect) and transforms into shining virtues, and the criminal himself into what I may call a second Messiah, he that should come for the salvation and comfort of God's people. And all this was purely that he might pre-engage the favour of the new emperor, who (he well knew) entertained a secret grudge against the Constantinopolitan bishop, for his attachment to the preceding emperor Mauricius; a grudge which, when he saw with what spirit the patriarch protected the empress dowager,

and her daughter, soon settled into implacable hatred.

But Gregory, who died soon after the aforesaid revolution, did not live to reap the fruits of his accursed policy. Indeed, Boniface the third, the next but one who succeeded him, for the pontificate of his immediate successour was very short, did very soon obtain of the emperor not only the revocation of the edict, by which the title of *universal bishop* had been conferred on the patriarch of Constantinople, but the issuing of a new decree, whereby that title was entailed in perpetuity on the Roman pontiff, who was vested with the primacy of all the bishops of the empire. And the church of Rome, by accepting these, not only declared that she derived her honours from the secular powers, but proclaimed herself, in the opinion of Gregory, who is acknowledged to have been as great a pontiff as ever filled the chair of St. Peter, to be vainglorious, proud, profane, impious, execrable, blasphemous, antichristian, heretical, diabolical; for these are some of the epithets he bestows on whosoever shall accept the title of *universal bishop.*

Now if such was the conduct of a Gregory, who, it must be owned, in cases wherein their politics did not interfere, appears to have been endowed with several virtues and good qualities,

what

what are we to expect from other popes? We need not be surprized, that a Zachary, in the middle of the eighth century, should, for the interest of the holy see, assist with his counsel, and countenance the usurper Pepin, to depose his master and benefactor Childerick, king of France, with all his family, and to possess himself of his crown and kingdom; a favour which Pepin, in the very next pontificate, returned in kind, assisting the pope to usurp the imperial dominions in Italy; or that pope Stephen and king Pepin became reciprocally guarantees of each other's usurpations, the former by the sanction of religion, the latter by an armed force. As little need we wonder at the many flagrant injustices of other pontiffs, when they happened to be influenced by the like motives.

After so much has been said of Gregory, it may not be amiss to make some remarks on his character, that we may not be thought to attribute to him things absolutely incompatible. To me he appears to have been a man, whose understanding, though rather above the middle rate, was much warped by the errours and prejudices of the times wherein he lived. His piety was deeply tinctured with superstition, and his morals with monkery. His zeal was not pure, in respect either of its nature or of its object. In respect of its nature, it was often intolerant; witness

witness the sanguinary measures he warmly recommended against the Donatists; and in respect to its object, it is manifest, that his attachment was more to the form than to the power of religion, to the name than to the thing. His aim was not so much to turn men from sin to God, and from vice to virtue, as to bring them by any means within what is called the pale of the church, and, consequently, under the dominion of its rulers; to draw them from the profession of paganism to the profession of christianity. If this was effected, he cared not, though they remained more than half heathen still. His zeal was exactly that of those pharisees, who compassed sea and land to make a proselyte, which, when they had accomplished, they rendered him twofold more a child of hell than themselves. Witness the advice he gave to the monk Augustine, who had been sent into Britain for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, not to abolish their paganish ceremonies, but rather to adopt them, and give them a new direction, that so the conversion of the people might be facilitated, and their relapse to the superstition of their fathers prevented. The plain language of this conduct is, if they are but called christians, and are subjects of the church, to which they yield an external conformity, it matters not what sort of christians they are at bottom, or

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how much of the pagan they may still retain in their heart, principles, and conduct.

I must own, that this turn of thought has a very natural connection with that kind of zeal, which has for its object the erection, or preservation, of a hierarchy, or what is called an ecclesiastical polity. With zealots of this stamp, a bare exteriour will serve the purpose. Obedience, whether voluntary or extorted; attachment, whether sincere or dissembled; submission, whether it proceed from love or from fear, equally, as in other worldly politics, tend to support the secular honours and emoluments of the different orders, which are the great pillars of the fabric.

This kind of zeal is, in like manner, the true source of persecution for conscience sake, and of a maxim inseparably connected with the principle of intolerance, that the end will sanctify the means. That Gregory had, through the misfortune and errour of the times, thoroughly imbibed both these principles, will never be doubted by any person, who, with judgment and impartiality, reads his history. Indeed, in the sacrifices which he made, as appears from the above observations, of truth, humanity, and integrity, we can hardly, at present, though the maxim were admitted, consider the end as having

goodness

goodness enough to justify the means. His object in the contest with the Constantinopolitan patriarch, about the title of universal bishop, was not the advancement of christianity, or so much as the profession of it, it was not the enlargement of the pale of the church, or the increase of the number of her nominal children. It was purely the honours and pre-eminence of his see. But such was the infatuation of the times, that even this was become, in their imaginations, an important and a religious object.

Nor was this the case only with the see of Rome, though it was evident that she had drank most deeply of this spirit, but, in some measure, of every particular church. It was become a popular and plausible cloak, for the pride and ambition of churchmen, that they acted out of a principle of zeal for the dignity of the see with which they were entrusted, that is, said they, for the honour of the founder. This was thought to be of great weight, if the founder happened to be a saint in the calendar; of greater still, if he was, or (which is all one) if he was believed to have been, a scripture saint, or an evangelist; and greatest of all, if an apostle. They acted on the supposition, that they could not more effectually ingratiate themselves with their patron, though in heaven, than by

by exalting the church he had erected or endowed upon the earth, above the churches erected or endowed by others, and, consequently, in exalting him above his fellow saints. They, in this way, were disposed to excuse their interferences with one another, thinking it reasonable, that each should do his best for the saint to whom he was most indebted, and who, from being the founder, commonly became the tutelar saint of his diocese, or parish. And then, as to the idea they supposed those saints to entertain of the dignity of their respective churches, it was altogether secular, or suited to the apprehensions of mere men of the world. This dignity consisted not at all in the virtue and piety of the parishioners, but in the opulence and pre-eminencies of the clergy, in the extent and populousness of the parish or diocese, the magnificence of the churches, sacred utensils, and vestments, particularly the rank, the titles, the privileges, the prerogatives, and the riches of the pastor.

It is true, the apostles, when on this earth, before they were fully instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven, and the spiritual nature of the Messiah's government, were found contending with one another who should be greatest. And it is equally true, that their Lord and Master severely reprehended this conduct, and taught them,

them, that unless they were converted, and acquired a very different disposition, as well as different sentiments concerning true greatness, far from being great in that kingdom, they should never enter it. And it is to be believed, nay, their conduct demonstrates, that they were soon after far superiour to thoughts so groveling, to an ambition so ill adapted to their profession. But from the sentiments which gradually sprang up in the church, on the decline of true knowledge and genuine piety, men seemed universally to be convinced, that in these squabbles for greatness, eminence, and precedency, the apostles and saints were still as keenly engaged in heaven as ever they had been on the earth; and that they could not be more highly gratified, than by the successful struggles of their clients here in maintaining their respective honours and preeminencies.

Nor does any person seem ever to have entered more into these views than the celebrated pope Gregory. He was ever holding forth the prerogatives of St. Peter, (who was, in his time, acknowledged as the founder of his church) nor did he make any ceremony of signifying, that this prime minister of Jesus Christ, like other prime ministers, would be most liberal of his favours to those who were most assiduous in making court to him, especially to them who

were

were most liberal to his foundation at Rome, and most advanced its dignity and power. So much for St. Gregory, and for the nature and extent of Roman papal virtue.

LEC-

LECTURE XVII.

IN the preceding lecture, I illustrated, at some length, in the instance of Gregory, one of the best of the Roman pontiffs, how far the maxim could go, of reckoning every thing just and lawful, by which the papal power could be advanced, and the supremacy of Rome secured. But it was not in one or two ways only, that they showed their attention to the aforesaid maxim, but in every way wherein they could apply it to advantage. I have also observed to you some of their other practices of the like nature and tendency. The only artifice I shall consider at present, is the claims which Rome so long and so assiduously affected to derive from the prerogatives of the apostle Peter, the pretended founder of that see. I have hinted at this, by the way, once and again; but as it was one of her most potent engines, it will deserve our special attention.

In my first discourse, on the rise of the pontificate, I showed sufficiently how destitute this plea

plea is of every thing that can deserve the name of evidence, and observed, that the first pontiff who seemed directly to found the honours of his see on the privileges of Peter, was pope Innocent, about the beginning of the fifth century, As to the apostolic age, and that immediately succeeding, there is not a vestige of either authority or precedency in the Roman pastor, more than in any other bishop or pastor of the church. Nor is this to be imputed to a defect of evidence through the injury of time, in relation to the point in question. So far from it, that next to the sacred canon, the most ancient and most valuable monument we have of christian antiquity, is a very long letter to the Corinthians from a bishop of Rome, Clement, who had been contemporary with the apostles, and is mentioned by Paul, in one of his epistles. So much the reverse do we find here of every thing that looks like authority and state, that this worthy pastor, in the true spirit of primitive and christian humility, sinks his own name intirely in that of the congregation to which he belonged, and does not desire that he should be considered otherwise than as any other individual of the society; a manner very unlike that of his successors, and quite incompatible with their claims. The letter is titled and directed thus: "The "church of God, which sojourns at Rome, to

"the church of God, which sojourns at Co-
"rinth." The words of the congregation were then considered as of more weight than those of any bishop, even the bishop of Rome. Nor is there, in the whole performance, any trace of authority lodged either in him, or in his church, over the church of Corinth, or, indeed, over any person or community. In every part, he speaks the language not of a superiour to his inferiours, a master to his servants, or even a father to his children, but of equal to equal, friend to friend, and brother to brother. He uses no dictating and commanding; he only exhorts and entreats. To the contraveners there are no menacing denunciations, such as have, for many centuries, accompanied the papal bull of the vengeance of Almighty God, and the malediction of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul. The modesty of the style of this truly primitive pastor, is an infallible index of the modesty of his pretensions; and, let me add, a very strong evidence of the great antiquity and perfect authenticity of the epistle.

The first who appeared to claim any thing like authority was Victor, bishop of Rome, (or pope, if ye please to call him so, though that name was not then peculiar) who lived near the end of the second century. This man, the first noted stickler for uniformity, quarrelled with the

Asiatic

Asiatic bishops for following a different rule in the observance of Easter, or the feast of the passover, from that followed in the west. This festival appears from the beginning to have been distinguished by christians, not on its own account as a Jewish solemnity, in commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt, but on account of its coincidence in respect of time, with those most memorable of all events, the death and resurrection of Christ. In the east, they were accustomed to observe the 14th day of the first month, on whatever day of the week it happened. In the west, when the 14th did not fall on Sunday, they kept it the first Sunday after. When Victor found that the orientals were no more impelled by his menaces than persuaded by his arguments, to relinquish the custom they had been taught by their founders, and to adopt implicitly the Roman practice, he, in a rage, cut them off from his communion. It is of importance here to observe, that this phrase, as used then, was not (as it is often misunderstood by modern readers) of the same import with excommunicating, in the strictest sense. It only denotes refusing, in respect of one's self, to join with such a person in religious exercises. And this every bishop whatever considered himself as entitled to do, in regard to those whom he thought to err in essential matters. That

the pope himself considered it in this manner, is manifest from the pains he took (though to no purpose) to induce other bishops to follow his example; sensible, that his refusal of communicating with the Quartodecimans, as they were called, did neither exclude them from the communion of the church, unless the resolution had become universal, nor oblige any other bishop to exclude them, till satisfied of the propriety of the measure. Accordingly, he is not considered by his contemporaries as assuming an extraordinary power, but as using very absurdly and uncharitably a power which every one of them had as well as he. Even those of the same opinion with him, in regard to Easter, would not concur in this measure. They looked on the time of observing that festival as merely circumstantial, and therefore not a sufficient reason for a breach. Such had been the opinion of his own predecessors, and such also was the opinion of all his successors, till the time of Constantine, when, by the emperor's influence with the Nicene council, the practice of the west was established throughout the church. So far, therefore, is this passage of history, as some have represented it, from being an evidence of power in the Roman pastor at that early period, that it is a very strong evidence of the contrary. In Victor, we have a pope that was wrong-

headed

headed and violent enough to attempt an extraordinary exertion, if he had had but as much influence as would have secured to his endeavours some probability of success. But in any other way than that of example and persuasion, he knew that his endeavours could only serve to render himself ridiculous. Of so little account, however, were his judgment and example made, that, in this step, to his no small mortification, he remained singular. All were ashamed of it, and his immediate successor did not judge it proper to adopt it. I need not add, that on this occasion we hear not a syllable of the authority of St. Peter, or of any right in the Roman see, to direct and command all other churches.

Of no greater consequence was the excommunication of St. Cyprian, and most of the African bishops, about half a century afterwards, by pope Stephen, on occasion of the question about the validity of heretical baptism. These sentences were mere *bruta fulmina*, had no consequences, and, as Augustin observes, produced no schism. The pope's excommunication, when unsupported by other bishops, did, in effect, rebound upon himself, and he himself was properly the only person cut off by such a sentence from the full communion of the church. Nothing can be juster than the sentiment of Firmilian on this subject. "O Stephen," says he,

"by attempting to separate others from thee, "thou hast separated thyself from all other "churches. He is the true schismatic who de-"parts, as thou hast done, from the unity of "the church." When the bishop of Rome acted unreasonably, no person considered himself as under an obligation to follow his example more than that of any other pastor in the church. Nor was Stephen's conduct, any more than Victor's, imitated by his successor; for though the African bishops rebaptized, and most others did not, they lived peaceably in communion with each other till rebaptization was condemned in the following century, first by the synod of Arles, and then by the council of Nice.

Even as far down as the pontificate of Damasus, towards the end of the fourth century, when the see of Rome was, through the munificence of the emperors and persons of opulence, greatly increased in riches and splendour, and, consequently, in dignity and power, a synod of Italian bishops, with the pope at their head, in a letter to the emperor Gratian, thus express themselves in regard to the superiority of the see of Rome: "The bishop of Rome is above "other bishops, in respect of the prerogatives "of his apostolic see, but on a level with them "in respect of his ministry." Let it be observed, that the term *apostolic* was not yet peculiarly

Early appropriated to the Roman see, but was conceived to belong to it, as has before been observed, in common not only with all the churches that had been founded by apostles, but even with all patriarchal and metropolitical churches. By his superiority, therefore, no more is meant than such a precedency as they supposed Peter to have enjoyed amongst his fellow-apostles. As to the latter part of the declaration, the equality of the ministry in the bishops, though it be the doctrine of all antiquity, nothing can be more repugnant, to what has been the doctrine of Rome, for many centuries, namely, that all power, both spiritual and temporal, is lodged in the pope; that all the bishops are no more than his deputies; that all the authority and jurisdiction they are vested with, are but emanations from the plenitude of power lodged in him. But Damasus, who, though far from being unambitious, had not formed a conception of so exorbitant a claim, appears to have been well satisfied with the respect shown to his see in the above declaration.

From this event, to the time of Innocent, in the beginning of the fifth century, though the popes piqued themselves not a little on the tradition they had, however implausible, that their see was founded by the apostle Peter, they did not pretend to derive any peculiar authority

from him; but in maintaining their power, always recurred to the dignity of Rome, the queen of cities, the capital of the world, to the imperial rescripts, the decrees of Sardica, which, on some occasions, they wanted to impose on mankind for the decrees of Nice, and to canons, real or supposititious, of ecumenical councils. That there were real canons, which gave the bishop of Rome a precedency before other bishops, is not denied; but in these it is never assigned as a reason, that this church had Peter for its founder, but solely, that the city was the world's metropolis.

But no sooner was this other foundation suggested, than its utility for the advancement of the papal interest was perceived by every body. First, this was a more popular plea. It made the papal authority much more sacred, as being held directly *jure divino*, whereas, on the other plea, it was held merely *jure humano*. Secondly, this rendered that authority immoveable. What one emperor gave by his rescript, another might resume in the same manner; the canons of one council might be repealed by a posteriour council. Such alterations, in matters of discipline, arrangement, and subordination, had been often made. But who durst abrogate the prerogatives granted by his Lord and Master to the prince of the apostles, and by him transmitted to his church?

church? Thirdly, the power claimed in this way was more indefinite, and might be extended, nobody knows how far, as long as there was found enough of ignorance and superstition in the people to favour the attempts of the priesthood. Besides, when the claim was of divine right, the pontiff had this advantage, that he alone was considered as the proper interpreter of his own privileges. The case was totally different with all human decrees, authority, and claims whatever. Add to this, that whilst they derived from any terrestrial power, they could never raise their claims above the authority which was acknowledged to be the source. But when the source was believed to be in heaven, no claim over earthly powers, however arrogant, could endanger their exceeding in this respect. And though I believe, that all these considerations were not fully in view at the beginning, yet it is certain, that for these purposes they employed this topic, in the course of a few centuries, when they would have all power, secular as well as spiritual, to have been conferred by Peter, a poor fisherman of Galilee, upon the pope.

It was some time, however, before the old ground of canons, imperial edicts, and ancient custom, was intirely deserted. Zosimus, the successor of Innocent, and a most aspiring pontiff,

tiff, recurred to these as the sole foundation of his pretended right of judging in the last resort. It was, perhaps, prudent, not to desert a plea at once which had great weight with many, and to risk all upon a novelty, which, till men's ears were familiarized with it, might, for aught he knew, be but little regarded. In process of time, however, the credulity of the people keeping pace with their degeneracy in knowledge, and virtue, and rational religion, dispelled all apprehensions on this head, and the repeal of the canons of Sardica by other councils, compelled his holiness to recur to the new ground pointed out by Innocent, which was found, upon trial, to afford a much firmer bottom, whereon to erect the wonderful fabric of the hierarchy.

Accordingly, in less than fifty years after this plea had been ushered in by Innocent, it began to be a common topic with the pontiffs, and all the advocates of pontifical jurisdiction. Hilarius, in the first letter he wrote after his accession to the papal chair, mentions, with much exultation, the primacy of St. Peter, and the dignity of his see. There was the greater need of this alteration, as Rome was, both in riches and splendour, daily declining, and, from being the imperial city, was become only the capital of Italy, a Gothic kingdom, as Constantinople was, in strictness, the only imperial city, and was

now become much superiour to the other in populousness and wealth. Accordingly, in the time of pope Gelasius, about the close of the fifth century, in a synod, consisting mostly of Italian bishops, and dependents on the pontiff, a decree was obtained, declaring boldly, (as if, says Bower, all records had been destroyed, and men knew nothing of what had happened but a few years before) "that it was not to any coun-
"cils, or the decrees of any, that the holy
"roman catholic and apostolic church owed her
"primacy, but to the words of our Saviour, say-
"ing, in the gospel, '*Thou art Peter*, &c.' and
"thereby building the church upon him, as on
"a rock which nothing could shake; that the
"Roman church not having spot or wrinkle,
"was consecrated and exalted above all other
"churches, by the presence as well as by the
"death, martyrdom, and glorious triumph of
"the two chief apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul,
"who suffered at Rome under Nero, not at
"different times, as the heretics say, but at the
"same time, and on the same day; and that
"the Roman church is the first church, being
"founded by the first apostle, the church of
"Alexandria the second, being founded by his
"disciple, St. Mark, in his name, and that of
"Antioch the third, because St. Peter dwelt
"there before he came to Rome, and in that
"city

" city the faithful were first distinguished by
" the name of christians."

Why was there no mention here, I must beg leave to ask, of the church of Jerusalem, which had been infinitely more highly honoured, even in their own way of estimating honours, than any or all of those churches put together? It had been honoured by the presence, the ministry, the martyrdom, the resurrection, and glorious triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole founder and king of the church universal, honoured by the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the whole college of apostles, whereby they were both authorized and qualified to commence their ministry, honoured further by the express command of Jesus Christ to all his apostles, to begin the discharge of their office at Jerusalem.

But, says the Romanist, it was for this very reason, the murder of the Lord of glory, that the Jews were rejected from being God's people, and Jerusalem in particular humbled, in being denied the honours she had otherwise enjoyed, as the capital of the church of Christ. Is it then reasonable, that Jerusalem should be punished for the death of the master, and Rome rewarded and honoured for the slaughter of his servants? Shall that be pleaded as a merit to the one, which is accounted a dishonour to the other? And if not the guilt of the murderers, but the

testimony

testimony given to the truth by the sufferers, and the importance of the oblation, are the things to be considered, the martyrdom of Jesus Christ was infinitely more important, in respect both of the victim, and of the consequences, than that of all his apostles and followers put together. It is true, the infidel Jews were rejected as a nation, because they had previously rejected the Lord's Messiah, and, in this fate, the unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem justly shared, when their temple and polity were destroyed; but this was no reason why the church of Jerusalem, that is, the believing inhabitants and believing Jews, a church which Christ himself had planted, and which was, for some time, watered by the joint labours of all his apostles, should be involved in that punishment. On the contrary, their faith, their fortitude, their glory, are enhanced by the unbelief, apostacy, and unrelenting cruelty of their countrymen and fellow-citizens. And that our Lord himself meant to show a particular respect to his faithful servants or church in that city, is manifest from what has been observed, the order he gave to his disciples, to wait *there* the fulfilment of the Father's promise, the effusion of the spirit in a variety of miraculous gifts, after which they were *there* to begin their ministry. For out of Zion this new

law

law was to issue, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

I adduce all this more as an *argumentum ad hominem* to the papist, than as implying, that it was intended that one church ought to have jurisdiction over another, by whomsoever founded. The disciples were commanded to call no man father upon the earth, because they had only one Father, who is in heaven, and they themselves were all brethren; and to call no one *master*, teacher, or guide; because Christ alone was their master, their teacher, their guide. It is scarcely worth while to criticize minutely this decree of Gelasius. It founds their whole claim on a tradition, which has been shown to be not only uncertain, but exceedingly improbable. It is somewhat remarkable, that he takes just as much of tradition as will suit his purpose, and no more. The tradition was as universal, and much more probable, that Peter was likewise the founder of Antioch; but this he did not judge convenient to admit. Besides, that Mark founded Alexandria in Peter's name, had never been heard of in the church before. In this pitiful manner he was obliged to mutilate and misrepresent tradition, that by all means he might avoid letting it appear, that the dignity of those several cities in the empire, and that alone, had determined

mined the rank of their respective bishops. With a gross and ignorant people, such as the Romans were now become, bold assertions would supply the place both of arguments and of testimonies. The pope had also this further motive in this new conceit, to mortify, as much as possible, the patriarch of Constantinople, (the only prelate powerful enough to be a rival) by exalting the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch above him; and, doubtless, by this expedient, he hoped the more easily to gain the two last mentioned bishops to his side.

Nothing from this time forwards was heard from the patronizers of Romish usurpation but *Thou art Peter, and I give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,* and so forth. These things began now to be echoed from every quarter. What is often repeated, how weak soever, never fails to make some impression, especially on the illiterate. The hard stone is at length hollowed by the eave's drop, however feeble and unperceivable the effect of a single drop must be accounted.

Matters were advanced so far at the beginning of the sixth century, that when pope Symmachus was summoned to appear before an assembly of bishops, and undergo a trial for several crimes of which he was accused, it was pleaded by some, (for the first time, indeed) that no synod,

or

or council had a right to judge the pope, that he was accountable for his actions to God alone. It must be owned, that this notion, though at present like an article of faith with every genuine son of Rome, (I mean not every Roman catholic) appeared to the generality of christians, at the time it was broached, exceedingly extravagant and absurd. But the synod (for it was not a general council) which Theodoric, king of the Goths, had convened, consisting entirely of Italian bishops, who were, in several respects, dependent, and had now, of a long time, considered the exaltation of the Roman see as the exaltation of their country, and the only means left of raising themselves above the eastern part of the empire; though they were not inclinable to give a positive decision in this extraordinary question, were satisfied to supersede the necessity of deciding it, by absolving the pontiff from all the charges brought against him, and restoring him to all his authority both within and without the city.

It was impossible to foresee how far the advocates for the hierarchy would carry the privileges they derived from the prince of the apostles, as they commonly affected to style St. Peter. What shall we think of this high prerogative, the title, the absolute jus divinum, to commit all crimes with impunity, at least in this world, being amen-

able

able to no jurisdiction, temporal or spiritual? Yet nothing less than this was the pope's benefit of clergy! Some, to avoid one absurdity in giving an unbounded licence, have run into another, maintaining the impeccability of popes in action, as well as their infallibility in judgment. But let any man who has read their history, even as written by their own friends and favourers, believe them to be either impeccable, or infallible, if he can. I shall only remark, by the way, that, in an Italian synod, assembled little more than a century before the pontificate of Symmachus, the bishops, however partial to the pope, were so far from exempting him from the jurisdiction of a council, that they presented a petition to the emperour Gratian, begging it, as a special favour, that the bishop of Rome might not be judged by a subordinate magistrate, but either by the emperour himself, or by a council. And to obtain so much as this was then thought a very great acquisition, though now it would be accounted extremely derogatory to the holy see.

The progress of the pontiffs was indeed rapid. One attainment, though, at the time it was made, it appeared the utmost extent of their ambition, always served but as a step to facilitate the acquisition of something still higher. "A person "never mounts so high," said Cromwell, "as

"when he does not know himself how far he de-
"sires to go." Nothing is more certain than that, in later centuries, there were many prerogatives strenuously contended for by the papal see, which the popes of earlier ages explicitly disclaimed.

But to return to the new plea, in support of the hierarchy, first suggested by Innocent, and afterwards solemnly ratified in a synod by Gelasius, there was even a gradation in the use they made of this, and in the consequences they deduced from it. At first, it was little more than a sort of divine title, in the see of Rome, to that honour and precedency, which she had for several ages enjoyed by such a human title as I have formerly explained. The altering of their ground, therefore, seems not at first to have been so much intended for extending their prerogatives, as for rendering them more venerable, and more unassailable, by every human power. But matters did not long rest here.

For some ages the primacy of Peter was understood by nobody to imply more than that he was a president, chairman, or first in rank, in the apostolic college. But now that his prerogatives were considered as the ground-work of the Roman claims, every true Romanist was disposed to stretch them as much as possible. The primacy they first raised into a superintendency, then

then the superintendency into a supremacy; and the supremacy they at length exalted into despotism, or an absolute and uncontrollable jurisdiction. Again, what was granted to Peter, by his master, was no longer considered in the way it had been formerly, as a personal reward for the important confession he was the first to make. Every prerogative, which they fancied to have belonged to him, they now ascribed to the pope, as the representative of his person, and the inheritor of all that was his. What a wonderful deduction from a number of premises, every one of them assumed without proof, and some of them in direct opposition to the clearest evidence.

As their claims advanced, their style varied. In the primitive ages, the utmost that was pretended, was, that the church, or christian society in Rome, was founded by the apostle Peter; that is, in other words, that the first converts to christianity, in Rome, were made by his preaching and ministry. But not satisfied with what is implied in this account, that he was the first who preached the gospel to them, they afterwards would have that capital to be the peculiar see of St. Peter, where he was settled as the bishop, or fixed pastor, of the congregation. The Romans were denominated the peculiar people of St. Peter. The pontiff was become his successor in office. Nay, as if this were not enough, they

quickly affected to talk of Peter as still personally present there, and of the pope as the organ through which he spoke. Their episcopal throne is accordingly the chair of St. Peter. What is given to that church is given to St. Peter. To disobey the pope is to affront St. Peter; nay, it is to rebel against God, and to renounce his son Jesus Christ, and is therefore no better than total apostacy. This was now become their manner universally.

Nay, so far did pope Stephen the second, about the middle of the eighth century, carry this matter, that in writing to Pepin, king of France, on a very urgent occasion, he thought proper to use the apostle's name instead of his own, and thus begins his letter: "Simon Peter, "the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to three "most excellent kings, Pepin, Charles, and Car-"loman, to all the holy bishops, abbots, &c. to "all the dukes, counts, and captains of the "army, and to the whole people of France, "grace to you and peace be multiplied. I am "the apostle Peter, to whom it was said, *Thou "art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my "church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail "against it. And to thee will I give the keys of "the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou "shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, "and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall*

"*be*

"*be loosed in heaven. Feed my sheep.* As all "this was said to me peculiarly, all who hearken "to me, and obey my exhortations, may be "certain that their sins are forgiven, and that "they will be admitted into everlasting life, "cleansed from all guilt, &c." He proceeds to enjoin them to assist the pope, his vicar, and the Romans, his favourite people, his chosen flock, by making war upon the Lombards, those ravening wolves, as they would hope for remission here, or admission into heaven hereafter; and assures them, that in this entreaty and command, he is joined by our lady, the virgin Mary, the mother of God, the thrones and dominions, the principalities and powers, and the whole multitude of the heavenly host. Now this, on pope Stephen's authority, ye may call the third epistle of Peter. But on comparing it with the former two, we cannot help remarking the wonderful change in the apostle's style. In this he is a perfect braggart; whereas in those we find not a syllable of his high prerogatives and claims. So far was he then from assuming any superiority, that he put himself on a level not only with apostles, but with every minister of the word. *The elders* (says he, Pet. v, 1,) *that are amongst you, I exhort, who am also an elder.* The Greek words are more emphatically expressive of equality than the English, πρεσβυτερους τους εν υμιν παρα-

καλω ὁ συμπρεσβυτερος. The "presbyters amongst "you," he says not I their archpresbyter command, but "I their fellow-presbyter exhort." And to what does he exhort them? "To feed "the flock of God, which was among them, "acting the parts of bishops or overseers, not "of lords over God's heritage, but serving as "patterns to the flock, teaching them not so "much by precept as by example." Was it not, however, as under shepherds, that they were to feed and guide the christian community? Undoubtedly. Who then was the chief shepherd? This also we learn from his words. It was not Peter himself. He is very far from giving such a suggestion. But it was Jesus Christ, his and their common master. "When "the chief shepherd, ὁ αρχιποιμην, shall appear, "ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth "not away." Nothing here of that arrogant and imperious style, which his pretended successors so soon assumed, and so injuriously fathered upon him. In regard to the spirit of the epistles, I say not how different, but how opposite, are they! This, transmitted by pope Stephen, is an incentive, by every means, the grossest flattery not excepted, to war, bloodshed, and vengeance. Those we have in the sacred canon, breathe nothing but humility, peace, and love, a meek and patient submission to the worst evils that men could

could inflict. In regard to the new fangled titles conferred on Mary, of *our lady*, and the *mother of God*, so foreign from the simple manner of the inspired penmen, I suppose a Romanist would account for them by saying, that the apostle must have learnt these improvements on his language from St. Cyril, who had, long ere now, carried to heaven the news of the Nestorian controversy, and his own triumph at the council of Ephesus.

To give you a specimen of the mode of proving which now came in vogue. The pope is the sole foundation of the christian edifice; for Christ said to Peter, *On this rock I will build my church.* In other places, however, all the apostles are represented equally as foundations. Again, the pope alone has the whole jurisdiction; for Christ said to Peter, *To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom* of heaven, and *whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven.* Yet the same power is, almost in the same words, in another passage given to all the apostles, nay, and to the whole church. The pope is the chief shepherd, the only apostle and pastor, that derives his power from Christ: all other bishops are under shepherds that derive their power from the pope. And how is this evinced? After the shameful fall of Peter in thrice denying his master, Jesus Christ judged it meet to bring

him thrice solemnly to profess his love, and subjoined this precept, as affording the apostle the means of giving the only satisfactory evidence of the truth of his profession: *Feed my sheep*, and *feed my lambs*. Hence the Romanist sagely concludes, that this charge belonged only to Peter. He might with equal reason have maintained, that as the question, *Lovest thou me?* was put only to Peter, and the threefold profession required of none, and given by none but him, it was not a duty incumbent on the other apostles, to love their master, or to confess him. It is on this ground, also, that some have dared to advance, in contradiction equally to the sense and to the words of scripture, that Peter was properly the only apostle of Jesus Christ, and that all the rest were the apostles of Peter. Seriously to refute such a principle would be almost as absurd as to maintain it.

Nay, to show a little more of their wonderful dexterity in reasoning, and the surprising advantages they derive from this fund of St. Peter, the pope's infallibility is thus demonstrated by them. Our Lord said to Peter, before the denial, as being the only disciple who was in imminent danger, (for the traitor is out of the question) *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou*

thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Those who think it necessary to mind the scope of the place, and the principles of reason, allege, that the prayer that his faith might not fail, means evidently that he might not proceed so far as to make a total defection from christianity, which he would soon, by repeatedly abjuring his master, appear on the brink of doing. But who thinks it necessary to mind these in disputing? The import of this passage, says the Romanist, is, Christ prayed that Peter might have the gift of infallibility, or, as they also term it, inerrability, in his judgment concerning all articles of christian doctrine. Peter then alone was, and consequently the pope, his sole heir and representative, alone is, infallible.

I shall give but one other specimen of this Romish logic. When in the ages of the church, posteriour to those I have yet remarked on, the popes claimed to be the true depositaries of all secular as well as spiritual jurisdiction, how satisfactory was the proof they produced in support of their claim, from this passage. *They said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said, It is enough.* Here they shrewdly ask, Why were there neither more nor fewer than two swords? The answer is plain: It was to denote that there were two sorts of power, neither more nor fewer, deposited with the church, the tem-

poral and the spiritual; and that these two were sufficient for all her occasions. But why are these supposed to be entrusted solely to the pope? If they were entrusted to Peter, they are certainly entrusted to the pope. And that they were entrusted to Peter is manifest from this, that Peter afterwards used one of them, as we learn from the evangelist John, in cutting off the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. And if he had one of these swords, what good reason can be given why he should not have both? Thus, by a regular deduction, as convincing to a Romanist as demonstration, it is proved, that the pope is the only fountain of all authority, both temporal and spiritual.

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LECTURE XVIII.

IN my preceding lectures, on the rise and progress of the papacy, I have been more particular, and treated things more in detail, than I had at first intended. But on so complex a subject, to which so great a variety of different and even dissimilar circumstances contributed, it is not easy to consult at once brevity and perspicuity. Besides, in this deduction, I have found it impossible to elucidate the latent causes, which co-operated in rearing this wonderful fabric, in a narrative of its advancement, according to the order of time. To have attempted this would have led me to make an abridgment of ecclesiastic history, and to interweave with it such critical inquiries, as would serve to expose the secret springs and progress of that enormous power. But this would have occasioned a still more minute detail, and would, after all, have scarcely been so satisfactory as the manner I have adopted. A number of different springs, in the great machine, which operated separately, though simultaneously,

taneously, I have been obliged, for the sake of distinctness, to consider separately. In the deductions I have given of each, I have conformed myself, as much as possible, to the order of time, that the different phases, if I may so express myself, of the same plea, at different periods, might be considered and compared. Something of this kind ye may have observed from what has been said on the subject of appeals, and on the different foundations on which Rome, at different periods, raised her title to jurisdiction. But when leaving one topic I recurred to another, I have been obliged to turn back, as it were, in order to resume the history of that particular, also, from the beginning. My object, in these discourses, is not to give a narrative of facts, but from known facts, with their attendant circumstances, by comparing one with another, to deduce principles and causes. I have already gone so far this way, not with a view to supersede the accounts given by the historian, but rather to enable you to read those accounts with greater attention and advantage. Many circumstances, apparently trivial, in a detail of facts, are apt to be overlooked by a hasty reader, which yet may be of very considerable consequence for bringing to light the springs of action, and accounting for other things with which, at first, to a superficial observer, they may appear to have little

little or no connection. In what remains of this enquiry into the Roman hierarchy, I do not intend to be so particular, but shall briefly take notice of some of the principal causes (for to name all would be impossible) which co-operated in rearing this strange medley of divine (as it was called) and human, spiritual and secular, dominion.

There is none who has read church history with the least attention, but must be sensible, that, from the very beginning of papal power, it has been much more considerable and conspicuous in the west, than in the east. Indeed, for some centuries, the Roman pontiff hardly made any pretensions in the east, except in regard to his precedency, which, as it had been settled by early but tacit consent, and preserved by custom, the eastern prelates were not disposed to controvert. But when from a bare precedency, in point of rank, he came to extend his claim to jurisdiction, he always met from them a vigorous and often successful opposition. The case was not entirely similar with the western bishops, over whom the pope obtained a considerable ascendant, much earlier than it was in his power to do, in regard to his oriental brethren. Several causes may be assigned for this difference.

In the first place, in some of the earliest ages, if we except the inhabitants of Rome, Carthage, and

and some principal cities, those in the west were in general, beyond all comparison, inferiour both in knowledge and acuteness to the orientals, and were therefore much better adapted to be implicit followers, first, during the church's worldly obscurity, of the most respectable characters, afterwards, during her worldly splendour, of the most eminent sees. Victor, bishop of Rome, in the violent measures he adopted against the Quarto-decimans, in Asia, in the second century, seems to have had no adherents, even among those, who, in the observance of Easter, the only point in dispute, followed the same custom with himself. As little had Stephen the first, in the third century, in his measures against the African rebaptizers of those who had been baptized by heretics or schismatics. Ireneus, bishop of Lyons, on account of his personal character, was of ten times more authority even in the west than pope Victor; and Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, than pope Stephen. But matters underwent a very great change after christianity had received the sanction of a legal establishment. Then indeed the difference between one see and another, both in riches and in power, soon became enormous. And this could not fail to produce, in the sentiments of mankind, the usual consequences. Such is the constant progress in all human polities whatever.

In the most simple state of society, personal merit, of some kind or other, makes the only noticeable distinction between man and man. In polities, purely republican, it is still the chief distinction. But the farther ye recede from these, and the nearer ye approach the monarchical model, the more does this natural distinction give place to those artificial distinctions created by riches, office, and rank.

When Rome was become immensely superiour both in splendour, and in opulence, to every western see, she would, with great facility, and, as it were naturally, (if nothing very unusual or alarming was attempted) dictate to the other sees in the west; the people there having had, for several ages, very little of the disputatious, dogmatizing, humour of their brethren in the east. It no doubt contributed to the same effect, that Rome was the only see of very great note, which concurred with several of them in language, latin being the predominant tongue among the western churches, as Greek was among the eastern. It was natural for the former, therefore, to consider themselves as more closely connected with the Roman patriarch than with the Constantinopolitan, or any of the other oriental patriarchs. A similar reason, when not counteracted by other causes, operated among

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the Greeks, to make them prefer a Grecian patriarch before a Latin one.

I acknowledge, as I hinted before, that this natural bias was frequently surmounted by other causes. When the orientals were divided into parties by their disputes, as was often the case, the Romans could then obtain almost any thing from the side they favoured, such was the violence of the parties against each other. But this humour, though it was not entirely without effect, was but temporary with them, and commonly lasted no longer than the controversy which gave rise to it. Like an elastic body, though it may be very much bent by the proper application of external force, no sooner is the force removed, than of itself it resumes its former state. Nevertheless, on bodies of this sort, such violence, frequently repeated, will produce some change.

One thing, which rendered it very difficult to effect a hearty coalition between Greeks and Latins, was the contempt which the former were, from early childhood, inured to entertain of the genius and understanding of the latter. Notwithstanding the superiority the Romans had obtained over them by subduing their country, and all the eastern monarchies which had sprung out of the Macedonian conquests, the Grecians could

could not help considering them as no better than a sort of barbarians, a little more civilized than the Scythians, or the Tartars. "These "men," said Photius, the Greek patriarch, who, in the ninth century, proved the occasion of the schism between the oriental churches and the occidental; these men, speaking of the Latins, "sprung from the darkness of the west, "have corrupted every thing by their ignorance, "and have even proceeded to that pitch of im-"piety and madness, as to foist words into the "sacred symbol confirmed by all the councils." The Greeks often bragged that the Latins were their scholars. "They have nothing," said they, "which they have not gotten from us, "not even the names of their ceremonies, mys-"teries, and dignities, such as baptism, eucha-"rist, liturgy, parish, diocese, bishop, presbyter, "deacon, monk, church, which they often stu-"pidly misunderstand, and wretchedly misap-"ply." But though the Greeks never showed much inclination to a cordial union with the Latins, they were far from being so closely united among themselves as the Latins generally were. I have already hinted at some of the causes of this difference in the Greeks, such as their ingenuity itself, which could ill brook the dictatorial manner, and their disputative and inquisitive turn of mind.

But there was another remarkable cause arising from the different constitutions of these two great parts of the empire, the oriental and the occidental. The former, as being beyond all comparison the richest, the most populous, and the most civilized, was sooner brought to a regular form of government, ecclesiastical as well as civil. I had before occasion to observe, that the ecclesiastic polity was, in a great measure, modelled upon the civil. All the cities of greatest eminence, as well as the most ancient churches, were situated in the east: Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Constantinople, Cesarea, Ephesus, were cities of that note, with which nothing in the west, if we abstract Rome itself, was worthy to be compared. Accordingly, except Milan in Italy, and Carthage in west Africa, there does not appear to have been any bishop in the occidental churches above the rank of a metropolitan.

And even those I have named, Milan and Carthage, were considerably inferiour, both in jurisdiction and in wealth, not only to the three great patriarchal sees in the east, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, but even to the principal of those called exarchal, such as Ephesus and Cesarea. Consequently, the pope had not in the west a single bishop, of consideration and rank, sufficient to be, in any degree, qualified for either

a rival,

a rival, or a check. It is manifest, that in Gaul, Spain, and Britain, there were not, at least for some ages, any who had the inspection of more than a single province. The disparity, therefore, was so exceedingly great in the west, as to give the utmost scope for the ambition of a see, which, in respect of worldly circumstances, had been so remarkably distinguished.

When there is an equality, or even nearness, in riches and power among those who share it, we may be assured, there will always be emulation; but if you raise one of the possessors distinguishably above the rest, you not only destroy their emulation, but give a contrary direction to their ambition, and make them fain to court the man whom they cannot hope successfully to emulate. Nay, the very rivalship which the rest entertain of one another, leads them to act this part with regard to him whom more fortunate circumstances has raised into their superiour; that, by his means, they may the more easily surmount their equals. Rome, it must be owned, was not at first considered as a patriarchate. The whole of Italy made but one civil diocese, which, as I observed once before, was on account of its extreme populousness, as well as opulence, divided into two lieutenancies, or vicariates. The one was called the vicariate of Rome, the other that of Italy: the capital of this last was Milan.

The first title, therefore, the pope enjoyed, after the church, in Constantine's time, had been modelled in this manner, was the vicar of Rome, as the bishop of Milan was called the vicar of Italy; nor was the pope, if I remember right, honoured with the name of patriarch, though he was always allowed the precedency till the synod of Chalcedon in the fifth century. But as he had been time immemorial denominated the *vicar*, and as it is not easy to suppress a title firmly established by custom, it is not improbable that the bishops of Rome, near that period, have judged it more political not to attempt the suppression; but to add to *vicar*, by way of explanation, in order to disguise its inferiority, the words, *of Jesus Christ*, and with this addition to arrogate it as peculiar.

The bishop of Milan, who, by that first division, was vicar of Italy, was on a foot of equality, in respect of his title, and even of the nature, though not of the extent of his jurisdiction, with the bishop of Rome; insomuch, that nothing but the immense disparity there was in riches and splendour, and almost all external circumstances, could have prevented him from being a rival. This disparity, however, did effectually prevent all rivalry, and make it conducive both to the interest and to the ambition of the former, to forward, instead of opposing, the designs of the

the latter. It is evident, therefore, that the popes, even from the beginning, had in the west incomparably a more advantageous situation for the acquisition of power, than any patriarch in the east was possessed of. It is, in like manner, evident, and might almost have been concluded beforehand, that he could not, without a concurrence of events quite extraordinary, have brought the oriental to the same implicit submission and obedience to which he actually brought the occidental churches.

It is proper also here to observe another fortunate circumstance, which operated very early for the advancement of his authority. To the vicarage of Rome belonged ten provinces, including the islands Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia. As in these there were no metropolitans, as all were under the immediate jurisdiction of the capital itself, and thence were denominated suburbicary provinces, the vicar of Rome, or pope, as he was called, had not only all the power of an exarch over the whole ten provinces, but that also of the primate in every province. There was in him a coalition of both jurisdictions, the metropolitical and the patriarchal. As the metropolitan had the charge of ordaining the bishops of his province, and the patriarch that of ordaining the metropolitans, the bishop of Rome had the charge, either by himself, or by his delegates, of ordaining

every bishop within the provinces of his vicariate. These rights he gradually extended, as circumstances favoured his views, first to the whole prefecture of Italy, which included west Illyricum, and west Africa, afterwards to all the occidental churches, Gaul, Spain, and Britain; and lastly, as of divine right, and therefore unalienable, over the whole catholic church. This last claim, however, hath subsisted only in theory.

That these pretensions were introduced gradually is a fact indisputable. Pope Leo, in one of his letters still extant, to the bishops of Gaul, explicitly disclaims the right of ordaining them. That pontiff was not deficient either in ambition or in abilities. And one would have thought he might have been better instructed in the divine and unalienable rights of his see, if any conception of such rights had been entertained in his time. But the zenith of the hierarchy was too sublime a pinnacle to be attained by a few bold leaps. It was by innumerable steps, not considerable, taken severally, that that amazing and dizzy height at length was reached. It was not till after repeated successes in the attainments of objects far below the summit, that this great antitype of Lucifer said in his heart, *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit upon the mount of the congregation,*

tion, (or church, as the word imports) *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* But to return, there can be no doubt that the want of patriarchs in the west did greatly facilitate the attempts of the Roman pontiff to supply their place, first in consecrating their metropolitans, and afterwards even in ordaining the suffragans.

Again, one great advantage which Rome derived from her vast opulence and rich domains, both in Italy and in the neighbouring islands, was the power she acquired of employing and supporting missions, in distant parts of Europe, for the propagation of *the gospel.* When by means of missions and expence churches were planted in any country, they were always accounted dependent on that as the mother church by whom the missionaries were employed. In this manner, by the monk Augustine, a missionary of Gregory the first, the Anglo-Saxons in Britain were converted from idolatry near the end of the sixth century. The Britons, or ancient inhabitants, had indeed been christians for some ages before. But they were ere now dispossessed of their ancient habitations, and confined by those new comers to a small part of the island, the principality of Wales. In the beginning of the eighth century, the Germans were in like manner, converted by Winfrid, or Boni-

face, a missionary of Gregory the second, which Boniface, I may remark in passing, is the first ecclesiastic on record, who took a solemn oath of fealty to St. Peter, that is, to the Roman see, a security which was afterwards exacted by the pope, not only of all legates and servants of his court, but of all bishops whatever; and the more effectually to prevent its being omitted, it was engrossed in the pontifical, among the rites to be observed in consecration. Nor did a question of this kind of pre-occupancy prove, about a century afterwards, the least considerable cause of the great schism still subsisting between the oriental and the occidental churches. The disputed titles of Ignatius and Photius to the patriarchate of Constantinople, and even the differences in doctrine and ceremonies between the Latins and the Greeks, would have been much more easily adjusted than the lucrative pretensions that both Rome and Constantinople made to the superiority and patronage of the new converted churches of Bulgaria. That of right from all the principles which then prevailed, they should have been dependent on the Constantinopolitan patriarch, can scarcely be made a doubt. But Rome was ever interfering; and this was too great an acquisition to lose sight of. Paul, indeed, avoided to promulge the gospel in places where Christ had already been made known, lest

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he should build on another man's foundation, and thereby bestow his time and labour less profitably for the common cause. That maxim answered admirably, when the end was the advancement of a spiritual kingdom, peace, and truth, and righteousness, the honour of God, and happiness of mankind. He might then well say, that Christ is preached, wheresoever and by whomsoever, I do, and will, rejoice. But the case was quite altered when conversions to a nominal more than real christianity, were made the instruments of a new sort of conquest, mere engines for extending ecclesiastical dominion. Constantinople could do a good deal in this way, but Rome still more.

I shall mention another excellent piece of papal policy, first introduced by Damasus, near the end of the fourth century, and commonly called the legatine power. The introduction of this practice, and what gave rise to it, I shall give you from our English biographer's history of that pope.—" Acholius, bishop of Thessalo-
" nica, was the first who enjoyed, under Dama-
" sus, the title of the pope's vicar. He was
" nominated to this office, in east Illyricum, on
" the following occasion: Illyricum, comprising
" all ancient Greece, and many provinces on
" the Danube, whereof Sirmium was the capital,
" had, ever since the time of Constantine, be-
" longed

"longed to the western empire. But in the "year 379, Dacia and Greece were, by Gracian, "disjoined from the more westerly provinces, "and added, in favour of Theodosius, to the "eastern empire, being known by the name of "east Illyricum, whereof Thessalonica, the me-"tropolis of Macedon, was the chief city. The "bishops of Rome, as presiding in the metro-"polis of the empire, had begun to claim a kind "of jurisdiction, or rather inspection, in eccle-"siastical matters, over all the provinces of the "western empire; which was the first great step "whereby they ascended to the supremacy, they "afterwards claimed and established. This Da-"masus was unwilling to resign, with respect to "Illyricum, even after that country was dismem-"bered from the western, and added to the eastern "empire. In order, therefore, to maintain his "claim, he appointed Acholius, bishop of Thes-"salonica, to act in his stead; vesting in him "the power which he pretended to have over "those provinces. Upon the death of Acholius, "he conferred the same dignity on his successor "Anysius, as did the following popes on the "succeeding bishops of Thessalonica; who, by "thus supporting the pretensions of Rome, be-"came the first bishops, and, in a manner, the "patriarchs of east Illyricum, for they are some-"times distinguished with that title. This, how-

"ever,

" ever, was not done without opposition, the
" other metropolitans not readily acknowledging
" for their superiour one who, till that time, had
" been their equal. Syricius, who succeeded
" Damasus, enlarging the power claimed by his
" predecessor, decreed, that no bishop should be
" ordained in east Illyricum without the consent
" and approbation of the bishop of Thessalonica.
" But it was some time before this decree took
" place. Thus were the bishops of Thessalonica
" first appointed vicegerents of the bishops of
" Rome, probably in the year 382. The con-
" trivance of Damasus was notably improved by
" his successors, who, in order to extend their
" authority, conferred the title of their vicars,
" and the pretended power annexed to it, on
" the most eminent prelates of other provinces
" and kingdoms, engaging them thereby to de-
" pend upon them, and to promote the autho-
" rity of their see, to the utter suppression of
" the ancient rights and liberties both of bishops
" and synods. This dignity was, for the most
" part, annexed to certain sees, but sometimes
" conferred on particular persons. The institu-
" tion of vicars was, by succeeding popes, im-
" proved into that of legates; or, to use De
" Marca's expression, the latter institution was
" grafted on the former. The legates were
" vested with a far greater power than the
" vicars;

"vicars; or, as pope Leo expresses it, were ad-
"mitted to a far greater share of his care, though
"not to the plenitude of his power. They were
"sent, on proper occasions, into all countries,
"and never failed exerting, to the utmost stretch,
"their boasted power, oppressing, in virtue of
"their paramount authority, the clergy as well
"as the people, and extorting from both large
"sums, to support the pomp and luxury in which
"they lived."

Thus far our historian. Nothing, indeed, could be better calculated, for both extending and securing their authority, than thus engaging all the most eminent prelates in the different countries of christendom, from a principle of ambition, as well as interest, to favour their claims. Rome was already gotten too far, as we have seen, above the episcopal sees of the west, for any of them to think of coping with her, and was, besides, too distant to excite their envy. But it would greatly gratify the covetousness, as well as the pride and vanity, of those bishops whom she was thus pleased to distinguish, to be, by her means, raised considerably above their peers and neighbours.

Add to this, that not only the ambitious views of individuals served to promote the schemes of Rome, but the general ambition of the clerical order greatly forwarded her views. The western

empire

empire soon came to be divided into a number of independent states and kingdoms. Now in the form into which the church had been moulded before the division, a foundation had been laid for incessant interferings and bickerings, in every country, between the secular powers and the ecclesiastical. In these interferings, the principal advantage of the latter arose from the union that subsisted among the churches of different countries, as members of one great polity. And even this connection, (however possible it might have been to preserve it for the single purpose of promoting piety and virtue) it was absolutely impossible to preserve, for the purpose of spiritual dominion, unless they were united under a common head. The republican form of any kind, democratical or aristocratical, could never answer in such a situation of affairs. Not only are commonwealths slower in their operations than the exigencies of such a state would admit, but they can do nothing without the authority of a legislative council; and this it would be in the power of a few temporal princes totally to obstruct, either by preventing them from assembling, or by dispersing them when assembled. And from any state, or kingdom, it would be in the power of the chief magistrate to prevent a deputation being sent. The monarchical form, therefore, supported by the prejudices and super-

stition

stition of the people, was the only adequate means both of preserving and of extending the high privileges, honours, titles, and immunities, claimed universally by the sacred order, and which they most strenuously contended for, as the quintessence of christianity, the sum of all that the Son of God had purchased for mankind. This could not fail to induce them to put themselves under the protection of the only bishop in the west, who was both able and willing to support their bold pretensions.

I must likewise add, however unlikely, that the ambition of secular princes concurred in the establishment and exaltation of the hierarchy. Nothing can be more evident, than that it was the interest of the princes of christendom, and their people, to combine against it. But though this was the general and most lasting interest of all the states of Europe, what was, or at least was conceived to be, the immediate interest of a particular prince, or state, might be to favour the hierarchy. Let it be observed, that the European monarchs were almost incessantly at war with one another. Neighbour and enemy, when spoken of states and kingdoms, were, and to this day too much are, terms almost synonymous. The pope, therefore, could not make even the most daring attempt against any prince, or kingdom, which would not be powerfully backed by

the most strenuous endeavours of some other prince, or kingdom, whose present designs the pope's attempts would tend to forward.

If England was the object of papal resentment, if the enraged ecclesiarch had fulminated an excommunication, or interdict, against the kingdom, or issued a bull deposing the king, and loosing his subjects from their oaths and allegiance, (for all these spiritual machines were brought into use one after another) France was ready to take advantage of the general confusion thereby raised in England, and to invade the kingdom with an armed force. The more to encourage the French monarch to act this part, the pontiff might be prevailed on (and this hath actually happened) to assign to him the kingdom of which he had pretended to divest the owner. A man may afford to give what never belonged to him. But if the owner found it necessary to make submissions to the priest, the latter was never at a loss to find a pretext for recalling the grant he had made, and re-establishing the degraded monarch. In like manner, when France was the object of the pontiff's vengeance, England was equally disposed to be subservient to his views. Nay, he had the address, oftener than once, to arm an unnatural son against his father. Such was the situation of affairs all Europe over. Those transactions, which always

terminated

terminated in the advancement of papal power, could not fail, at last, to raise the mitre above the crown. Every one of the princes, I may say, did, in his turn, for the gratifying of a present passion, and the attaining of an immediate object, blindly lend his assistance, in exalting a potentate, who came, in process of time, to tread on all their necks, and treat both kings and emperours, who had foolishly given their strength and power to him, as his vassals and slaves.

It were endless to take notice of all the expedients, which Rome, after she had advanced so far, as to be esteemed in the west the visible head of the church universal, and vested with a certain paramount, though indefinite authority, over the whole: devised, and easily executed, both for confirming and extending her enormous power. It is true, she never was absolute in the east; and, from about the middle of the ninth century, these two parts of christendom were in a state of total separation. But that became a matter of less consequence to her every day. The eastern, which may be said to have been the only enlightened, and far the most valuable part of the empire, in the days of Constantine, was daily declining, whilst the western part was growing daily more considerable. In the eastern empire, one part after another became a prey to Turks and Saracens,—Egypt, Barbary, Syria,

Asia,

Asia, and at length Greece, Macedonia, and Thrace. The only part of the western empire that not only was, but still continues to be, subjected to the depredations of these barbarians, is proconsular and west Africa. Whereas, in the western, and northern parts of Europe, there were, at the same time, springing up some of the most powerful and polished, and, I may now add, the most enlightened monarchies and states, with which the world has ever been acquainted. The very calamities of the east, particularly the destruction of the eastern empire, the last poor remains of Roman greatness, and the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, left the western patriarch totally without a rival, and christendom without a vestige of the primitive equality and independence of its pastors.

When Rome had every thing, in a manner, at her disposal, it was easy to see that all canons, in regard to discipline, and decrees, in relation to doctrine, would point invariably to the support of this power. Hence the convenient doctrines of transubstantiation, purgatory, prayers and masses for the dead, auricular confession, the virtue of sacerdotal absolution. Hence the canons extending so immensely the forbidden degrees of marriage, the peculiar power in the popes of dispensing with these, and other canons, the power of canonization, the celibacy of the

clergy, the supererogatory merits of the saints, indulgences, and many others.

There is indeed one right that has been claimed, and successfully exerted, by Rome, which, as being a most important spring in this great and complex machine of the hierarchy, will deserve a more particular notice. I mean, the pope's pretended title to grant exemptions to whomsoever he pleases, from subjection to their ordinary ecclesiastical superiours. But this I shall reserve for the subject of another lecture.

LECTURE XIX.

FROM what has been discovered, in the course of our enquiries into the rise, the progress, and the full establishment of the papacy, we may justly say, that if happiness consist in dominion, (which it certainly does not, though all mankind, by their conduct, seem to think it) what a wonderful good fortune has ever attended Rome! From the first foundation of the city, by a parcel of banditti, she rose but to command, and gradually advanced into an empire of such extent, renown, and duration, as has been unexampled in the world, either before or since. And from the first declension of that enormous power, for it could not subsist always, she is insensibly become the seat of a new species of empire, which, though not of equal celebrity with the former, is much more extraordinary, and perhaps more difficult to be surmounted, being deeply rooted in the passions and sentiments of men.

Nay, how fortunate has been this queen of cities in what concerned both the formation and the advancement of this second monarchy. She continued the imperial city during the nonage of the hierarchy, that is, as long as was necessary to give her priest, though under the humble title of pastor, the primacy, or precedency among his brethren, for these two terms were at first synonymous, and by the wealth and splendour to which she raised him, to lay the foundation of those higher claims he hath since made, of supremacy and jurisdiction over them. And she ceased to be the seat of empire at the critical period, when the residence of a court must have eclipsed his lustre, confined him to a subordinate part on the great theatre of the world, and stifled, in the birth, all attempts to raise himself above the secular powers. Had the eastern empire remained to this day, and Constantinople been the imperial residence, it would have been impossible that her patriarchs should ever have advanced the claims which the Roman patriarch not only advanced, but compelled the christian world to admit. When Rome was deserted by the emperors, her pontiff quickly became the first man there; and in the course of a few reigns, the inhabitants came naturally to consider themselves as more con-

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nected with him, and interested in him, than in an emperor who, under the name of their sovereign, had his residence and court in a distant country, who spoke a different language, and whose face the greater part of the Romans did not so much as know. Nor was the matter much mended in regard to them after the division of the empire, as the royal residence, neither of the emperor of the West, nor afterwards of the king of the Goths, was Rome, but either Milan or Ravenna.

And when in succeeding ages the pope grew to be, in some respect, a rival to the German emperor, the Romans, and even many of the Italians, came to think, as it might have been foreseen that they would, that their own aggrandizement, the aggrandizement of their city, and of their country, were more concerned in the exaltation of the pontiff, who, by the way, was then, in a great measure, a creature of their own making, (for the office was not then, as now, in the election of the conclave) than in that of a monarch, who, from whatever origin he derived his power, was, in fact, an alien, and not of their creation, and who was as ill situated for defending them against their enemies, as the successours of Constantine had been before. Of the inability of both to answer this purpose, the invasions and conquests made at different times

by Goths and Lombards, Franks and Normans, but too plainly showed. In short, had Rome never been the imperial city, its pastor could never have raised himself above his fellows. Had it continued the imperial city, he might, and probably would have had, such a primacy, as to be accounted the first among the patriarchs, but without any thing like papal jurisdiction over church and state. Had Rome remained the seat of empire, the pope's superiority to councils had never been heard of. The convocation of these, whilst the empire subsisted, would, in all probability, have continued, as it was for several ages, in the hands of the emperor. The dismemberment of the empire tended but too visibly to subvert the emperor's claim, and occasion the setting up of another in its stead. A sovereign has no title to convoke the subjects of another sovereign, of whatever class they be, and call them out of his dominions, whatever title he may have to assemble any part of his own subjects within his own territories. Now whatever weakened the emperor's claim, strengthened the pope's. Immemorial custom had taught men to consider councils as essential to the church. And if the right to call them could no longer be regarded as inherent in any secular prince, where would they so readily suppose it to inhere as in him, to whose primacy in the church

church they had been already habituated? And even after the dismemberment of the empire, and the succession of a new power over part, under the same title, had it been possible for the emperors of Germany, who, in the former part of the eleventh century, made and unmade popes at their pleasure, to have made Rome their residence, and the capital of their empire, the pope, as Voltaire justly observes, had been no other than the emperor's chaplain. Nay, much of the power which the former, in that case, would have been permitted to exercise, would have been more nominal than real, as it would have been exercised under the influence of a superiour. But luckily for the pope and for Italy, to reside at Rome, was what the emperor could not do, and at the same time retain possession of his German dominions, of which he was only the elective sovereign.

The obscurity of the western, in the beginning, compared with the oriental churches, occasioned that their ecclesiastic polity was left imperfect, so as to give Rome too great an ascendancy in that part of the world; the gradual but incessant decline of those eastern nations, whose opulent sees were alone capable of proving a counterpoise to the power of Rome; and, on the other hand, the slow, but real advancement of the occidental countries, after the power of

the pontiff had been firmly established; their real, but late advancement, in arts, populousness, wealth, and civilization, all alike conspired to raise him. His rivals sank, his subjects rose.

For many ages he seemed to have conceived no higher aim than to be at the head of the executive and the judicial power in the church. No sooner was that attained than his great object came to be the legislative power. Ye do not find, for several centuries, the least pretext made by the pope, of a title to establish canons, or ecclesiastical laws; his pretence was merely, that he was entrusted with the care, that the laws enacted by councils should be duly executed. He was then only, as it were, the chief magistrate of the community; nothing now will satisfy him but to be their legislator also. A doctrine came accordingly much in vogue with the partizans of Rome, that the pope was not subject to councils, nay, that he was not only independent of them, but above them; that he was himself entitled to make canons, to declare articles of faith, to pronounce what was orthodox, what heterodox, and that he needed not the aid of any council.

If such were really the case, all the world, popes as well as others, had been greatly deceived for many ages. When an effectual remedy was at hand, they had thought it necessary

to

to take a very difficult and circuitous method to attain a cure, at most not more certain. To what purpose bring such a multitude together from all the quarters of the globe, with great expence and infinite trouble, to tell us, after whole days spent in chicane, sophistry, and wrangling, what one single person could have told us at the first, as soon as he was consulted? In all these different claims, made at different periods by the pontiff, though he generally succeeded at last, he never failed to encounter some opposition. It has, however, on this article of the pope's authority, been justly observed, that the advocates for it have been much more numerous than those for the authority of councils. The manner in which Æneas Sylvius, who was himself afterwards raised to the popedom, under the name of Pius II, accounted for this difference, is strictly just: "Because," said he, "the popes have benefices to give, and the "councils have none." Whether he would have returned the same answer, after he had reached the summit of ecclesiastical preferment, may be justly made a question. Certain it is, that the pontiffs cannot be charged with want of attention to those who have stood forth as champions for their authority. Whereas there is hardly a motive, except a regard to truth, which can induce any one, in roman catholic countries,

tries, to defend the other side of the question. For on this article there are different opinions even among roman catholics. This, however, is a point of which there has never been any decision that has been universally acquiesced in; and, indeed, on the footing whereon matters now stand in that church, we may affirm, with great probability, that it will always remain undecided.

In the conclusion of my last lecture, I mentioned one great engine of papal policy, the exemptions granted by the pontiffs to particular ecclesiastics or communities, by which their subjection to the ordinary was dispensed with, and their dependance rendered immediate upon Rome. The legatine power, of which I have already spoken, was somewhat of the same nature, though it had a more plausible excuse. But exemptions were not limited to those who might be considered as a sort of agents for the pontiff, and employed to represent his person. He pretended a title to make such alterations in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of any country as he should judge proper, and particularly to exempt bishops, when he found it convenient, from the jurisdiction of the archbishop, priors and abbots, from that of the bishop. This privilege came at length to be so far extended, that almost all the orders of regulars, and the universities, were taken,

taken, as it was termed, under the pope's immediate care and protection, that is, released from all subordination to the secular clergy, in whose dioceses they were situated, or might happen to reside.

For several ages after the church had been modelled on the plan of the civil government under Constantine, it was considered as a thing totally inadmissible, that a presbyter should withdraw his obedience from his bishop, a bishop from his metropolitan, or a metropolitan from his exarch or patriarch, where there was an ecclesiastic vested with that dignity. Accordingly, in the oriental churches, nothing of this sort was ever attempted. And, indeed, if the aristocratical form then given to the church had continued unviolated also in the west, such an attempt never had been made. But to say the truth, there was no possibility of supporting the monarchical form now given to the occidental churches, without some measure of this kind.

It is true, there had been established a subordination in all the clerical orders, from the pope downwards to the most menial officer in the church. The pope was the judge in the last resort, and claimed the exclusive title to give confirmation and investiture to all the dignitaries. Rome, by her exactions, as well as by the frequent recourse

recourse to her from all parts, for dispensations, and the like trumpery, as we should call them, which had gradually obtained, and were then of the most serious consequence, had taken all imaginable care, that the several churches might not forget their subjection and dependance. Yet however sufficient this might have proved in a single kingdom or country, such as Italy, where the whole is more immediately under the eye of the governours, who can quickly get notice of, and provide against a rising faction, before it bring any purpose to maturity, it is far from being sufficient in a wide-established empire. The primates, or archbishops, and even some of the wealthiest bishops, were like great feudatory lords. They owed a certain acknowledgment and duty to their liege-lord the pope; but the dependance of the inferiour clergy, the suffragans and priests, like that of the vassals upon the barons, was immediately or directly on the prelates, and but indirectly and remotely upon the pope. As whilst the feudal government subsisted, the greater barons, in most kingdoms, with their train of vassals and dependants, by whom they were sure to be attended, found it an easy matter to rebel against their sovereign, and often to compel him to accept terms very humiliating to royalty, we may conclude, that a subordination pretty similar in a sovereignty so much

much wider, could not have subsisted so long without some additional and powerful check. This was the more necessary in the present case, because, if there had arisen any factions or discontents among the more potent ecclesiastics against their spiritual lord, they would, in most cases, have had the assistance of the secular powers of the country, who, in spite of their superstition and ignorance, could not brook the reflection, that they were tributary to a foreign power, and a power which even claimed a sort of superintendency, or what was equivalent to superintendency, over their judicatures and senates. The different claims set up by Rome, under the name of annats, tithes, peterspence, reservations, resignations, expectative graces, beside the casualties arising from pilgrimages, jubilees, indulgences, the dues of appeals, confirmations, dispensations, investitures, and the like, were so many sorts of tribute; nor could any nation which paid them to another, be said to be independent of the nation to which they were paid, or to possess sovereignty within itself. The right of appeals, not only in all cases ecclesiastical, but in most cases wherein ecclesiastics were concerned, the many clerical privileges, of which Rome pretended to be both the guardian and the judge, laid a restraint both on the judiciary powers, and on the legislative. No wonder, then,

then, that in the different states of christendom, there should subsist, in the civil powers, an inextinguishable jealousy of Rome. As the pretensions of the latter were exorbitant, it was necessary that her resources for supporting her pretensions should be powerful.

Now the right of exemption I have been speaking of, proved exactly such a resource, being an effectual check on the secular, or established clergy. Accordingly, when in the council of Trent, an attempt was made by some bishops to have this abuse, as they accounted it, totally removed, the pope's legates, and all those who supported papal authority, saw but too clearly, that the scheme of those bishops, if they were gratified in it, would undermine the hierarchy, and make, as they expressed it, every bishop a pope in his own diocese; for when papal exemptions should be abrogated, every person would depend on his bishop, and none immediately on the pope, the consequence whereof would be, that people would soon cease altogether to recur to Rome. And this consequence had, doubtless, long ago taken place, had not the monastic orders come very opportunely, though, in some respect, accidentally, to support a fabric, become at length so unwieldy, as to appear in the most imminent danger of falling with its own weight. They proved as so

many buttresses to it, which, though originally no part of the building, added amazingly to its strength.

As some of the largest and loftiest trees spring from very small seeds, so the most extensive and wonderful effects sometimes arise from very inconsiderable causes. Of the truth of this remark, we have a striking example in the monastic order, of the rise and progress of which I am now to speak. In times of persecution in the church's infancy, whilst the heathen yet raged, and the rulers took council together against the Lord, and against his anointed, many pious christians, male and female, married and unmarried, justly accounting, that no human felicity ought to come in competition with their fidelity to Christ, and modestly distrustful of their ability to persevere in resisting the temptations wherewith they were incessantly harassed by their persecutors, took the resolution to abandon their possessions and worldly prospects, and, whilst the storm lasted, to retire to unfrequented places, far from the haunts of men, the married with, or without their wives, as they agreed between them, that they might enjoy in quietness their faith and hope, and without temptations to apostacy, employ themselves principally in the worship and service of their Maker. The cause was reasonable, and the motive

motive praise-worthy. But the reasonableness arose solely from the circumstances. When the latter were changed, the former vanished, and the motive could no longer be the same. When there was not the same danger in society, there was not the same occasion to seek security in solitude. Accordingly, when the affairs of the church were put upon a different footing, and the profession of christianity rendered perfectly safe, many returned without blame from their retirement, and lived like other men. Some, indeed, familiarized by time to a solitary and ascetic life, as it was called, at length preferred, through habit, what they had originally adopted through necessity. They did not waste their time in idleness; they supported themselves by their labour, and gave the surplus in charity. These likewise, without blame, remained in their retreat. But as it was purely to avoid temptation and danger that men first took refuge in such recesses, they never thought of fettering themselves by vows and engagements, because, by so doing, they must have exposed their souls to new temptations, and involved them in more, and perhaps greater dangers, a conduct very unlike that self-diffidence which certainly gave rise to so extraordinary a measure. This, therefore, was not monachism in the acceptation, which the word came soon afterwards to receive, though,

though, most probably, it suggested the idea of it, and may justly be considered as the first step towards it.

Such signal sacrifices have a lustre, which dazzles the eyes of the weak, and powerfully engages their imitation. The imitators, regardless of the circumstances which alone can render the conduct laudable, are often, by a strange depravity of understanding, led to consider it as the more meritorious, the less it is reasonable, and the more eligible, the less it is useful. Nay, the spirit of the thing comes to be reversed. What at first, through humble diffidence, appeared necessary for avoiding the most imminent perils, is, through presumption, voluntarily adopted, though itself a source of perpetual peril. This I call *monachism*, according to the common acceptation of the term, of the progress of which I propose to give some account in the sequel.

Monachism, one of the most natural shoots of superstition, which, viewing the Deity as an object of terrour rather than of love, regards it as the surest recommendation to his favour, that men become both burdens to society, and torments to themselves, and which, in some shape or other, may be found in all religions, was not, in its original state, even in the christian church, considered as clerical; nor were the monks, as

monks, accounted ecclesiastics of any order or denomination. They were no other than people who had bound themselves by a vow to renounce the world, to live in poverty and chastity, to confine themselves in respect of meat, and drink, and apparel, to what appeared merely necessary, and to devote their time to prayer and penance, reserving a small portion for works of industry. This way of life was, in its commencement, open to the laity of all conditions, and even of both sexes. But it was not open to the clergy, whose parochial duties were incompatible with such a seclusion from society. For it must be observed, that they had not then, as afterwards, any clergy merely nominal, or, to speak more properly, clergymen, who were no ministers of religion, having no charge or office in the church of Christ.

This engagement, at first, led many unhappy fanatics to fly the world without necessity, to pass their lives in solitude, in remote and desert places, whence they were called *hermits*, from the Greek word ερημος, signifying desert, and monks, from μοναχος, denoting a solitary, from μονος, alone. They were also named anchorets, from αναχωρητης, a recluse. Every one of their ancient names, or titles, bears some vestige of this most distinguishing trait in their character, their secession from the world and society.

They sheltered themselves accordingly in some rude cell or cavern, and subsisted on herbs and roots, the spontaneous productions of the soil, covering themselves with the skins of beasts, for defending their bodies from the inclemencies of the weather.

But things did not remain long in this state. Give but time to fanaticism, and its fervours will subside. It was soon found convenient to relax this severity, to fall on a method of uniting society with retirement, property with indigence, and abstinence with indulgence. They then formed communities of men, who lived together in houses, called monasteries; where, though the individuals could acquire no property for themselves individually, there was no bounds to the acquisitions which might be made by the community. The female recluses also had their nunneries, and were named nuns. The word we have borrowed from the French *nonne*; its etymology I know not. Thus people fell, at length, on the happy expedient of reconciling loud pretences to sanctity and devotion, not only with laziness and spiritual pride, but with the most unbounded and shameless avarice; unbounded, because apparently in behalf of a public interest; and shameless, because under the mask of religion. And if they excluded some natural and innocent gratifications, the

exclusion, as might be expected, often served to give birth to unnatural lusts. Hardly, one would think, can an imposition be too gross for deceiving a gross and superstitious people. So much was the world infatuated by the sanctimonious appearance of the recluses, (which consisted chiefly in some ridiculous singularity of garb) that men thought they could not more effectually purchase heaven to themselves, than by beggaring their offspring, and giving all they had to erect or endow monasteries; that is, to supply, with all the luxuries of life, those who were bound to live in abstinence, and to enrich those who had solemnly sworn, that they would be for ever poor, and who professed to consider riches as the greatest impediment in the road to heaven.

Large monasteries, both commodious and magnificent, more resembling the palaces of princes than the rude cells which the primitive monks chose for their abode, were erected and endowed. Legacies and bequests, from time to time, flowed in upon them. Mistaken piety often contributed to the evil; but oftener superstitious profligacy. Oppression herself commonly judged, that to devote her wealth at last, when it could be kept no longer, to a religious house, was a full atonement for all the injustice and extortion by which it had been amassed.

But

But what can set in a stronger light the pitiable brutishness, to which the people were reduced by the reigning superstition, when men of rank and eminence, who had shown no partiality to any thing monastical, during their lives, gave express orders, when in the immediate views of death, that their friends should dress them out in monkish vestments, that in these they might die, and be buried, thinking, that the sanctity of their garb would prove a protection against a condemnatory sentence of the omniscient Judge. It is lamentable, it is humiliating to think, that we have unquestionable evidence, that human nature can be sunk so low. The ignorance and superstition of the times, by degrees, appropriated the term *religious* to those houses and their inhabitants.

I have often observed to you, how great an influence names and phrases have on the opinions of the generality of mankind. I should have remarked, that soon after things were put upon this footing, it was, on many accounts, judged expedient, that the religious should be in orders. For the absurdity of shepherds without a flock, pastors without a charge, was an absurdity no longer; so much can men be familiarized by custom to use words with any latitude, and even to assign a meaning to them incompatible with their primitive use. Accordingly the compa-

nions in the monastery had commonly what was called priest's orders, and were termed *friars*, *fratres*, brethren; the head, or governour of the house, was denominated *abbot*, from a Syriac word, signifying father. Sometimes he was only a priest, and sometimes had episcopal ordination. Hence the distinction between mitred abbots and unmitred. All these, on account of the rules to which they were bound by oath, were styled regular clergy, whereas those established as bishops and priests over the dioceses and parishes, were called secular. I know that some distinction is made also between *monks* and *friars*. Suffice it to observe at present, that the rules of the former are stricter than those of the latter.

When spacious monasteries were built, and supplied with a numerous fraternity, governed by an abbot of eminence and character, there often arose a jealousy between the abbot and the bishop, in whose diocese the abbey was situated, and to whom, as things stood at first, the abbot and the friars owed spiritual subjection. Out of their mutual jealousies sprang umbrages, and these sometimes terminated in quarrels and injuries. In such cases, the abbots had the humiliating disadvantage, to be under the obligation of canonical obedience to him, as the ordinary of the place, with whom they were at variance.

That

That they might deliver themselves from these inconveniencies, real or pretended, and might be independent of their rivals, they applied to Rome one after another, for a release from this slavery, as they called it, by being taken under the protection of St. Peter; that is, under immediate subjection to the pope. The proposal was, with avidity, accepted at Rome. That politic court saw immediately, that nothing could be better calculated for supporting papal power. Whoever obtains privileges is obliged, in order to secure his privileges, to maintain the authority of the granter.

Very quickly all the monasteries, great and small, abbeys, priories, and nunneries, were exempted. The two last were inferiour sorts of monasteries, and often subordinate to some abbey. Even the chapters of cathedrals, consisting mostly of regulars, on the like pretexts, obtained exemption. Finally, whole orders, those called the congregations of Cluni and Cistertio, Benedictines and others, were exempted. This effectually procured a prodigious augmentation to the pontifical authority, which now came to have a sort of disciplined troops in every place, defended and protected by the papacy, who, in return, were its defenders and protectors, serving as spies on the bishops as

well as on the secular powers. Afterwards the mendicant orders, or begging friars, though the refuse of the whole, the tail of the beast, as Wickliff termed them, whereof the Roman pontiff is the head, obtained still higher privileges, for they were not only exempted every where from episcopal authority, but had also a title to build churches wherever they pleased, and to administer the sacraments in these independently of the ordinary of the place. Nay, afterwards, in the times immediately preceding the convention of the aforesaid council, things had proceeded so far, that any private clerk could, at a small expence, obtain an exemption from the superintendency of his bishop, not only in regard to correction, but in relation to orders, which he might receive from whomsoever he pleased, so as to have no connection with the bishop of any kind.

What had made matters still worse was, that the whole business of teaching the christian people had, by this time, fallen into the hands of the regulars. The secular clergy had long since eased themselves of the burden. Preaching and reading the sacred scriptures properly, made no part of the public offices of religion. It is true, it was still the practice to read, or rather chant, some passages from the gospels and epistles,

epistles, in an unknown tongue; for all in the western churches must now, for the sake of uniformity, to which every thing was sacrificed, be in Latin. Now, for some centuries before the council of Trent, Latin had not been the native language of any country or city in the world, not even of Italy or of Rome. That such lessons were not understood by the people, was thought an objection of no consequence at all. They were not the less fitted for making a part of the solemn, unmeaning mummery, of the liturgic service. The bishops and priests having long disused preaching, probably at first through laziness, seem to have been considered at last as not entitled to preach; for, on the occasion abovementioned, they very generally complained, that the charge of teaching was taken out of their hands, and devolved upon the friars, especially the mendicants, who were a sort of itinerant preachers, licensed by the court of Rome.

How the friars discharged this trust, we may learn from the most authentic histories, which sufficiently show, that the representations of the scope of their preaching, made by the bishops in that council, were not exaggerated, when they said, that the end of their teaching was not to edify the people, but to collect alms from them, either for themselves or for their convents; that, in

in order to attain this purpose, they solely considered not what was for the soul's health, but what would please, and flatter, and soothe the appetites of the hearers, and thereby bring most profit to themselves; so that the people, instead of learning the doctrine of Christ, are but amused, said they, with mere novelties and vanities. But whatever be in this account, the pope could not fail to draw an immense advantage from this circumstance, that the instruction of the people was now almost intirely in the hands of his own creatures. How great, then, must be the advantage, of a similar but still more important kind, resulting from the exemptions granted to universities, who being taken, as it were, under his immediate patronage, were engaged from interest to instil principles of obedience to the pope into the minds of the youth, of whose education they had the care.

Now if the chain of dependance of the secular clergy on the head, be similar to that which subsists in a civil, particularly a feudatory constitution, where the obligation of every inferiour through the whole subordination of vassalage is considered as being much stronger to the immediate superiour than to the sovereign, the dependance of the regulars may justly be represented by the military connection which subsists with the sovereign in a standing army. There

the

the tie of every soldier and subaltern is much stronger to the king than to his captain or his colonel. If, then, the secular clergy, in Romish countries, may be called the pope's civil officers, the regulars are his guards. This matter was too well understood by the friends of Rome, who were the predominant party in the council of Trent, ever to yield to any alteration here that could be called material. Some trifling changes, however, were made, in order to conciliate those who were the keenest advocates for reforming the discipline of the church, or at least to silence their clamours. The exemptions given to chapters were limited a little. The bishops were made governors of the nunneries within their bishoprics, not as bishops of the diocese, but as the pope's delegates; and friars, who resided in cloisters, and were guilty of any scandalous excess without the precincts of the cloister, if the superiour of the convent, whether abbot or prior, refused, when required, to chastise them within a limited time, might be punished by the bishop.

I have now traced the principal causes, which co-operated to the erection of the hierarchy, and shall, in what remains to be observed on the subject, in a few more lectures, consider both the actual state of church power, and the different

ferent opinions concerning it at the time of the council of Trent, which shall terminate our inquiries into the rise and establishment of the hierarchy.

LEC-

LECTURE XX.

I Have now, in a course of lectures, endeavoured, with all possible brevity, to lay before you the principal arts, by which the Roman hierarchy was raised, and have also pointed out some of the most remarkable events and occurrences, which facilitated the erection. It is chiefly the progress of ecclesiastical dominion, that I have traced. The papal usurpation on the secular powers, though I have explained its source in the erection of episcopal tribunals, and glanced occasionally at its progress, I have, for several reasons, not so expressly examined. One is, it does not so immediately affect the subject of the hierarchy, with which I considered myself as principally concerned. Another is, that the usurpation here is, if possible, still more glaring to every attentive reader of church history, and therefore stands less in need of being pointed out. A third reason is, that though the claims of superiority over the civil powers, formerly advanced by Rome with wonderful success, have never

never been abandoned, but are, as it were, reserved in petto for a proper occasion, yet, at present, the most sublime of their pretensions are little minded, and are hardly, as affairs now stand in Europe, capable of doing hurt. Nothing can be better founded than the remark, that the thunders of the Vatican will kindle no conflagration, except where there are combustible materials. At present there is hardly a country in christendom so barbarously superstitious (I do not except even Spain and Portugal) as to afford a sufficient quantity of those materials for raising a combustion. We never hear now of the excommunication and deposition of princes, of kingdoms laid under an interdict, and of the erection and the disposal of kingdoms by the pope. Such is the difference of times, that these things, which were once the great engines of raising papal dominion, would now serve only to render it contemptible. The foundation of all is opinion, which is of great consequence in every polity, but is every thing in an ecclesiastic polity. To the above reasons, I shall add a fourth. It is only a part, and not the greater part neither, of the Roman Catholics, who acknowledge that the pope, as pope, or bishop, has any kind of authority in secular matters over the civil powers. They make but a party comparatively small, who carry the rights of the

papacy

papacy so far as to include therein a paramount authority over all the powers of this earth, spiritual and temporal. A gentleman of the house of commons, in a celebrated speech on the affairs of America, in the beginning of the American revolt, speaking of the religious profession of those colonies, denominated it the protestantism of the protestant religion. In imitation of the manner of this orator, I shall style the system of that high-flying party in the church of Rome, the popery of the popish religion. It is the very quintessence of papistry. Nay, we have some foundation even from themselves for naming it so; for those who hold it are, even among Roman Catholics, distinguished by the name *pontificii*, or *papists*, and mostly consist of the people and clergy of Italy, the immediate dependencies on the papal see, and the different orders of regulars. It was in a particular manner the system strenuously supported by the order of jesuits now abolished. The doctrine of the more moderate Roman Catholics, which is that of almost all the laity, and the bulk of the secular clergy in all European countries, except Italy and its islands, is unfavourable to those high pretensions of the Roman pontiff. But even these are far from being intirely unanimous in regard to the spiritual power and jurisdiction, which they ascribe to him.

The

The bounding line, which distinguishes the civil from the ecclesiastic, is one of the arcana of that church's policy, and therefore never to be precisely ascertained. I shall then, in order to give you some idea ere I conclude, of the sublimity and plenitude of the ecclesiastic power, claimed in behalf of his holiness over the ministers of the church, by the advocates of that see, and to give you some notion of their manner of supporting those claims, exhibit to you the substance of a speech on episcopal jurisdiction, delivered in the council of Trent, by father Lainez, general of the jesuits, translated from the Italian of Fra Paolo Sarpi. Afterwards I shall take a little notice of the encroachments made on the civil powers.

"Lainez," says that historian, "spoke more "than two hours with great vehemence, in a "distinct but magisterial tone. The argument "of his discourse consisted of two parts. The "first was employed in proving, that the right "of jurisdiction over Christ's kingdom here "had been given intirely to the Roman pontiff, "and not a single particle of it to any other in "the church. The second contained his an-"swers to all the arguments on the opposite "side, adduced in former meetings.

"The substance was, that there is a great "difference, nay, a contrariety between the

" church of Christ and civil communities, in-
" asmuch as these have an existence previous
" to the formation of their government, and
" are thereby free, having in them originally,
" as in its fountain, all the jurisdiction, which,
" without divesting themselves of it, they com-
" municate to magistrates. But the church did
" neither make herself, nor form her own go-
" vernment. It was Christ the prince and
" monarch who first established the laws where-
" by she should be governed; then assembled
" his people, and, as scripture expresses it, built
" the church. Thus she is born a slave, with-
" out any sort of liberty, power, or jurisdiction,
" but every where, and in every thing, sub-
" jected. In proof of this he quoted passages
" of scripture, wherein the gathering of the
" church is compared to the sowing of a field,
" the drawing of a net to land, and the rearing
" of an edifice; adding, that Christ is said to
" have come into the world to assemble his
" faithful people, to gather his sheep, to instruct
" them both by doctrine and by example. Then
" he subjoined: the first and principal founda-
" tion whereon Christ built the church, was
" Peter and his succession, according to the
" word which he said to him, *Thou art Peter,*
" *and upon this rock I will build my church;*
" which rock, though some of the fathers have

 " under-

" understood to be Christ himself, and others
" the faith in him, or the confession of the
" faith, it is nevertheless a more catholic expo-
" sition to understand it of Peter himself, who,
" in Hebrew or Syriac, is called *Cephas*, that is,
" Rock. He affirmed, in like manner, that
" while Christ lived in mortal flesh, he governed
" the church with despotic and monarchical
" government, and leaving this earth, he left
" the same form, constituting St. Peter, and the
" successours of St. Peter, his vicars succes-
" sively, to administer it, as it had been exer-
" cised by him, giving them plenary power and
" jurisdiction, and subjecting to them the church
" in the way wherein it is subjected to him.
" This he proved from what we are told of
" Peter, because to him alone were given the
" keys of the kingdom of heaven, and by con-
" sequence, power to admit and exclude, which
" is jurisdiction; and to him alone it was said,
" *Feed*, that is, rule *my sheep*, silly animals,
" which have no part, no choice whatever in
" conducting themselves. These two things,
" namely, to be porter and pastor, being perpe-
" tual offices, it was necessary that they should
" be conferred on a perpetual person, that is,
" not on the first only, but on the whole suc-
" cession. Hence the Roman pontiff, begin-
" ning from St. Peter to the end of the world,
" is

" is true and absolute despot with plenary power
" and jurisdiction; and the church is subject
" to him as it was to Christ. And as when his
" divine majesty governed it, it could not be
" said, that any of the faithful had the smallest
" power or jurisdiction, all being in total sub-
" jection, the same may be said in all perpetuity.
" Thus we ought to understand these declara-
" tions, that the church is a sheepfold, that it
" is a kingdom, and what St. Cyprian says, that
" the episcopate is one, and that a part thereof
" is held by every bishop; that is, that the
" whole undivided power is placed in one single
" pastor, who apportions and communicates it
" to associates in the ministry as exigencies re-
" quire; and that, in allusion to this, St. Cy-
" prian compares the apostolic see to the root,
" the head, the fountain, the sun; showing, by
" these comparisons, that the jurisdiction is
" essentially in her alone; in others, only by
" derivation or participation. And this is the
" meaning of that most usual expression of an-
" tiquity, that Peter and the pontiff possess the
" plenitude of power, others do but participate
" in the cure. And that he is the sole shep-
" herd, is demonstrated by the words of Christ,
" who said, that he had other sheep, which he
" would gather, that there might be but one
" sheepfold, and one shepherd. The shepherd

"spoken of here cannot be Christ himself, be-
"cause it could not be said, in the future tense,
"that there shall be one shepherd, he being
"already the shepherd. It must, therefore, be
"understood of another sole shepherd, to be
"constituted after him, who can be no other
"than Peter with his succession. He remarked
"here, that the precept to feed the flock, occurs
"but twice in scripture, once in the singular
"number, when Christ said to Peter, *Feed my*
"*sheep;* once in the plural, when Peter said to
"others, *Feed the flocks assigned to you.* Now
"if the bishops had received any jurisdiction
"from Christ, it would be equal in them all,
"which would destroy the difference between
"patriarch, archbishop, and bishop; besides,
"the pope could not intermeddle with that
"authority, either by diminishing it, or by re-
"moving it intirely, as he cannot intermeddle
"with the power of orders which is from God.
"Wherefore the greatest caution is necessary
"here, lest by making the institution of bishops
"*de jure divino,* they should subvert the hierar-
"chy, and introduce into the church an oligar-
"chy, or rather, an anarchy. He added, To
"the end that Peter might govern the church
"well, so that the gates of hell should not pre-
"vail against her, Christ, a little before his
"death, prayed efficaciously, that his faith
"might

" might not fail, and ordained him to confirm
" the brethren; in other words, he gave him
" the privilege of infallibility, in judging of faith,
" manners, and the whole of religion, obliging
" all the church to obey him, and stand firm in
" whatsoever should be decreed by him. He
" concluded, that this is the true foundation of
" the christian doctrine, and the rock whereon
" the church is built. He proceeded to censure
" those who hold that bishops have received any
" power from Christ, an opinion subversive of
" the privilege of the Roman church, whose
" pontiff is head of the church universal, and
" the only vicar of Christ upon earth. It is very
" well known, that by the ancient canon, *omnes*
" *sive patriarchæ*, &c. it is enacted, that who-
" ever takes away the rights of other churches,
" commits injustice, but whoever takes away the
" privileges of the Roman church, is a heretic.
" He added, that it is an absolute contradiction
" to maintain, that the pontiff is head of the
" church, and its government is monarchical,
" and to affirm, that there is either power or au-
" thority in it, which is received from others,
" and not derived from him.

" In refuting the arguments, on the opposite
" side, he advanced, that, according to the or-
" der instituted by Christ, the apostles must
" have been ordained bishops, not by Christ,

"but by Peter, receiving jurisdiction from him "alone; an opinion, he said, extremely proba- "ble, and held by many catholic doctors. "Others, however, who maintain that the apos- "tles were ordained bishops by Christ, add that "his divine majesty, in so doing, exercised, by "prevention, Peter's office, doing for once what "belonged to Peter to do, giving to the apostles "himself that power which they ought to have "received from Peter, just as God took of the "spirit of Moses, and imparted it to the seventy "judges, so that it was as much as if they had "been ordained by Peter, and had received all "authority from him; and therefore they con- "tinued subject to Peter, in regard to the places "and modes of exercising their authority. And "though we do not read that Peter corrected "them, it was not through defect of power, but "because they exercised their office properly, "and so did not need correction. Whoever "reads the celebrated canon, *Ita Dominus*, will "be assured, that every catholic ought to be- "lieve this; and thus the bishops, who are suc- "cessors of the apostles, receive the whole from "the successor of Peter. He observed, also, "that the bishops are not called successors of "the apostles, unless, as being in their places, "in the way that a bishop succeeds his prede- "cessors, and not as being ordained by them.

"He

"He replied to what some had inferred, that the "pope might then leave off making bishops, "choosing to be the only bishop himself. He "admitted that ordination is divine, that in the "church there is a multitude of bishops, coad-"jutors of the pontiff, and therefore that the "pontiff is obliged to preserve the order, but "that there is a great difference between saying "that a thing is *de jure divino*, and that it is "appointed of God. Things instituted *de jure* "*divino*, are perpetual, and depend on God "alone, at every time, both universally and "particularly. Thus baptism, and all the other "sacraments, wherein God operates singularly "in each particular, are *de jure divino*. Thus "the Roman pontiff is of God. For when one "dies, the keys do not remain with the church, "for they were not given to her. But when the "new pope is created, God immediately gives "them to him. But it happens otherwise in "things barely of divine appointment; inas-"much as from God comes only the universal, "whereas the particulars are executed by men. "Thus St. Paul says, that princes and temporal "powers are ordained of God; that is, from him "alone comes the universal precept, that there "should be princes; nevertheless, the particu-"lars are made by civil laws. In the same "manner bishops are ordained of God; and St.

"Paul says they are placed by the Holy Ghost "for the government of the church, but not "*de jure divino.* The pope, however, cannot "abolish the universal precept for making bi-"shops in the church, because it is from God: "but each particular bishop, being only *de jure* "*canonico,* may, by pontifical authority, be re-"moved. And to the objection made, that the "bishops would be delegates, and not ordina-"ries, he answered: It behoveth us to distin-"guish jurisdiction into fundamental and de-"rived, and the derived into delegated and or-"dinary. In civil polities, the fundamental is "in the prince, the derived is in all the magis-"trates. And in these, ordinaries are different "from delegates, because they receive the au-"thority diversely, though they all derive "equally from the same sovereignty; but the "difference consists in this, that the ordinaries "are by perpetual laws, and with succession: "the others have singular authority either per-"sonal or casual. The bishops, therefore, are "ordinaries, being instituted, by pontifical laws, "dignities of perpetual succession in the church. "He added, that those passages, wherein Christ "seems to give authority to the church, as that "wherein he says, that it is *the pillar and basis* "*of the truth,* and that other, *Let him who will* "*not hear the church be to thee as a heathen and* "*a pub-*

"*a publican*, are all to be understood solely in "respect of its head, which is the pope. For "this reason the church is infallible, because it "has an infallible head. And thus he is sepa- "rated from the church who is separated from "the pope, its head. As to what had been "urged, that the council could have no autho- "rity from Christ, if none of the bishops had "any, he answered, that this was not to be re- "garded as an objection, but as a certain truth, "being a very clear and necessary consequence "of the truly catholic doctrine he had demon- "strated; nay, added he, if each of the bishops "in council be fallible, it cannot be denied, "that all of them together are fallible; and if "the authority of the council arose from the au- "thority of the bishops, no council could ever "be called general, wherein the number of those "present is incomparably less than the number "of those that are absent. He mentioned, that "in that very council, under Paul the third, the "most momentous articles concerning the ca- "nonical books, the authority of translations, "the equality of tradition to scripture, had been "decided by a number less than fifty; that if "multitude gave authority, these decisions had "none at all. But as a number of prelates, "convened by the pontiff, for the purpose of "constituting a general council, however few,

"derives

"derives not the name and efficacy of being "general from any other cause than the pope's "designation, so likewise he is the sole source of "its authority. Therefore, if it issue precepts, "or anathemas, these have no effect, unless in "virtue of the pontiff's future confirmation. "Nor can the council bind any by its anathe-"mas, further than they shall be enforced by "the confirmation. And when the synod says, "that it is assembled in the Holy Ghost, it "means no more than that the fathers are "assembled, by the pope's summons, to discuss "matters, which, when approved by him, will "be decreed by the Holy Ghost. Otherwise, "how could it be said, that a decree is made "by the Holy Ghost, which may, by pontifical "authority, be invalidated, or has need of fur-"ther confirmation; and therefore, in councils, "however numerous, when the pope is present, "he alone decrees, nor does the council add any "thing but its approbation; that is, it receives. "Accordingly, the authentic phrase has always "been, *Sacro approbante concilio;* nay, in de-"terminations of the greatest weight, as was "the deposition of the emperour Frederic the "second, in the general council of Lions, Inno-"cent the fourth, a most wise pontiff, refused "the approbation of the synod, lest any should "imagine it necessary: he thought it enough

"to

" to say, *sacro-presente concilio.* Nor ought we
" hence to conclude, that a council is super-
" fluous. It is convened for the sake of stricter
" inquisition, easier persuasion, and for giving
" the members some notion of the question.
" And when it judges, it acts by virtue of the
" pontifical authority, derived from the divine,
" given it by the pope. For these reasons, the
" good doctors have subjected the authority of
" the council to the authority of the pontiff, as
" totally dependent thereon. Without this, it
" has neither the assistance of the Holy Spirit,
" nor infallibility, nor the power of binding the
" church. It has nothing but what is conceded
" to it by him alone, to whom Christ said, *Feed*
" *my sheep.*"

Such was the famous discourse of Lainez, in which, I must own, we have much greater reason to admire Jesuitical impudence than even Jesuitical sophistry. So many bold assertions, some of which are flatly contradicted by sacred writ, and others by the most unquestionable records of history, required a man of no common spirit, or, as scripture strongly expresses it, who had a brow of brass, to advance them. Is it possible, that he himself was so ignorant as to believe what he advanced? Or could he presume so far upon the ignorance of his audience, as to think of making them believe it? Or did he imagine that his hearers would be so overborn by his eloquence,

his

his assuming tone and dictatorial manner, as to be thrown into a kind of stupor, and rendered incapable of discovering the notorious falsehoods with which his oration was stuffed? Passing the contradictions to holy writ, a book with which the divines of his day were but beginning to be acquainted, was it prudent to ascribe a power to the papacy not only unheard of in former ages, but which popes themselves had explicitly disclaimed? Nothing can be more express than the words of Gregory, surnamed the great, who, though remarkably tenacious of the honours of his see, says, in arguing against the Constantinopolitan patriarch, for assuming the title of universal bishop, "Si unus episcopus vocatur uni-"versalis, universa ecclesia corruit, si unus uni-"versus cadet." If one should fall, the universal church falls with him. Here, taking it for self-evident, that all bishops, without exception, are fallible, he infers the absurdity there is in any one calling himself universal. Again, "Absit "a cordibus christianorum nomen istud blas-"phemiæ, in quo omnium sacerdotum honor "adimitur, dum ab uno sibi dementer arroga-"tur;" where he no less plainly arraigns the impious usurpation of any one, who, by claiming such a superiority, would strip all other priests of their dignity, and madly arrogate the whole to himself. Was it well-judged to misrepresent so common an author as Cyprian in so flagrant a man-

a manner, and make him compare the apostolic (that is, in the Jesuit's dialect, the Roman) see to the root, the head, the fountain, the sun, in a passage where Cyprian mentions no see whatever, but speaks solely of the necessity of union with the universal church? Cyprian, in writing to popes, and of them, uniformly shows, that he considered them as, in respect of their ministry, entirely on a foot of equality with himself, denominating them brethren, colleagues, and fellow-bishops. Whether he paid an implicit deference to their judgment, let the dispute he had with pope Stephen, about the rebaptization of those who had been baptized by heretics, testify. By this firmness, he incurred excommunication from the pope; and, in this state, he died, though now worshipped as a saint and a martyr by the very church which excommunicated him.

But not to enter farther into particulars, was it judicious in Lainez, to trust so much to the ignorance of the whole assembly, as not only to quote such men as Cyprian, an eminent and inflexible opposer of papal arrogance, but to talk of the pope's power in convoking councils, and confirming their decrees, as what had always obtained in the church, and was essential to the very being of a council, when every smatterer in ecclesiastic history, and in ancient ecclesiastic writers, must have known, that this practice was

comparatively recent? Passing the custom of the earlier ages, when the imperial authority was used, was it already quite forgotten, that, in the very preceding century, the council of Pisa was not convened by any pontiff, and yet proceeded so far as to try and depose two pretenders to the popedom, and elect a third in their stead? Or, had they now no knowledge of the council of Constance, which was still later, and, in like manner, deposed two claimants, one of them the pope, who had convoked it, and, after accepting the resignation of a third, proceeded to the election of a fourth? Or could it be imagined, that the whole audience was so stupid, as not to be sensible, that, if those proceedings at Constance were null, there was no vacancy made by the deposition of John and Benedict, consequently that the council's election of Martin, following thereon, was null, consequently that Pius the fourth, the pope then reigning, had no right, as he derived his title lineally from an usurper, who, by creating cardinals whilst he himself was destitute of authority, had perpetuated, in his successors, the failure of his own title, and consequently, that there was an irreparable breach made in the succession to the popedom? Was it possible, that they should not perceive, that the subversion of the authority of that council, an authority claimed over popes, was the subversion of the title of

Martin

Martin the fifth, and that the subversion of the title of Martin the fifth, was the subversion of the title of all succeeding popes to the end of the world?

How curiously does Lainez argue from the metaphor of *sheep*, that the christian people, indeed the whole church, clergy as well as laity, (the pope, the one shepherd of the one sheepfold, alone excepted) have no more judgment in directing themselves than brute beasts. He does not, indeed, so cleverly account how that superiour sort of being, the pope, can think of choosing any of these irrational animals, as partners in the ministry with him, to assist in guiding and directing their fellow-brutes. I admire the wonderful fetch by which he makes Jesus Christ, when he commissioned the twelve apostles, act in ordaining eleven of them, (though no distinction is pointed out in the history) merely in the name of Peter, and as Peter's substitute; borrowing back, for this purpose, part of the authority exclusively conferred on him. He is, indeed, greatly at a loss (these deputy-apostles, or apostles of the apostle Peter, unluckily behaved so properly) to find an instance of Peter's so much boasted authority in judging and correcting them. But we are at no loss to find an instance wherein, on Peter's behaving improperly, Paul not only opposed, but publicly and sharply re-

buked

buked him. The passage well deserves your notice. Ye will find it in the epistle to the Galatians, ii, 11, &c. *When Peter was come to Antioch*, says Paul, *I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed: for before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch, that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter, before them all,* If thou, being a Jew, *livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* Was this a treatment from a mere delegate to his principal, nay more, from one of the sheep, those stupid irrational animals, to his shepherd, (for mark, that according to Lainez, Peter was the sole shepherd, they all, in respect of him, were sheep) from a fallible member of the church to Christ's only vicar, to the infallible head and pastor? What matter of triumph would there have been here to the Romanist, if the case had been reversed, and Peter had, in a manner, to appearance, so authoritative judged and rebuked Paul? Our ears would have been stunned with the repetition of a demonstration, so irrefragable,

of

of the supremacy of Peter, and consequently of Rome. Yet there would have been no real ground of triumph had it been so. If any regard is to be had to the accounts of inspiration, it is manifest, that none of them, though apostles, were infallible; and that as they were all, by their vocation, brethren and equals, and expressly called so by their master, in a passage wherein he prohibits their either giving or assuming a superiority one over another, it was their duty to correct one another in love, and not permit a brother unadmonished to persist in any practice truly blame-worthy. Passing, however, the article of correction, of which it appears, that Peter, the only infallible apostle, was the only person of the society that ever stood in need; what evidence have we, of any authority, in other respects, exercised by Peter over the sacred college? Does he ever call them together, to assign them their several charges, and give them instructions in relation to the duties of their office? or, Do they ever have recourse to him for the proper information in regard to these? Not a vestige, to this purpose, do we find in the acts of the apostles, where, if there had been such a thing, it could hardly have been omitted; nor is there the least suggestion, that points this way, in any of the epistles. Nay, not one of the apostles do we find sent on any mission whatsoever

by him. We have, indeed, as I had occasion to remark in a former discourse, a notable instance, in which Peter and John were sent on a mission by the other apostles, who were at Jerusalem at the time, but not a single example of an apostle, who received either direction or orders of any kind from Peter.

But it would be trifling to enter more into particulars. Who sees not that, by this Jesuit's way of commenting, not only there is no evidence, that any powers were conferred on the other apostles, or on the church, but it would have been impossible for the inspired writers themselves to give us evidence that there were? For, however clear and decisive their expressions might have been, this brief reply would have cut them down at once: "All such passages are to "be understood solely in respect of the church's "head, which is the pope." Suffice it then to say of the whole piece, as we may say with the greatest justice, that it is a mass of falsehoods and chicanery. Some things are affirmed in opposition to the fullest evidence, many things are assumed without any evidence, and nothing is proved.

But it is of some consequence to consider the reception it met with in the council, as this consideration will serve to show the different sentiments which prevailed at that time among Roman

man catholics, in relation to the hierarchy, and ecclesiastical dominion. This, together with some remarks on the present state of the papacy, shall be reserved for the subject of another lecture.

LECTURE XXI.

IN my last lecture, in order to give you some idea of the sublimity and plenitude of the spiritual power and prerogatives, claimed in behalf of his holiness, by the partizans of the see of Rome, and, at the same time, to give you some taste of their manner of supporting their claims from scripture and antiquity, I exhibited to you the substance of a speech on episcopal jurisdiction, delivered by the jesuit Lainez in the council of Trent. I made also a few strictures on his mode of probation. But as it is of more consequence, for understanding the present state of parties and opinions in the Romish church, to know the reception which the jesuit's sentiments met with in the council, I reserved this for a principal part of the subject of my present lecture. I shall therefore begin with it.

"Of all the orations that had yet been deli-
"vered in the council, there was not one, say
"our historian, more commended, and more
"blamed, according to the different dispositions

"of

" of the hearers, than was this of Lainez. By " the pontificii, or papists, (so do even Roman " catholics term the minions of Rome, and stick- " lers for every claim made by the papacy) it " was cried up as most learned, bold, and well- " founded; by others it was condemned as adu- " latory, and by some even as heretical. Many " showed that they were offended by the aspe- " rity of his censures, and were determined, in " the following congregations," (so the meet- ings holden for deliberation and debate were named) " to attack his speech on every occa- " sion, and point out the ignorance and teme- " rity which it betrayed.

" The bishop of Paris having, when he should " have given his sentiments, been confined by " sickness, said to every body who came to see " him, that when there should be a congregation " that he could attend, he would deliver his opi- " nion against that doctrine without reserve, a " doctrine which, unheard of in former ages, " had been invented about fifty years before by " Gaetan, in hope of being made a cardinal, and " had been censured, on its first publication, by " the theological college in Paris, called the " Sorbon, a doctrine which, instead of repre- " senting the church as the heavenly kingdom, " agreeably to the denomination given her in " scripture, exhibits her as not a spiritual king-

"dom, but a temporal tyranny, taking from "her the title of the chaste spouse of Christ, "and making her the slave and prostitute of "one man."

It was not difficult to discover what man he alluded to. Indeed, methinks, this Parisian theologist was not far from the opinion of those protestants, who interpret the whore of Babylon, in the Apocalypse, to be the church of Rome. He plainly acknowledges, that the accounts given of this church by the pope's partizans, are exactly descriptive of such a character. And may we not justly say, that a church, which could tamely bear such treatment from Lainez, or any of the creatures of papal despotism, deserved to be branded with the disgraceful appellation? Or may we not rather say, that her bearing it in the manner she did, was a demonstrative proof, that the representation, given of her state at that time, was just? It may, indeed, excite some wonder, that the above-named jesuit should have chosen to adopt a style on this subject, so directly contradictory to the style of holy writ. Our Lord promises freedom to his disciples. "Ye shall know "the truth, and the truth shall make you free." By convincing your judgment, it shall powerfully operate upon your will, and make your duty to become your choice. Herein lies the most perfect freedom. Again, "If the Son make you

"free,

"free, ye shall be free indeed." The service of his disciples is not like that of a slave by constraint, arising solely from fear, it is entirely voluntary, proceeding from the noblest of motives, *love*. He therefore calls them not servants, so much as friends, and treats them as such, communicating his purposes to them, and engaging them, not by coercive methods, but by persuasion. His law is, for this reason, styled a law of liberty; and those who receive it are required to act *as free, yet not using their liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the* willing *servants of God.* Not the most distant hint has he any where given of his people's slavery. But Lainez tells you, judging of the conduct of Christ from that of Rome, the very worst model he could have taken, that Jesus Christ has made his church (that is, the whole community of his disciples) a mere slave, that has not any sort of liberty, but is every where, and in every thing, subjected to the dominion of an absolute despot. So different is the language of this son of Loyola from that of the Son of God. Yet not more different than is the spirit of the different religious institutions which they teach.

But to return to the bishop's remarks, "Lainez," said he, "maintains, that there is only "one bishop instituted by Christ, and that the "other bishops have no power unless depend-

"ently on him. This is as much as to say, that "one only is bishop, the rest are but his vicars, "removeable at his pleasure. For his own part, "he acknowledged, he wished to rouse the whole "council, to consider how the episcopal autho-"rity, so much depressed, could be preserved "from annihilation, since every new congrega-"tion of regulars, which springs up, gives it a "violent shock. The bishops had maintained "their authority entire till the year 1050." With this good prelate's leave, their authority was, by the gradual encroachments of Rome, long before that period greatly reduced. Her supreme jurisdiction, both as lawgiver, and as judge, were, ere then, pretty firmly established. Her orders and canons were generally, throughout the western churches, promulged and obeyed: recourse was had to her for dispensations, for confirmation, and collation, in ecclesiastic offices, and for judgment by appeals. But these usurpations were, long before the time of this council, acquiesced in as rights. An acquiescence, thus far, may be considered as at least virtually comprehended in the solemn oath of fidelity, subjection, and obedience, to the pope, exacted of, and given by, prelates immediately before their consecration. In regard to these, therefore, however objectionable, they had precluded themselves, and could not decently object to them. Whereas, those

those claims, to which the Parisian alluded, being more recent, though they had surmounted the force of opposition, had not yet survived the murmurs and discontents which the introduction of them had created.

I resume the prelate's account of the matter: "It was then in 1050, that the Cluniac and "Cistertian congregations, and others, which "arose in that century, gave a signal blow to "the episcopal order: many functions, proper "and essential to bishops, being, by their means, "devolved upon Rome. But after the year "1200, when the mendicants arose, almost the "whole exercise of episcopal authority has been "taken away, and given to them by privilege. "At length, this new congregation, (the Je-"suits) a society of yesterday, which is scarcely "either secular or regular, as the university of "Paris, eight years ago, knowing it to be dan-"gerous in matters of faith, pernicious to the "peace of the church, and destructive of mo-"nachism, has well observed, (this congrega-"tion, I say) that it might outdo its predeces-"sors, has attempted to subvert entirely episco-"pal jurisdiction, denying it to be from God, "and wanting it to be acknowledged as from "men, and therefore precarious and mutable.

"These things," says the historian, "repeated "by the bishop to different persons, as occasion

"offered,

"offered, moved many others to reflect, who "had at first given little attention to the sub-"ject. But among those who had any know-"ledge of history, not a little was spoken con-"cerning that observation, *sacro præsente con-"cilio*, which appeared in all the canonical codes, "but not having been attended to, seemed new "to every body. Some approved the Jesuit's "interpretation, some interpreted it in a sense "quite contrary, that the council had refused "to approve that sentence: others, taking an-"other rout, argued, that as the matter treated "on that occasion was temporal, and the con-"tentions were worldly, one could not infer "from its procedure, in that instance, that the "same thing ought to be done in treating mat-"ters of faith, and ecclesiastic rites; especially, "when it is considered, that in the first council "of the apostles at Jerusalem, which ought to "be our rule and exemplar, the decree was not "made by Peter, either in presence of the coun-"cil, or with its approbation, but was entitled "the epistle, with the addition of the names of "three degrees assembled in that congregation, "apostles, elders, and brethren; and Peter un-"named was, without prerogative or distinc-"tion, included in the first degree, apostles; "an example which, in respect of antiquity and "divine authority, ought to discredit all the

"examples,

"examples, on the opposite side, that can be "deduced from subsequent times."

I have observed how degrading and dishonourable, according to the bishop, the picture was which Laincz had drawn of the church of Christ, and taken notice of the strong resemblance, though perfectly unintended, which, from the Parisian's comment, appears, in the Jesuit's sentiments, to what was then affirmed by their adversaries, the protestants, in regard to the church of Rome. It may not be improper to observe here, that even an avowed coincidence with these, if we may judge from the language they used, was at that time not unfrequent in some of those who, though greatly dissatisfied, never chose to separate from the Romish communion. It may not be improper to give one specimen of the complaints then so common, in order to show how great the dissatisfaction was at the torrent of corruption which universally prevailed, and to suggest what was the general opinion in regard to the fountain whence the prevalent corruption flowed. Among many instances, that might be given, I shall select one of a very public nature, the speech pronounced by the French ambassador Ferrier, when he produced his credentials in the above-named council. Let it be remarked, that France was then involved in a civil war between the Roman catholics and the Hugonots,

Hugonots, the name then given to the reformed in that country by their enemies. After a preamble, in which he expatiates on the pious intentions of the king, his master, his great merits in respect of the zeal he had shown for the catholic church, and even for the dignity and authority of the sovereign pontiff; he, on the matter, acknowledges, that it is this zeal alone which occasioned all the intestine broils wherewith his reign was at that time disturbed; for that if he had no further aim, than securing due obedience to his own civil authority, and maintaining the peace of the kingdom, every thing might be settled to his satisfaction in three days. In this his excellency gave a more honourable testimony to the dispositions of the protestants, in his country, than probably he had intended. At least, he showed that the aggression and persecution were entirely on the other side, and that the protestants, whether right or wrong in resisting, acted merely on the defensive. When coming towards a conclusion, after many free and spirited things, he adds, "The most christian king "demands of this council nothing but what all "the christian world demands, what the great "Constantine demanded of the fathers of the "Nicene council. His Majesty's requests are "all comprehended in the sacred scriptures, the "ancient councils of the catholic church, the

"old

"old constitutions, decrees, and canons, of the "pontiffs and fathers. He demands of those "whom Christ hath constituted judges, the en-"tire restoration of the catholic church, not by "a decree in loose and general terms, but ac-"cording to the form of the express words of "that perpetual and divine edict, against which "usurpation or prescription can have no place; "so that those good ordinances, which the devil "has violently robbed us of, and long concealed, "may at length return, as from captivity, into "the holy city of God, and the light of men."

He adduced the example of Darius, who quieted the tumults of Judea, not by arms, but by executing the ancient edict of Cyrus. That of Josiah also, who reformed religion by causing the book of the law, which had been hidden through the malice of men, to be read to the people, and observed by them. Then, continues the historian, he made use of a very cutting expression: "If the fathers," said he, "should ask, why "France is not in peace, no other answer can "be given, than that which Jehu gave to Joram, "*What peace can there be so long as* ———" Here he stopped, and after pausing a little, added, "Ye know the rest." The story referred to we have in the ninth chapter of the second book of Kings. The words to which he pointed so distinctly that they could not be mistaken, but which

which he judged it convenient to suppress, we have in the twenty-second verse, where we are told, that when Jehu was asked by Joram, whether there was peace, he answered, *What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts, are so many?* It was impossible, considering when, where, and to whom, the ambassador was directing his discourse, to entertain a doubt concerning his meaning. The respectable appellation of *mother* had been given to the church time immemorial, individual christians were denominated her children. In regard to particular churches, they had been for ages, in the west, considered as the daughters of Rome. The Roman church was their common mother, so that this gentleman, addressing himself to the Tridentine fathers, who represented their respective churches in the council, and in the midst of whom the pope's legates sat as presidents, had the boldness to call the church of the haughty and imperious Rome, not in so many words, but as intelligibly and manifestly a harlot, a sorceress, a Jezebel, the source of all their calamities. Indeed, the happy aposiopesis he employed, rendered the invective more energetical, and the intended application more unquestionable, than if he had spoken out. If he had spoken out, there would have been still room for suspicion, that (however unlikely) he must have had some

other

other meaning to the words, else he could not, to their faces, have employed terms so opprobrious. The method he took, at the same time that it left no doubt as to the expression to be supplied, betrayed a consciousness, that he considered it both as incapable of any other application, and as too gross for utterance. Would not one be tempted to think, that either the French monarch had mistaken the principles of the servant he employed on this occasion, or that the latter had mistaken totally the intent of his embassy, and was actually pleading the cause of the protestants before the council, and not that of his master, who was endeavouring, by all possible means, to exterminate them? He concluded with declaring, that if the reformation he proposed was not quickly and seriously applied to, all the assistance of the king of Spain, (by arms doubtless he meant) of the pope, and of the other princes, would be to no purpose, and that the blood of those who should perish, though deservedly, on account of their own sins, would be required at the hands of the fathers then assembled. This discourse, as may well be imagined, excited very great indignation; but matters were then so critically circumstanced, and the fear of offending the king of France, and perhaps provoking him to adopt less sanguinary measures with his revolted subjects, made even the keenest advocates for the papacy to stifle

their

their resentments, and take no notice of the offensive expressions.

Having exhibited to you the state of the papal claims of jurisdiction over the clergy, at that most memorable era, the reformation in the sixteenth century, I shall now attempt to convey some idea of the claims then advanced in behalf of the clergy, in the first instance, and ultimately of the pope, in whom they all terminated, over the laity, especially over the secular powers. For this purpose, I shall here lay before you the scheme prepared in the same convention, for the reformation of princes and civil magistrates, which, though in the situation of things at that time, and on account of the strenuous opposition from the temporal powers, it was not found convenient to push, yet has never been departed from, nor abandoned, by those of that establishment; on the contrary, the several articles have, for ages, afforded matter of contention and struggles in all nations of christendom. Much has been attained, and hardly has a proper opportunity been omitted of asserting even the most extravagant of them. The bill prepared for this purpose, contained a preamble, thirteen decrees, and a conclusion. It was in substance as follows:—

The council, beside the statutes enacted for reforming persons ecclesiastical, have judged it their

their duty to reform also secular persons of those abuses, which have been introduced against the immunities of the church, confident that princes will acquiesce, and cause due obedience to be rendered to the clergy. To this end they are admonished, before other things, to oblige their magistrates, delegates, and other temporal lords, to render their pastors that obedience, which those princes themselves are bound to perform to the sovereign pontiff; and for this purpose anew enforces whatever has been decreed by the sacred canons, and the imperial laws in favour of ecclesiastical immunities, which ought to be observed by all under pain of anathema. The principal decrees are the following: that persons ecclesiastical, even though their clerical title should be doubtful, and though they themselves should consent, cannot, under any pretext, even that of public utility, be judged in a secular judicatory. Even in cases of notorious assassination, or other excepted cases, their prosecution must be preceded by a declaration of the bishop of the diocese. That in causes spiritual, matrimonial, those of heresy, tithes, &c. civil, criminal, mixed, belonging to the ecclesiastical court, as well over persons as over goods, tenths, &c. pertaining to the church, the temporal judge cannot intermeddle, notwithstanding any appeal, &c.; and those who, in such causes,

shall recur to the secular power, shall be excommunicated, and deprived of the rights contended for. Secular men cannot constitute judges in causes ecclesiastical, and clergymen, who shall accept such offices from laymen, shall be suspended from orders, deprived of benefices, and incapacitated. The secular cannot command the ecclesiastical judge not to excommunicate without licence, or to revoke, or suspend, an excommunication fulminated. No king or emperour can make edicts, relating to causes or persons ecclesiastical, or intermeddle with their jurisdiction, or even with the inquisition, but are obliged to lend their arm to the ecclesiastical judges when called on. Rulers may not put their hand to the fruits of vacant benefices, under pretence of custody, protection, &c.; secular persons, who shall accept such offices, shall be excommunicated, and clergymen suspended and deprived. Ecclesiastics shall not be constrained to pay taxes, excise, &c. not even under the name of free gifts, or loans, either for patrimonial goods, or the goods of the church. The letters, sentences, and citations, of the ecclesiastic judges, especially of the court of Rome, shall, immediately on being exhibited, be, without exception, intimated and executed, &c. If there be any doubt that the letters are forged, or that tumults will arise, the bishop, as apostolic delegate,

delegate, may order the needful precautions. Princes and magistrates shall not quarter their officers, &c. on the houses, or monasteries of ecclesiastics, nor draw thence ought for victuals, or passage money. There were several other articles of the same stamp, which it is not necessary to enumerate. The above will sufficiently serve for a specimen.

By way of conclusion, there was an admonition to all princes, to have in veneration the things which are of ecclesiastical right, as pertaining to God, and not to allow others herein to offend, renewing all the constitutions of sovereign pontiffs and sacred canons in favour of ecclesiastical immunities; commanding, under pain of anathema, that, neither directly nor indirectly, under any pretence, aught be enacted or executed against ecclesiastical persons, or goods, or against their liberty; any privilege or immemorial exemption to the contrary notwithstanding.

Such was the famous bill of rights, (if I may so express myself) of the clergy of christendom in the sixteenth century, on which I shall beg leave to make a few remarks. In the first place, it is evident, that these articles imply a total independence of the ecclesiastic on the secular powers, inasmuch as the latter could, on this

 plan,

plan, use no coercive measures, either for preventing the commission of crimes by the former, or for punishing them when committed, could not, even for the eviction of civil debts, or discharge of lawful obligations, affect the clergy either in person, or in property, moveable or immoveable, could exact from them no aid for the exigencies of the state, however urgent. Now allowing that the independence were equal on both sides, it might admit a question, whether it be possible that two such independent states, whereof the subjects of each live together as members of the same community, and are blended in all the ordinary duties and concerns of life, could subsist any time on that footing. I observe, secondly, that the independance was solely on the side of the clergy. The laity could not, by their civil sanctions, affect the clergy without their own concurrence; but the clergy, both by their civil and by their religious sanctions, could affect the laity, and, in spite of their opposition, whilst the people had any religion, bring the most obstinate to their terms. The civil judge could not compel a clergyman to appear before his tribunal, the ecclesiastic judge could compel a layman, and did, daily, compel such to appear before him. And in all the interferings and disputes between individuals of the different orders,

the clerical only could decide. The ecclesiastic powers could command the aid of the secular, the secular could not that of the ecclesiastical. I observe, thirdly, that though the kinds of power, in the different orders, were commonly distinguished into spiritual and temporal, the much greater part of the power of ecclesiastics was strictly temporal. Matters spiritual are those only of faith and manners, and the latter only as manners, that is, as influencing opinion, wounding charity, or raising scandal. Whereas, under the general term *spiritual*, they had got included the more important part of civil matters also, affairs matrimonial and testamentary, questions of legitimacy and succession, covenants and conventions, and wherever the interposition of an oath was customary. Add to these, that they were the sole arbiters of the rights avowedly civil of the church and churchmen, and in every thing wherein these had, in common with laymen, any share or concern. Though these privileges (weakly called immunities, since they imply dominion) had, for centuries, been claimed by the clerical order, many of them in most countries actually obtained, and the rest made matter of incessant broils and contentions; yet all of them were never any where acquiesced in by the secular powers. Had they, indeed, admitted them in their full extent,

the abolition of the secular authority would have quickly ensued; the priesthood would have engrossed every thing. Christendom would have then become in a sense very different from that of the apostle, *a royal priesthood*, or, as some like to render his words, *a kingdom of priests*. In scripture the church is so denominated in the same sense, wherein it is said of all christians without exception; that they are made kings and priests to God; because all have free access to him through the blood of his Son; not because our instructors in holy things, men specially called to be ensamples to the flock, in faith and patience, in resignation and humility, were constituted lords with plenary power, both temporal and spiritual, over God's heritage. I observe, in the last place, that an ordinary reader, who has not entered thoroughly into the spirit of those times, cannot fail to be exceedingly surprized, (as I acknowledge I was myself) on the first perusal of the aforesaid overtures. They are ushered in as pious resolutions to be adopted by the council, for the reformation of princes and secular persons. One is naturally led to expect, that in such a writing, calculated purely to reform the great, their faults will, with christian freedom, but in the spirit of meekness, be animadverted on; that one shall find a just censure on the pride, the luxury, the impiety, the extor-

tion,

tion, the envy, the revenge, and the other vices which so often abound among those in high rank and authority; or that one shall see branded with proper severity, that unchristian ambition, which leads sovereigns so often, though fellow-christians in profession, to make war on one another, on the most trivial pretences, to the destruction of one moiety of their subjects, the oppression of the other, and dishonour of the christian name. But not a syllable of these. Was there nothing of this kind, then, among the powers of Europe? Never, perhaps, was there more. Yet this venerable body seemed to think, that there was nothing in their earthly potentates which would need correction, were they sufficiently submissive to their ghostly fathers, the bishops and the priests, that is, in effect, would they but resign to them their whole authority, and consent to become their humble slaves, a virtue, it seems, more successful, in the eyes of their reverences, than charity itself in covering sins.

In the same spirit, the seventeenth canon of general reformation, passed in the last session of that council, has these words: "Against those "bishops, who in church, or out of it, behave "themselves meanly towards the ministers of "kings, persons of quality, and barons, and "with too much indignity, not only give place

"to them, but do them personal service, the "synod, detesting this conduct, and renewing "the canons concerning the decorum of episcopal dignity, commands bishops to beware "of such practices, and every where to challenge due respect to their degree, remembering "they are pastors; and also commands princes "and all others to bear them the honour and reverence due to fathers." How high their claims went, we learn from a canon of the council of Troyes, in the ninth century, which orders, that no man shall presume to sit in the presence of a bishop, unless he command it. We know who they were in ancient times that sought honour one of another, who affected the principal seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts, who loved greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. We know also who it was that expressly prohibited, amongst his disciples, such unbecoming emulation and worldly vanity, who enjoined them not to seek honour from men, or to contend who, in the judgment of men, should be greatest, but to seek that honour only which cometh from God; we know also who it was that made usefulness the standard of greatness, and pronounced him to be possessed of the highest dignity, who is most humble and most serviceable; who, instead of courting, is solicitous to avoid such enviable distinc-

distinctions. On which of these models the convention at Trent, and other preceding councils, were formed, I shall leave to the candid and impartial to determine. I shall conclude this lecture with a story, homely indeed, but apposite: An English country parson was bragging, in a large company, of the success he had had in reforming his parishioners, on whom his labours, he said, had produced a wonderful change to the better. Being asked in what respect, he replied, that when he came first among them, they were a set of unmannerly clowns, who paid him no more deference than they did to one another, did not so much as pull off their hat when they spoke to him, but bawled out as roughly and familiarly as though he were their equal; whereas now, they never presumed to address him but cap in hand, and, in a submissive voice, made him their best bow, when they were at ten yards distance, and styled him *your reverence*, at every word. A Quaker, who had heard the whole patiently, made answer; "And so, friend, the upshot of this reforma-" tion, of which thou hast so much carnal " glorying, is, that thou hast taught thy people " to worship thyself." So much for clerical and papal claims. But, in order to know more exactly the state of those times, we must be acquainted with the sentiments of both sides on

every

every principal question. I shall, therefore, in my next lecture, take notice of the reception, which those articles of reformation I have read to you, met with from the secular powers.

LEC-

LECTURE XXII.

IN my two last prelections, I laid before you, in their utmost extent, the papal claims of jurisdiction over the clergy, and the clerical claims not only of independance, but of authority over the secular powers. I promised to take notice, in the present lecture, of the reception which the last mentioned claims over the secular powers met with from those against whom they were aimed.

Copies of those articles, for the reformation of princes and magistrates, having been sent by the ambassadors to their respective courts, they were instructed to give them all the opposition in their power. In this resolution, none were more determined than the emperor, and the king of France. The former wrote to cardinal Moron, that neither as emperor, nor as archduke, would he ever consent, that they should speak in council of reforming the jurisdiction of princes, or of divesting them of their right to draw contributions from the clergy; that he considered all their

their past evils as having sprung from the oppressions attempted by ecclesiastics, both on the people and on the princes. The French ambassadors prepared a protestation, which they were commanded to make, if there should be occasion for it.

In one of their meetings called congregations, one of the fathers, in a long speech, advanced, that the cause of all their corruptions proceeded from the princes, who, of all men, had the greatest need of reformation; adding, that the heads of a scheme for this purpose were already digested, meaning that which I gave you in a preceding lecture, and that it was now time to propose them, and not suffer so important a design to come to nothing through their dilatoriness. As here the rights of sovereigns were touched, the ambassador Ferrier, of whose vehemence, as well as freedom in speaking, I have already given you a specimen, interposed, and, in a very resolute tone, supported the rights of the secular powers in general, and of his master the king of France in particular. Though he was by no means destitute of eloquence, his eloquence was not always adapted to time and place.

The liberty of expression, in which he indulged himself, was too great for the prejudices of the age in which he lived; and the reflections

which

which he threw out were too galling, to be borne by men of so much importance as those reverend fathers, who looked on themselves as the only rightful legislators of the universe, and whose authority they deemed it treason, or what was still worse, sacrilege, even in sovereigns to dispute.

Ferrier, in his oration, lamented, that christian kings had now, for more than a hundred and fifty years, at the councils of Constance, Basil, Lateran, and Trent, been earnestly requiring of popes the reform of ecclesiastic discipline, and that all their endeavours had proved abortive. They had, indeed, got a large return of decrees and anathemas. They demanded one thing, and they are put off with another; insomuch, that in all probability, for three hundred years to come, the same grievances will be lamented, and the same requests of redress will be made to no better purpose. In regard to the huge mass of reforms which had occupied the council for some months past, they had sent their opinion of it to the king, who, in return, wrote them, that he found therein few things conformable, but many contrary to ancient discipline.

Ferrier maintained further, that the plaster which they had been preparing, far from being adapted to heal the wounds of the church, could serve only to make them fester, and to cause even

sores

sores that had been healed, to break out afresh: particularly that those expedients of excommunicating and anathematizing princes were unexampled in the primitive church, and solely calculated for opening a wide gate to rebellion in every state; that the whole chapter of the reformation of kings and princes had no other aim, than to divest their temporal rulers of all authority. Yet by such rulers some excellent ecclesiastic laws had been made, which even popes had not disdained to adopt, honouring their authors with the name of saints; that by those laws the church had been governed, not only since the times of the pragmatic and the concordate, but before, nay, for more than four hundred years before the book of decretals, which later popes had got substituted into their place, had been so much as heard of. He then attempted a comparison between the ancient canons and the modern, particularly the regulations made for the reform of discipline in the preceding sessions of the present council, exposing the futility of their new canons in a strain of contemptuous irony, the most provoking imaginable. He maintained, that the king his master, the founder and patron of almost all the churches of France, may, for the instant and urgent necessities of the state, in consequence of the power given him of God,

and

and by the most ancient laws of the kingdom, freely avail himself of even the ecclesiastical goods and rents of his subjects. He said, that the king was particularly surprized at two things; that those fathers adorned with great ecclesiastical power in the divine ministry, and assembled solely for restoring ecclesiastical discipline, not attending to that, had turned aside to reform those whom, though wicked, it behoved them to obey and pray for; and he was surprized still more, that they should imagine themselves entitled, without admonition, to excommunicate and anathematize princes, who are given them of God, a thing not to be done even to a plebeian, who perseveres in a heinous transgression; that Michael the archangel did not dare to curse the devil, neither did Michaiah or Daniel curse the most impious kings, yet those fathers vented all their curses against kings and princes; nay, their maledictions were levelled even against his most christian majesty, for defending the laws of his ancestors, and the liberties of the Gallican church. He concluded, that the king required them not to decree any thing against those laws and liberties, and, if they should, commanded his ambassadors to oppose their decrees, as they then did, adding, that if, not meddling with sovereigns, they would attend to that which all the world expected of them, their

conduct

conduct would be most agreeable to his majesty, and should have the utmost aid of his ministers. Hitherto he spoke in the name of the king. Then, in a bold epiphonema, he invoked heaven and earth, and the fathers themselves, to consider whether it suited the time, to show no sympathy with the church, in the present distractions, or with France, involved in a civil war on account of religion, but to have all their sensibility engrossed by their own dignities, and honours, and revenues, which cannot be preserved by other arts than those whereby they were acquired; that in such confusions, it was their duty to repent, and when Christ cometh, not to bawl out; *Send us into the herd of swine*; that if they would restore the church to its ancient reputation, bring adversaries to repentance, and reform princes, they should follow the example of good king Hezekiah, who did not imitate his impious father, nor the first, counting backwards, second, third and fourth of his very deficient progenitors, but went further back to the imitation of his remote, but more perfect ancestors; in like manner it behoved those fathers not to attend to their immediate predecessors, however learned, but to ascend to an Ambrose, an Augustin, a Chrysostome, who conquered heretics, not by the modern method of instigating princes to slaughter them, but by methods more primitive, by their prayers,

prayers, by the example of a godly life, by preaching pure doctrine; for if the fathers whom he addressed would first form themselves into Ambroses, Augustines, and Chrysostomes, and thus purify the church of Christ, they would soon transform princes into Theodosiuses, Honoriuses, Arcadiuses, Valentinians, and Gratians. This he prayed that with the help of God they might effectuate, and so concluded.

We cannot wonder, that this bold, and even dictatorial language, should irritate, as in fact it did, in a very high degree, not the pontificii only, but the other prelates, even the French clergy themselves. The historian tells us, that he had no sooner ended, than there arose such a general murmur, that it was found necessary to dismiss the congregation. Some taxed the discourse with heresy; others said it looked very suspicious; almost all agreed that it was offensive to pious ears, (meaning, no doubt, their own) and could be calculated only to break up the council; that he attributed to kings more than belonged to them; that he inferred the pope's authority not to be necessary to entitle them to ecclesiastical goods; that he made the king of France like the king of England, Harry the eighth, head of the church within his own dominions. Above all, nothing offended more grievously than his suggesting, that the autho-

rity of the king of France over persons and goods, was not founded on the pragmatic, concordate, and papal privileges, but on the law of nature, the sacred scriptures, the ancient councils, and laws of christian emperors. As his speech was every where attacked, and often misrepresented, he was obliged to disperse some copies of it for his own vindication. This occasioned a formal answer in writing, to which he made a spirited reply.

The principal instruction to be drawn from such altercations, is the knowledge they afford of the opinions and the spirit of the times, and of the mode of reasoning employed in their controversies. We are sometimes surprized to observe, that the things which proved matter of reprehension, were such as we should have least suspected. Thus what he affirmed of princes that they were given of God, was combated with great keenness as heretical, and condemned by *unam sanctam*, one of the decrees very happily named *extravagantes* of pope Boniface the eighth. He ought, said they, to have distinguished, by affirming, they are of God, *mediante suo vicario*. An easy device for making all power, temporal and spiritual, to be immediately from the pope, and but mediately from God. To their exceptions on this head, his excellency's answer was very brief. He had not said more

simply

simply and absolutely, that princes are from God, than the prophet Daniel and the apostle Paul had said before him, and that if there be no heresy in their expressions, there can be none in his; that for his own part, the distinction of mediate and immediate, and the extravagant constitutions of Boniface, never entered into his mind. His apology, instead of diminishing, only increased the odium and clamour against him. He obstinately defends, said they, those errours which he ought penitently to recant. His opposition, however, and the alarm taken by sovereigns, were sufficient to prevent those attempts on the secular power being carried further. In the other questions agitated, as those about residence, and the jurisdiction of bishops, there was a division of the clergy into two parties, the pontificii, or patrons of papal despotism, on one side, and those on the other, who maintained, that the bishops had a divine right to a share in the jurisdiction. But in the struggle between the spiritual power and the temporal, the ambassadors had the whole council for antagonists. Both the contending factions were united on this head. It had been, indeed, uniformly the policy of Rome to exert herself in supporting the attempts, made in every country, to draw both power and property out of the hands of the laity into those of the clergy.

When this was once effected, she was never at a loss for expedients, whereby she might again draw the whole, or the greater part, out of their hands into her own. By the first, she secured in her interest the clergy of every nation, and laid the foundation of such a close dependance on herself, as rendered the exertion necessary for obtaining the second object much easier, than what had been employed for obtaining the first.

To adduce some instances: with what infinite labour and contention did the pope, aided by the bishops, (always ready, at his instigation, to rebel against the civil powers) wrest the investitures in church livings out of the hands of princes, in order, as appeared at the time, to restore them to the chapters of the several dioceses; and with what ease, comparatively, were the chapters afterwards wormed out of that right by the pope! First, he employed the gentler method of recommendation. When this was ineffectual, he commanded. As even commands were sometimes disregarded, he proceeded to cause his commands to be conveyed by nuncios, empowered to give collation, if necessary; and armed with the highest censures against the disobedient. Thus the clergy found, to their cost, that the last errour was worse than the first, and that, under the appearance of recovering their liberty, they had brought themselves (as is often deser-

deservedly the case with rebels) into greater bondage. The monarch had commonly some regard to the merits of the candidate. The pope acknowledged no merit but that of a weighty purse. Natives were formerly preferred, now often aliens and strangers, who could not speak the language. Thus Roman courtiers, minions of the pontiff, men who resided constantly in Italy, frequently drew the richest benefices of distant countries, whilst the duties of the charge lay neglected. We have another example in the monks, who, at first, under pretence of vowed poverty, acquired great credit with the public, as aiming at no temporal advantage, but doing all through charity, for the service of the people. Afterwards, when their credit was fully established, Rome quickly devised reasons for dispensing with their vow. From that time they enriched themselves. When they were become opulent, the pope treated them as he treated bishoprics; bestowed them on his favourites, sold them to the highest bidder, or gave them in commendam. Rome always asserted resolutely, and, in most cases, successfully, the clergy's right of exemption from being taxed by the secular powers; but it was in order to slip into the place of those powers, and assume the prerogative of taxing them herself. This, though always controverted by temporal

rulers, she so effectually secured, that sovereigns, in any remarkable exigency, especially when they could plead some holy enterprize, such as a crusade for the massacre of infidels or heretics, were fain to recur to the pope, as the easiest and surest way of obtaining the assistance of their own clergy. This also gave the pope an easy method of bribing princes to his side, when he wanted to destroy or mortify any adverse power. It was his usual game, to ply the bishop against the king. But this, when his subalterns proved mutinous, he could successfully reverse, and ply the king against the bishop. At the time of this very council, he was forced to recur to these artifices. Both the Spanish clergy and the French, having proved refractory, on the article of episcopal jurisdiction, his holiness did not find it a fruitless expedient, for preventing their obtaining the countenance and support of their respective sovereigns, to give hopes to the latter, of the aids solicited from him, for extirpating heresy, and securing the catholic faith, namely, the tenths of the ecclesiastic revenues, in their own dominions.

Thus I have, in this and the two preceding lectures, given you a sketch of the state at which the papal authority was arrived in the sixteenth century, at the time of the sitting of the council of Trent, the last which, under the

name

name of ecumenical, (though not universally received even by the Roman Catholics) has been holden in the church. I have also given you some idea of the different sentiments on this article, entertained by different parties of Romanists; for, on this subject, and on some others, they are far from being unanimous. I shall now add a few things on the present state of the hierarchy, in regard to the form, particularly on the dignity and office of cardinal, which has naturally sprung up out of the changes gradually effected in the constitution of the Roman church, in respect both of the extent of her dominion, and of the exaltation of her power, concluding with some account of the manner in which the hierarch was wont to be installed in his sublime station.

As to the office of cardinal, there can be no doubt, that for several hundred years, there was no appearance in the church either of the name or of the thing. Though some other accounts have been given of its origin less honourable for the office, what appears to me the most plausible is the following.

When the distinction of patriarchs and metropolitans, and their suffragans, came to be established, it naturally gave rise to some distinction in the presbyters and deacons of the archiepiscopal churches, whether patriarchal or metro-

political, from the presbyters and deacons of the ordinary, that is, of the suffragan bishops. The dignity of an archiepiscopal see, as it raised its bishop above the other bishops of the province, would readily be conceived to confer some share of superiority, at least in honour and precedency, on the presbyters and deacons belonging to it, above the presbyters and deacons of the subordinate bishoprics of the province. The former were counsellors and assessors to a man, who had a certain jurisdiction over those to whom the latter were counsellors and assessors. In consequence of this, the presbyters and deacons, which constitute what, in the primitive church, was called the presbytery, or bishop's senate, came to be denominated in some capital cities, where the primates resided, (for the custom was neither universal nor confined to Rome) cardinal presbyters and cardinal deacons, that is, according to the original import of the name, chief, or principal presbyters and deacons; being accounted such when compared with their comprovincials of the same order. But still the more essential difference of the orders deacon, presbyter and bishop, was sacredly preserved. Thus a cardinal deacon, though superiour to the other provincial deacons, was held inferiour to an ordinary provincial presbyter, and a cardinal presbyter, though superiour to the other provincial presbyters, was inferiour to a suffragan bishop.

bishop. Accordingly, in the most noted councils held at Rome, we find, that the cardinal Roman priests always signed under the Italian bishops. Nor did any bishop then accept at Rome the office of cardinal priest, though it be not uncommon now for those who are bishops in other cities, to be priests or deacons in the Roman conclave.

As gradually a number of titles, that had before been enjoyed by many, were engrossed by Rome, whose supereminence came in process of time, to swallow up all other distinctions; as the term *pope*, and the epithets *most blessed*, *most holy*, which had, for several centuries, been attributed to all bishops, at least to all patriarchs and metropolitans, were arrogated by Rome, as belonging peculiarly to her pontiff; so the title *cardinal* was, from the like principle, assumed as belonging peculiarly to her clergy. Yet it remained at Ravenna till the year 1543, when it was abrogated by Paul III. Indeed, as the Roman see rose in power and riches, the revenues of all belonging to it rose in proportion, and the patrimony annexed to a deaconship in Rome was far more considerable, than the revenue of an ordinary bishopric in the provinces. And if such was the case with the deacons, we may be assured, that not only no provincial bishop, but very

very few metropolitans, were able to vie in splendour and magnificence with a Roman presbyter.

Exorbitant wealth annexed to offices may be said universally to produce two effects. There are singular exceptions; but these cannot affect the general truth. The two effects are, arrogance and laziness. When the priests of Rome were made petty princes, one might be assured, they would be no longer officiating priests. Opulence is never at a loss to find expedients for devolving the burden of the incumbent service on other shoulders. Another effect is *arrogance*. When Roman presbyters and deacons could live in greater pomp and magnificence than most bishops, or even archbishops could afford to do, they would soon learn to assume a state and superiority in other respects unsuited to the different functions. Accordingly we find, that in the three last councils of note, to wit, Pisa, Constance, and Trent, there were many and warm complaints on the haughtiness, and even insolence of these new dignitaries, who affected to be styled the princes of the church, and who thought themselves well entitled to this distinction. For they were both the electors and the counsellors of the sovereign pontiff, and had got it pretty well established, that in every vacancy one of their college should be chosen pontiff.

It

It could not easily, for some time, be relished, that those who, by canonical rules, belonged to a lower order, as priests and deacons, should treat the greatest prelates in the church as their inferiours and vassals. The honourable distinctions conferred on them by popes still widened the distance. They got the red hat from Innocent IV, in 1244. Paul II added the red cap and scarlet housings; and Urban VIII, in the last century, dignified them with the title of *eminence*.

At the same time it must be observed, on the other hand, in excuse of their uncommon exaltation, that when the bishop of Rome, that is, the pastor of a single diocese, or, as it was still more properly called at first, a single parish, a single church, or congregation, was risen insensibly into the head of the church universal, or, at least, the greater part of it; and when his presbytery, that is, his small consistory of colleagues and ministers, who assisted him in conducting the affairs of the parish, was, by the same insensible degrees, advanced into the senate, by whose assistance and consultations the affairs of the whole church were to be conducted, the members must, of necessity, become men of another sort of importance. This gave rise to the consequences I have mentioned, and these again gave rise to regulations in which (unless men's

men's view had been to overturn the fabric of the hierarchy altogether, and bring things back to their primitive model) it was proper, and even necessary, to consider more what the office of cardinal then was, than what it originally had been when the church of Rome was no more than the church of Corinth, or any other christian congregation.

At different periods there have been made changes, both in the number of the members of this college, and in their functions. The footing whereon it now stands is this: the conclave, which is the name of the court constituted by the cardinals, consists of seventy members, exclusively of the pope their head. Of these there are six bishops; for though this could not have been from the beginning, or rather from the time that the distinction between bishop and presbyter was first settled; for then no more than one bishop was allowed to one church, it was not unreasonable, to have also some of this order in the number, when it was no longer the presbytery of a single church, but the privy council of the monarch for the management of the whole. There are fifty priests, and fourteen deacons. They are, on occasion of vacancy by death, nominated by the pope, and may be of any country whatever. That they should be, as much as possible, taken from the different countries

countries of christendom, or rather, the different Roman catholic countries, since they have a share in the government of the whole Roman catholic church, is intirely suitable, and is now in a manner established by custom.

But the very great alterations made in this college, or society, are a demonstration of the prodigious change that arose in the nature and destination of the office. The bishop of Rome, for several ages after the time of Constantine, was elected, as most others were, by the presbytery, that is, the officiating clergy within the bishop's cure, and by the people of Rome, which, with the concurrence of the com-provincial bishops, and the emperor's ratification, were always sufficient for settling their *præsul*, or president, as he was frequently denominated. Indeed, for an office of such immense wealth and eminence, as it quickly rose to, after the establishment of christianity, the election continued too long in such improper hands. The consequence was, that for some centuries the choice of a bishop was almost as necessarily attended with a civil war in Rome, as that of a king was in Poland. The election is now in none of the societies it was in formerly. The officiating priests, who serve the several cures in Rome, with their subordinate ministers or deacons, have no concern in it. As little has any temporal

monarch,

monarch, the bishops of the provinces, or the Roman people. And though the conclave may be said to have sprung out of the presbytery, yet, by a thousand successive alterations, they are at length so completely changed, that, except the election of the pope, there is not one office they have in common; and even this, when examined critically, is no otherwise the same but in name. The ancient presbytery's concern was only in giving a pastor to the Romans, the modern conclave's concern is in giving a sovereign to the church.

I need not mention the expedients that have been devised, by pluralities, bishopricks in commendam, and the like, for increasing the splendour and luxury of those princes of the church, and electors of its monarch. In the time of a vacancy in the papal chair, the practice is now, that all the cardinals in Rome are shut up together in a place called, from this usage, the *conclave*, where they are to remain (there being all necessary accommodation for them) till they elect a pontiff. Cardinals, who arrive before the election is over, are enclosed with the rest. They give their votes by ballot. And if, upon scrutiny, none of the candidates has two thirds of the votes, the balloting must, after a stated interval, be repeated. And this continues to be reiterated, if they should remain shut up for years, always

till

till one of them attains the superiority I mentioned.

It may not be amiss to subjoin here, the description of the pope's consecration, given by cardinal Rasponi, in his book concerning the church of the Lateran, which is also related by father Bonanni, in his medallic history of the popes, and by Lenfant, in his history of the council of Constance. "Before the usage of "the conclave was introduced by Gregory the "tenth," says cardinal Rasponi, "the cardinals, "three days after the obsequies of the former "pope, convened in the Lateran church, where, "after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and the "celebration of mass, they proceed to the elec-"tion of a pope. The election being made, the "first cardinal deacon invested the pope elect in "his pontifical habits, and announced the name "which he chose to take:" for it has been the custom now, for several centuries, that the pope should assume a new name on being elected. "Afterwards, two cardinals, the most eminent "in dignity, one on his right hand, the other "on his left, conducted him to the altar, where "he prostrated himself in adoration of God, "whilst they sang the *Te Deum*. After the *Te* "*Deum*, the cardinals seated the pope in a mar-"ble chair, which was behind the altar, under "a sort of dome, or vault, where the pope, being

"set,

" set, admitted the cardinals, the bishops, and
" some others, to kiss his feet, and to receive
" the *kiss of peace.* Then the pope rising, the
" cardinals conducted him through the portico
" to another chair, bored like what is called in
" French, selle percée. This chair was thence
" very properly named *stercoraria*, the stercorary. It was formerly placed before the portico of the patriarchal basilic, and is now to
" be seen in the cloister of that basilic. The
" use of these chairs, however, was afterwards
" abolished by Leo the tenth, probably for this,
" amongst other reasons, because the perforated
" chair was become connected with the fabulous
" story of the female pope. That, however, is
" not a protestant fable, as some persons ignorantly pretend, for it was current long before
" the days of Luther. But the continuance of
" the use of that chair preserved the memory
" of the story, and might appear to the credulous an evidence of its truth. Whilst the pope
" sat on the stercorary, the choir sang these
" words of scripture: Suscitat de pulvere egenum, et de stercore erigit pauperem, ut sedeat
" cum principibus, et solium gloriæ teneat.
" Psalm cxiii, 7. The last clause is not in the
" Psalm. *He raiseth the poor out of the dust,*
" *and lifteth the needy off the dunghill, that he*
" *may set him with the princes of his people, and*
" *that*

" *that he may possess the throne of glory.* The
" intention of this ceremony, it was said, was to
" insinuate to the pope the need there is of the
" virtue of humility, which ought to be the first
" step of his greatness. After remaining some
" time in this chair, the pope received from the
" hands of the chamberlain three deniers, which
" he threw to the people, pronouncing these
" words: *Silver and gold I have none for my*
" *pleasure, but what I have I give you.* After-
" wards, the prior of the Lateran basilic, and
" one of the cardinals, or one of the canons of
" that basilic, took the pope between them, and
" whilst they walked in the portico, shouts of
" acclamation were raised near the basilic, and
" the election was declared, with the name which
" the pope had taken. In this manner they
" conducted the pope to the basilic of St. Syl-
" vester, where, being placed before this basilic
" in a chair of porphyry, the prior of the basilic
" put into his hands a *ferula,* in sign of correc-
" tion and government, and the keys, to denote
" the power which God gave to St. Peter,
" Prince of the apostles, of opening and shut-
" ting, of binding and loosing, and which passes
" (according to our historian) successively to
" all the Roman pontiffs. Thence the pope,
" carrying the ferula, and the keys, went to
" place himself in another chair, resembling the

"former; and after remaining there some time, "restored the ferula and the keys to the prior, "who girt him with a girdle of red silk, giving "him a purse of the same colour and stuff, "wherein there were twelve precious stones, "and a small bit of musk. Onuphrius, in his "treatise on the basilic of the Lateran, says, "that it was the prior of this basilic who gave "these things to the pope. His sitting in the "two chairs, denoted the primacy which St. "Peter conferred on him, and the power of "preaching the gospel conferred by St. Paul. "The girdle signified continence and chastity, "the purse denoted the treasure, out of which "the poor were to be nourished, the twelve pre-"cious stones represented the power of the "twelve apostles, which resides totally in the "pontiff; in fine, the musk denoted the fra-"grancy of good works, according to that say-"ing, *We are to God a sweet savour of Christ.* "In this chair the pope elect admitted the mi-"nisters of the palace to kiss his feet, and to re-"ceive the kiss of peace. There, too, several "pieces of silver were delivered to him by the "chamberlain, to the value of ten pence. These "he threw to the people at three different times, "pronouncing these words, *He hath scattered; "he hath given to the poor; his righteousness "remaineth for ever.* All this being done, the

"pope

" pope elect went next Sunday, attended by all
" the orders of the sacred palace, and the prin-
" cipal people of the city, to the basilic of the
" Vatican, and there, before the confession of
" St. Peter, he was solemnly consecrated by the
" bishop of Ostia, to whom this office specially
" belongs. After this function, the archdeacon
" and the second deacon gave the pall to the
" pope, the archdeacon pronouncing these words,
" *Receive the pall, which is the plenitude of the*
" *pontifical office, to the honour of Almighty God,*
" *of the most happy virgin his mother, of the*
" *blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and of*
" *the holy Roman church.*"

After this description, cardinal Rasponi adds these words:—" This is what was done when
" the pontiff was announced or proclaimed in
" the church of the Lateran; but when the elec-
" tion was made in the Vatican, the pope, im-
" mediately after being conducted to the altar
" by two cardinals, or after having performed
" his adoration, and offered a secret prayer,
" kneeling, was placed in a chair behind the
" altar, where he admitted the cardinal bishops,
" and the others, during the singing of the *Te*
" *Deum*, to kiss his feet, and to receive the kiss
" of peace. The following Sunday they assem-
" bled in the same church, and the pope, crowned
" according to the custom of his ancestors, went

"to the Lateran palace; but before entering it, "he seated himself in the *stercorary*, where, sit-"ting down thrice, according to custom, he was "introduced by the cardinals into the basilic, "distributing money to the populace. There "he ascended a throne behind the altar, where "he admitted the canons of the basilic to kiss "his feet, and to receive the kiss of peace: "which being done, he went to place himself "in the chairs that were before the oratory of "St. Sylvester, where all was performed that "has been recited above. But if it happened "that the pope was created out of Rome, all the "clergy, when he made his entry into that city, "and before entering the gate of the Lateran, "went to meet him without the gate, in ponti-"fical habits, with the standard of the cross and "censers; and, entering thus into the Lateran "church, they observed, though in an order "somewhat different, all the ceremonies men-"tioned above. And if the pope, coming to "Rome after his consecration, went to the "church of St. Peter, the same rites were used "there as in the Lateran church, except only "that he did not receive the canons of St. Pe-"ter to kiss his feet in the portico, and that he "did not sit down on the *stercorary*, which is "not in that church. For this reason, the next "day after mass, he went without the tiara to

"the

"the Lateran palace, and before entering the "basilic, he placed himself on the stercorary, "with the accustomed ceremonies."

These ceremonies, it must be owned, appear to us very silly, and some of them absolutely ridiculous. But ye may depend on it, that there i neither exaggeration nor misrepresentation in the account above given. It is not given by an enemy to that profession, or by a stranger to the customs used on such occasions, who could relate them only from hearsay. It is a relation given by a friend, a cardinal too, one who had probably witnessed them oftener than once, and who had himself a principal part to act on those occasions. The ceremonies of consecration as bishop, in case the pope elect had, previously to his election, been only in priest's or deacon's orders, have not been related by the cardinal, as not differing materially from those used in the ordination of bishops, which are to be found in the Roman pontifical. There was, besides, a ceremony of coronation used in the instalment of the popes, which seems not to have been introduced earlier than the thirteenth century; and it was in the following century, the fourteenth, that the triple crown was devised. Benedict the twelfth seems to have been the first pope that wore it. The reasons which the canonists give for the use of the triple crown are so diverse, and

so fantastic, that it is not worth while to report them.

The rites employed in coronation I shall give you some notion of, from the account given by Lenfant, in his history of the council of Constance, of the coronation of Martin the fifth, created pope in a peculiar manner, agreed on by that council, in the room of John the twenty-third, whom they had deposed. "There was "erected in the court of the palace," says our historian, "a grand theatre, which could contain "about a hundred persons. Close to the wall "was a very high throne, above which there "was a canopy of cloth of gold, the seat "destined for his holiness. On the right hand, "and on the left, were ranged several other seats, "a little lower, but magnificent, for the princes "and the prelates to sit on. At eight o'clock "in the morning, the two patriarchs, (for since "the time of the crusades, they had got titular "Latin patriarchs in the eastern patriarchal sees "subdued by the Mahometans) the twenty-two "cardinals, (for there were no more then pre-"sent) the archbishops, the bishops, the mitred "abbots, entered the court of the palace, on "horseback, in pontifical habits. The emperor, "and the other princes, followed on foot. When "all the people were assembled, the pope mounted "the theatre, preceded by the clergy, carrying

"the

"the cross and waxen tapers. On the fore-
"part of the theatre there was an excellent
"choir of music, which sang and played on all
"sorts of instruments. The pope had on his
"head a superb tiara, seeded with gold crowns,
"with a golden cross on the top. At his right
"hand, a little behind, were cardinal Viviers,
"and a patriarch; at his left, cardinal Brancas,
"with another patriarch. Then marched the
"other cardinals, and the grand master of
"Rhodes, who were all received by the emperor,
"the electors, and the princes. The pope being
"placed on the throne, the patriarch of Antioch
"took his tiara, or crown, off his head, and
"kneeled before him, holding this crown in his
"hand. Near him other cardinals kneeled also;
"one of whom carried some tow at the end of
"a stick, another a cross, and the rest wax ta-
"pers. At the pope's right hand sat cardinal
"de Brancas, with eight other cardinals; at his
"left, the grand master of Rhodes, with eight
"cardinals. Next them, on the right, the em-
"peror, on the left, the elector of Brandenburg,
"both attended by archbishops. Next them,
"electors, princes, bishops, and other prelates,
"as many as the place could contain. The rest
"sat on the stairs, which had been made very
"wide for the purpose. There was, beside these,
"in the court, a great number of archbishops,

"bishops, and other great lords, both ecclesiastic
"and secular, who surrounded the theatre on
" horseback. There was, likewise, an immense
"crowd of people, who could not get into the
" court. When the music had ceased, one of
"the cardinals, who was kneeling before the
" pope, and who carried the tow, lighted it, and
"twice said aloud, addressing himself to the
" pope, *Sancte pater, sic transit gloria mundi.*
" After which, three cardinals, who had been
"selected for putting the crown on the pope's
"head, standing up with the grand master of
" Rhodes, and taking the crown from the hands
" of the pope, they all four kneeled on the highest
" step of the throne, whence, after saying a
" prayer, they arose, and put the crown on the
" pope's head: after which, resuming their for-
"mer places, they heard the *Te Deum*, and the
" music. When they left the place, the pope
" mounted his white horse, which was preceded
" by three led horses, that were also white, and
" had red caparisons. The inferiour clergy walked
" before, followed by the abbots, bishops, arch-
" bishops, and cardinals, on horseback. The
" emperor, on foot, held the reins of the pope's
" bridle on the right, walking in the dirt, (which
" is particularly observed by the historian) whilst
" the elector of Brandenburg did the same on
" the left. Thus the pope was carried in pro-
" cession

"cession from the cathedral to the Augustin "monastery, and thence reconducted to the "episcopal palace. Here ended the ceremony." And here shall end our account of the rise and establishment of papal dominion.

LEC-

LECTURE XXIII.

HAVING now given you some account of the rise and establishment of the Romish hierarchy, it is but reasonable, that before I dismiss the subject of ecclesiastic history, I should consider the causes which have contributed to the declension of that wonderful empire. This will lead me to remark a little on the latent springs, the progress, and the effects of the reformation.

In all governments, of what kind soever, it may be justly said, that the dominion of the few over the many is primarily founded in opinion. The natural strength among beings of the same order, which is equal in the individuals, or nearly so, lies always in the multitude. But the opinion both of right and of occupancy, or secure possession, can and does universally invest the smaller with the direction or government of the greater number. By the opinion of right, we are restrained, through justice, or a sense of duty, from divesting a man of what we think him entitled to enjoy. By the opinion of occupancy,

we

we are restrained, through prudence, or a sense of danger, from disturbing a man in the possession of what we think he has a firm hold of. Either opinion, when strong, is generally sufficient to ensure peace; but they operate most powerfully in conjunction. When the two opinions are disjoined, that is, when unfortunately, under any government, it is the general opinion, that the right is in one, and the occupancy in another, there frequently ensue insurrections and intestine broils.

The above remarks hold equally with regard to property, which is in effect a species of power. Now these opinions, which, from the influence of custom, and insensible imitation, men have a natural tendency to form, prove, in all ordinary cases, a sufficient security to the few rich and great, in the enjoyment of all their envied advantages, against the far superiour force, if it were combined, of the many poor and small. Indeed, it is opinion that prevents the combination, and makes that a master may sleep securely amid fifty servants and dependents, each of whom, perhaps, taken singly, is, both in bodily strength, and in mental abilities, an overmatch for him. It is this which vests a single person with the command of an army, who, in contradiction to their own will, give implicit obedience to his; notwithstanding that they carry in their hands what

what would prove the instruments of working their own pleasure, and his destruction. It will not be doubted, that it is in the same way, by means of opinion, that ecclesiastical power has a hold of the minds of men.

There is, however, this remarkable difference in the two sorts of power, that knowledge and civilization, unless accompanied with profligacy of manners, add strength to those opinions on which civil authority rests, at the same time that they weaken those opinions which serve as a basis to a spiritual despotism, or a hierarchy like the Romish. The more a people becomes civilized, the more their notions of justice and property, prescription and peaceable possession, become steady, the more they see the necessity of maintaining these inviolate, and the ruinous consequences of infringing them. The love of peace and science, the encouragement of industry and arts, the desire of public good and order, the abhorrence of crimes, confusion, and blood, all cooperate to make those opinions take deep root. Nothing seems to endanger them so much as tyranny and oppression in the rulers. These tending directly to undermine the opinion of right, (for no man is conceived to have a right to tyrannize over his fellows) leave only in the minds of the people, in favour of their superiours, the opinion of occupancy. Thus one of the great

pillars

pillars by which magistracy is supported, the sense of duty, is removed, and the whole weight is left upon the other, the sense of danger. *Virtue*, in that case, we consider either as out of the question, or as in opposition to the powers that be, and consult only *prudence*. Now wherever the present evils of oppression, wherein a people is involved, appear intolerable, and greater than any, or even as great as any which they dread from opposition, the other support, *prudence*, is removed also; and men will both think themselves entitled to revolt, and, after balancing the chances on both sides, be disposed to hazard every thing.

On the other hand, the opinions, which are the great bulwarks of spiritual tyranny, are founded in ignorance and superstition, which are always accompanied with great credulity. Of these, nothing can be so subversive as knowledge and improvement. Virtue, and even piety itself, when its exalted and liberal spirit begins to be understood, become hostile to opinions which, under the sacred name and garb of religion, prove the bane of every virtue, and indeed of every valuable quality in human nature, as well as the nurse of folly and malevolence. Luxury and vice are often pernicious to the best constituted civil governments, because whilst, on one hand, they strengthen and inflame the passions, the

the great incentives to criminal attempts, they, on the other hand, loosen and undermine our regards to equity and right. But no kind of vice in the people, if accompaned with ignorance, is an enemy, every kind is, on the contrary, a friend to the reign of superstition. Consciousness of profligacy will at times excite terror even in the most obdurate. Superstition, especially when formed into a politic system, like the Romish, is never deficient in expedients for conjuring down that terrour, and rendering it subservient to the invariable aim, priestly dominion. It requires but little knowledge, in the history of christendom, to enable us to discover, that many of those persons, both princes and others, most highly celebrated by ecclesiastics as the great benefactors of the church, were the most worthless of the age wherein they lived, the most tyrannical, the most rapacious, the most profligate, men who have concluded a life stained with the blackest crimes, by beggaring their offspring, and devoting all that they had, by way of atoning for their sins, to one of those seminaries of sloth, hypocrisy, and unnatural lusts, commonly called *convents*; or by enhancing, in some other way, the power and wealth of churchmen. Few contributed more to the erection and establishment of the hierarchy than the emperor Phocas; and a

greater

greater monster of cruelty and injustice never disgraced the human form.

That the great enemy which superstition has to overcome is *knowledge*, was early perceived by those, who found their account in supporting her throne. Nor were they slack in taking measures for stifling this dangerous foe. Among the chief of these measures were the following:—1st, They judged it proper to confine to a few those divine illuminations, which they could not totally suppress, and which they could not deny had originally been given for the benefit of all. 2dly, When that formidable thing, *knowledge*, in spite of all their efforts, was making progress, they, in order to give it a timely check, affixed a stigma on all the books which tended to expose their artifices, and open the eyes of mankind. 3dly, For the more effectual prevention of this danger, through the terrour of example, persecution was employed, which has, in their hands, been digested into an art, and conducted with a cool, determinate, systematic cruelty, that defies alike all the principles of justice and humanity; and of which, among Jews, Mahometans, or Pagans, the world has hitherto furnished us with nothing that deserves to be compared.

In what regards the first method, we comprehend under it the means that have been used to render the scriptures inaccessible to the common people.

people, by discouraging, as much as possible, translations into the vulgar tongue; and, by confining the whole public service to a dead language, thereby rendering it to the congregation no better than insignificant mummery. Nothing is more evident from the scriptures themselves, than that they were written for the benefit of all. Accordingly, all are commanded to read and study them. And indeed, soon after the different books came abroad, one of the first effects of the pious zeal, with which the primitive christians were inspired, was, in every country, to get those inestimable instructions, as soon as possible, accurately translated into the language of the country. It is astonishing to observe how early this was effected in most of the languages then spoken. Indeed, there was nothing in those purer times which could induce any one, who bore the christian name, to desire either to conceal, or to disguise, the truth. To propagate it in its native purity, and thus diffuse to others the benefit of that light which they themselves enjoyed, was the great ambition, and constant aim, of all the genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus.

As no tongue (the Greek excepted, which is the original of the New Testament) was of so great extent as Latin,—into this a translation seems very early to have been made. It was commonly distinguished by the name *Italic*,

probably because undertaken for the use of the christians in Italy. It is not known who was the author. This is also the case of most of the old translations. About three centuries after, a new version into Latin was undertaken by Jerom. Our present vulgate consists partly of each, but mostly of the latter. No version whatever could, in early times, be more necessary than one into Latin. This was not the language of Italy only; it had obtained very generally in all the neighbouring countries, which had long remained in subjection to Rome, and in which Roman colonies had been planted. But in the other western churches, where Latin was not spoken by the people, the scriptures were translated into the vernacular idiom of the different nations, soon after their embracing the christian doctrine. There were, accordingly, Gothic, Frankish, or old German, Anglo-Saxon, and Sclavonic versions. In like manner, in the east, they had very early Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Persic, Ethiopic, and Coptic. The same may be said of the divine offices, or prayers and hymns, used in public in their churches. It is pretty evident, that for some centuries these were, in all the early converted countries, performed in the language of the people. But in the first ages there were no written liturgies.

Indeed, nothing can be more repugnant to common sense than the contrary practice. For if the people have any concern in those offices, if their joining in the service be of any consequence, it is necessary they should understand what is done: in an unknown tongue, the praises of God, and the praises of Baal, are the same to them. In like manner, in regard to the reading of the scriptures, if the edification of the people be at all concerned, still more if it be the ultimate end, how can it be promoted by the barbarous sounds of a foreign or dead language? How can instructions, covered by such an impenetrable veil, convey knowledge or comfort, produce faith, or secure obedience? The apostle Paul, (1 Cor. xiv,) has been so full and explicit on this head, that it is impossible for all the sophistry, that has been wasted on that passage, to disguise his meaning from any intelligent and ingenuous mind.

"The church," says the Romanist, "by this "averseness to change so much as the external "garb, the language of the usages introduced "soon after the forming of a christian society at "Rome, demonstrates her constancy, and invio-"lable regard, to antiquity, and consequently "ought to inspire us with a greater confidence "in the genuineness and identity of her doc-"trine."

"trine." But so far in fact is this from being an evidence of the constancy of that church, in point of doctrine, that it is no evidence of her constancy even in point of ceremonies. It is the dress, the language only, in which she has been constant, the ceremonies themselves have undergone great alterations, and received immense additions, (as those versed in church history well know) in order to accommodate them to the corruptions in doctrine, which, from time to time, have been adopted. Nor has it been the most inconsiderable motive for preserving the use of a dead language, that the whole service might be more completely in the power of the priesthood, who could thereby, with the greater facility, and without alarming the people, make such alterations in their liturgy, as should, in their ghostly wisdom, be judged proper.

It may at first appear a paradox, but on reflection is manifest, that this mark of their constancy, in what regards the dead letter of the sacred ceremonies, is the strongest evidence of their mutability, nay, actual change, in what concerns the vitals of religion. Consider the reason why Latin was first employed in the Italian churches. It was not the original language of any part of sacred writ. They had the New Testament in the original Greek. There were also forms of public prayer, or liturgies, in that language, be

fore any appeared in Latin. What then could induce them to usher into their churches a fallible translation of the scriptures, in preference to the original, acknowledged to have been written by men divinely inspired, and consequently infallible? I ask this the rather, because the Romanist admits, that the original was written by inspiration. He agrees with us, also, in not affirming the same thing of any version whatever. For, though the council of Trent has pronounced the Latin vulgate to be authentic, it has not declared it perfect, or affirmed that the translator was inspired. By the authenticity, therefore, no more is meant, in the opinion of their most learned doctors, than that it is a good translation, and may be used, by those who understand Latin, safely and profitably. But that this is not considered by themselves as signifying that it is totally exempt from errour, is manifest from this, that the critics of that communion use as much freedom in pointing out and correcting its errours, as the learned of this island do, in regard to the common English version. I return to my question, therefore, and ask the Italians, of the present age, Why did their forefathers, in the early ages, prefer a Latin version; a performance executed indeed by pious, but fallible, men, with the aid of human learning, to the Greek original, which they believed to contain the unerring dic-

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tates of the Holy Ghost? Why was not the latter read in their churches in preference to the former? The answer which they would return, or which at least their progenitors would have returned, is plain and satisfactory. "We do not "dispute that the Greek was in itself preferable; "but to our people it was useless, because not "understood. Latin was their mother tongue. "Much, therefore, of the mind of the spirit they "might learn from a good Latin version, not-"withstanding its imperfections. Nothing at "all could they acquire from hearing the sounds "of a language with which they were unac-"quainted. And better, as the apostle says, "speak but five words with understanding, that "is, intelligibly, or so as to teach others, than "ten thousand, in an unknown tongue, by which "nobody can be edified." Nothing can be more pertinent than this answer, with which Paul has furnished us, only make the application to the case in hand. Latin is not now your native tongue. It is not at present the language of any nation or city in the world. Your people understand it no more now than they do Greek. If the Romans, sixteen hundred years ago, thought it necessary to reject the public use of an infallible original, because unintelligible to the hearers, and to admit in its place a fallible version, because intelligible; and the Romans

now refuse to reject one fallible version, that is become unintelligible, for another not more fallible, which may be understood by every body; can there be a stronger demonstration of the total difference of sentiments, in regard to religious worship in the present Romans, from the sentiments of their ancestors in those early ages? Can there, consequently, be a stronger demonstration of the truth of the paradox I mentioned, namely, that this mark of Roman constancy, in what regards the dead letter, is the strongest evidence of their mutability, nay, actual change, in what concerns the vitals of religion? Their ancestors considered religion as a rational service, the present Romans regard it merely as a mechanical operation. The former thought that the understanding had a principal concern in all religious offices: the latter seek only to attach the senses. With them, accordingly, the exercises of public worship are degenerated into a motley kind of pantomime, wherein much passes in dumb show, part is muttered so as not to be audible, part is spoken or chanted in a strange tongue, so as not to be intelligible; and the whole is made strongly to resemble the performance of magical spells and incantations, to which idea, their doctrine of the *opus operatum* is wonderfully harmonized. But the smallest affinity to the devotions of a reasonable being to his all-wise

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and almighty creator, it is impossible to discover in any part of it. Well may we address them, therefore, in the words of Paul to the Galatians, "Oh! infatuated people, who hath bewitched "you; having begun in the spirit, are ye made "perfect by the flesh?"

If any thing could be more absurd than worship in an unknown tongue, it would be the insult offered to the people's understanding, in pretending to instruct them by reading the scriptures to them in such a tongue. The people are thus mocked with the name of instruction without the thing. They are tantalized by their pastors, who give and withhold at the same time. They appear to impart by pronouncing aloud what they effectually conceal by the language. Like the ancient doctors of the Jewish law, they have taken away the key of knowledge: they entered not in themselves, and those that were entering they hindered. Ah blind guides! Unnatural fathers! for ye affect to be styled fathers, how do ye supply your children with the food of their souls? When they ask bread of you, ye give them a stone. They implore of you spiritual nourishment from the divine oracles, that they may advance in the knowledge of God, in faith and purity; and ye say, or sing to them, a jargon, (for the best things are jargon to him to whom they are unintelligible) which may make

them stare, or nod, but must totally frustrate their expectation. They starve, as it were, in the midst of plenty; and are shown their food, but not permitted to taste it. They seek to have their souls edified, and ye tickle their ears with a song.

If witnesses were necessary to evince the contrariety of this their present practice to the intention of their forefathers, as well as the natural purpose of reading the scriptures in the congregation, I would ask no witness but themselves. They still retain a memorable testimony against themselves, in the form of ordaining readers enjoined in the pontifical, for with them this office is one of the minor orders. In the charge given to the readers by the bishop at their ordination, we have these words: "Studete igitur verba "Dei, videlicet lectiones sacras distincte, et "aperte, ad intelligentiam et ædificationem fide-"lium, absque omni mendacio falsitatis proferre; "ne veritas divinarum lectionum, incuria vestra, "ad instructionem audientium corrumpatur. "Quod autem ore legitis, corde credatis, atque "opere compleatis; quatenus auditores vestros, "*verbo* pariter et exemplo vestro, docere possi-"tis. Ideoque, dum legitis, in alto loco eccle-"siæ stetis, ut ab omnibus audiamini et videa-"mini." Instructions entirely apposite when they were first devised, for then Latin was their

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mother tongue; but which now can serve only as a standing reproach upon their practice, by setting its absurdity in the most glaring point of view. For what can it avail for the edification of the people, that the reader pronounces distinctly and openly, and stands in a conspicuous place, when he pronounces nothing but unmeaning words? Is this teaching them by word, *verbo?* Can this be called addressing the understandings of the faithful? Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou pageant of a teacher.

What shall we say of the power of prepossessions, when an abuse, so palpable, is palliated by such a writer as father Simon? I can bear to hear the most absurd things advanced by weak and illiberal minds. I can make great allowance for the power of education over such, and am led more to pity than to condemn. But it must awake real indignation, to see parts and literature prostituted to the vile purpose of defending what the smallest portion of common sense shows at once to be indefensible, and giving a favourable gloss to the most flagrant abuses and corruptions. Simon acknowledges, (Hist. Crit. des Versions du N. T. chap. 1,) that when christianity was first planted, it was found necessary, for the instruction of the people, to translate the scriptures, especially the New Testament, into the language of each country that received this doctrine;

doctrine; and adds, that this remark must be understood as extending to the service performed in the churches, which, in those early days, was every where in the language of the people. The same thing, he affirms, cardinal Bona* had observed in his work upon liturgies. Now if the case was so, it will not be easy to account, without recurring to papal usurpations, for the uniformity in using Latin in all the public offices of religion, that had been introduced, and actually obtained, through all the occidental churches, for ages before the reformation. Will Simon say, that Latin was the language of Britain for example, when christianity was first planted among

* Bona, however, does not say so much as seems here to be attributed to him by Simon. All that his words necessarily denote, is, that the apostles, and their successors, in converting the nations, taught the people, and officiated every where, in the idiom of the country. But this does not imply, that they used, for this purpose, either a written translation of the scriptures, or any written liturgy. What he says afterwards, that in all the western churches they had no liturgy but in Latin, evidently implies the contrary. He knew well, that Latin was never the language of the people, in most countries of the western empire. Even in Africa, where, for manifest reasons, that tongue must have been much more generally spoken than in the northern parts of Europe, he acknowledges, on Augustine's authority, that it was not understood by the common people. "In Africa etiam Latinæ linguæ usus in "sacris semper viguit, licet eam populus non intelligeret, ut "Augustinus testis est." L. 1, C. v, § 4.

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the Britons; or, indeed, of any of the northern countries of Europe? So far from it, that, for the service of those countries, there were, by his own confession, translations made into Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, Sclavonic, &c. Yet these versions (whatever they were formerly) are no where used at present, nor have they been used for many centuries, though fragments of some of them are still to be found in the libraries of the curious.

"Nothing," says Mr. Simon, "is more extravagant, than what Pierre du Moulin has written on this subject against cardinal du Perron. '*The end*,' says this minister, '*which the pope has proposed to himself, in establishing the Latin tongue in the public service, has been, to plant amongst his conquered nations the badges of his empire;*' as if," subjoins Simon, "it had been the popes by whom the Latin language had been extended throughout all the west." Now to me there appears great extravagance in this censure of Simon's, none in Pierre du Moulin's remark. For if the priest of the Oratory mean, by the Latin being extended throughout the west, that it was become the language of the people in all the western nations, nothing can be more evidently false. It was never the language of Scandinavia, of the greater part of Germany and Gaul; nor was it ever

ever the language of this island in particular. The common language here, at least of the southern part of the island, when the nation was subject to the Romans, was not Latin, but the ancient British, a dialect of the Celtic, which the people, when driven out of the greater and better part of their own country by their conquerors the Saxons, carried with them into Wales; which, in confirmation of what I say, is still spoken there, though, doubtless, in so many ages, considerably altered, and is now called Welsh. The Anglo-Saxon, the language of the invaders, succeeded it, which, after the conquest, being blended with the Norman French, hath settled at last into the present English. The like changes might be shown to have happened in most other European countries. Nor is this hypothesis of Simon's more contrary to fact, than it is inconsistent with his own concessions. For if the Latin had been so widely extended in the west, as his reflection on Pierre du Moulin manifestly implies, where had been the occasion for the versions into Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, Sclavonic, &c., of which he himself has made mention?

Further; Mr. Simon's account, that men, after their language had been totally vitiated by the irruptions of barbarians, and the mixture of people that succeeded, still retained the practice

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of reading the scriptures and liturgies in the language which their forefathers spoke, when christianity was first introduced among them, is absolutely incompatible with the universal use of Latin for so many ages in the west; and is, consequently, the amplest vindication of the remark of Du Moulin, which he had so severely and unjustly censured. For, on this hypothesis, it would not be Latin in any of the northern countries that would be used in their churches; for Latin never was, in those countries, the language of the people. In Wales it would be ancient British, in England the Anglo-Saxon, in Sweden the Gothic, in France and Germany the Frankish. Nor can any thing be more foreign to the cause in hand, than the examples brought from the different churches and sects in Asia, who still retain the scriptures in their ancient native tongues. Had all these churches and sects been, by any address or management, induced to employ Greek, some resemblance might have been fairly pleaded; for that language, to say the least, had as great a currency in the east as Latin ever had in the west. Nor do I conceive any thing a stronger evidence of an undue ascendant that one church had obtained over other churches, than that she had influence enough to make them either adopt at once a jargon they did not understand, or, which is

worse, abandon their ancient versions, not for the sake of others more intelligible into the modern language of the people, but to make way for what was to them foreign, as well as unintelligible, being in the language of the Romans.

I can make allowance for the prepossession, though unreasonable, that the present Armenians, Syrians, Copts, and Ethiopians, may retain, for books held venerable by their forefathers, though now no longer understood. For the same reason I can make allowance for the attachment of the people of Italy and its dependencies to the Latin vulgate and ritual, as Latin was once the language of their country. And though it arise in them all from a silly prejudice, which manifestly shows, that the form of religion has supplanted the power; yet I can easily, without recurring to authority or foreign influence, especially in the decline of all literature and science, account for it from the weakness incident to human nature. But totally different is the case of the northern regions, whose language Latin never was, and who, by the confession of Romish critics, once had the scriptures and sacred offices in their native tongues. Their admitting this foreign dress in their religious service, and submitting to wear the livery, and babble the dialect of Rome, is the surest badge of their slavery, and of the triumph of Roman

policy

policy over the combined forces of reason and religion both. That the natural consequence of this practice would be to promote ignorance and superstition among the people, it would be a misspending of time to attempt to prove.

But would there not be some hazard, that those sage politicians should overshoot the mark? Religion, the christian religion in particular, has always been understood to require faith in its principles; and faith in principles requires some degree of knowledge or apprehension of those principles. If total ignorance should prevail, how could men be said to believe that of which they knew nothing? The schoolmen have devised an excellent succedaneum to supply the place of real belief, which necessarily implies, that the thing believed is, in some sort, apprehended by the understanding. This succedaneum they have denominated *implicit faith*, an ingenious method of reconciling things incompatible, to believe every thing, and to know nothing, not so much as the terms of the propositions which we believe. When the sacred lessons of the gospel were no longer addressed to the understandings of the people; when, in all the public service, they were put off with sound instead of sense, when their eyes and ears were amused, but their minds left uninstructed; it was necessary that something should be substi-

tuted for faith, which always presupposes knowledge; nay, that it should be something which might still be called *faith*; for this name had been of so great renown, so long standing, and so universal use, that it was not judged safe entirely to dispossess it. Exactly such a something is *implicit faith*. The name is retained, whilst nobody is incommoded with the thing.

The terms *implicit faith* are used in two different senses. With us protestants, at least in this country, no more is commonly meant by them than the belief of a doctrine, into the truth of which we have made no inquiry, on the bare authority of some person or society declaring it to be true. But this always supposes, that one knows, or has some conception of the doctrine itself. All that is denoted by the term *implicit* in this acceptation is, that in lieu of evidence, one rests on the judgment of him or them by whom the tenet is affirmed. No ignorance is implied but of the proofs. But the *implicit faith* recommended by the schoolmen is quite another thing, and is constituted thus; if you believe that all the religious principles, whatever they be, which are believed by such particular persons, are true; those persons who hold the principles are explicit believers, you are an implicit believer of all their principles. Nor is your belief the less efficacious, because you are ignorant

ignorant of the principles themselves. Perhaps you have never heard them mentioned, or have never enquired about them. For it does not hold here as in the faith whereof the apostle speaks, *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* In the presence of those profound doctors the schoolmen, the apostle would be found to be no other than an arrant novice. The transcendent excellency of *implicit faith* consists in this, that you have it then in the highest perfection, when, in regard to its object, you know nothing, and have even heard nothing at all. In brief, it is neither more nor less than being a believer by proxy. Scripture saith, "Ye are saved through faith," and "without faith it is impossible to please God." Now *implicit faith* is a curious device for pleasing God, and being saved by the faith of others. It is, in fact, *imputative faith*, at least as extraordinary as the *imputative justice*, which brought so much obloquy on some of the reformers. It is as if I should call one an *implicit mathematician*, who knows not a tittle of mathematics, not even the definitions and axioms, but is convinced of the knowledge of some other person who is really, or whom he supposes to be an adept in that science.

"To believe implicitly," says Bona, "is to "believe in general universally all that holy

"mother church believes; so as to dissent from "her in nothing, nor disbelieve any of her "articles. And though it be convenient (*licet "opportunum sit*) for all, not only to believe all "the articles implicitly, but even *some* of them, "since the coming of Christ, explicitly; yet it "is not necessary (*non tamen est necessarium*) "for all, especially the common people, to be-"lieve them *all* explicitly. It is proper rather "for those, who assume the office of teaching "and preaching, as they have the cure of "souls." Further, to show the wonderful virtues and efficacy of such a faith, another of the doctors, Gabriel Byel, maintains, that, "if he "who implicitly believes the church, should "think, misled by natural reason, that the "Father is greater than the Son, and existed "before him, or that the three persons are "things locally distant from one another, or "the like, he is not a heretic, nor sins, provided "he do not defend this errour pertinaciously. "For he believes what he does believe, because "he thinks that the church believes so, subject-"ing his opinion to the faith of the church. "For though his opinion be erroneous, his opi-"nion is not his faith, nay, his faith, in con-"tradiction to his opinions, is the faith of the "church. What is still more, this *implicit faith* "not only defends from heresy and sin, but

"even constitutes merit in heterodoxy itself, "and preserves in that merit one who forms a "most heterodox opinion, because he thinks "the church believes so." Thus far Byel. It is then of no consequence what a man's explicit faith be; he may be an Arian, a Socinian, an Anthropomorphite, a Polytheist, in short, any thing, he cannot err, whilst he has an implicit faith in the church. This they give as their explanation of that article of the creed, "I "believe in the holy catholic church;" though, agreeably to this interpretation, there should have been no other article in the creed. This point alone supersedes every other, and is the quintessence of all. *Implicit faith* has been sometimes ludicrously styled *fides carbonaria*, from the noted story of one who, examining an ignorant collier on his religious principles, asked him what it was that he believed. He answered, "I believe what the church believes." The other rejoined, "What then does the church "believe?" He replied readily, "The church "believes what I believe." The other desirous, if possible, to bring him to particulars, once more resumes his inquiry; "Tell me then, I "pray you, what it is which you and the church "both believe." The only answer the collier could give was, "Why truly, Sir, the church "and I both—believe the same thing." This

is implicit faith in perfection, and in the estimation of some celebrated doctors, the sum of necessary and saving knowledge in a christian.

It is curious to consider the inferences, which they themselves deduce from this wonderful doctrine. A person, on first hearing them, would take them for the absurd consequences objected by an adversary, with a view to expose the notion of *implicit faith* as absolutely nonsensical. But it is quite otherwise, they are deductions made by friends, who are very serious in supporting them. One of these is, that a man may believe two propositions perfectly contradictory at the same time, one explicitly, the other implicitly. Another is, that in such a case, the implicit (which, to a common understanding, appears to include no belief at all) not the explicit, is to be accounted his religious faith. "It may be," says Gabriel, "that one "may believe implicitly a certain truth, and "explicitly believe the contrary." Put the case that a man believes, that whatever the church believes is true; at the same time disbelieving this proposition, *Abraham had more wives than one*, and believing the contrary, as thinking it the belief of the church; such a man implicitly believes this proposition, *Abraham had two wives*, because the church believes so, and explicitly he disbelieves it. Now the great virtue

virtue of implicit faith in the church lies here, that it saves a man from all possible danger, in consequence of any explicit erroneous opinions, and renders it, indeed, unnecessary in him to be solicitous to know whether his opinions be right or wrong, orthodox or heterodox. No wonder, then, that the utility of this simple principle is so highly celebrated by the schoolmen. "Hæc "fides implicita, qua fidelis credit quicquid ec-"clesia credit, utilissima est fideli. Nam si "fuerit in corde, defendit ab omni hæretica "pravitate, ut dicit Occam in tractata de sacra-"mentis, et post eum Gerson. Non enim ali-"quatenus hæreticari valet, qui corde credit "quicquid ecclesia catholica credit, id est, qui "credit illam veritatem, *quicquid ecclesia credit* "*est verum.*" And, indeed, its efficacy must be the same, as the reason is the same, in protecting from the consequences of every errour, even in the most fundamental points, as in protecting from what might ensue on that trifling errour, that Abraham had but one wife.

We must at least confess not only the consistency, but even the humanity of the Romish system, in this amazing method of simplifying all the necessary knowledge and faith of a christian. For surely, when the means of knowledge were, in effect, put out of the reach of

the people; when in public they were tantalized with the mere parade of teaching, by having instructions chanted to them in an unknown tongue; when it was not the understanding, but the senses solely, which were employed in religious offices; when every thing rational and edifying was excluded from the service; it would have been unconscionable, worse than even the tyranny of Egyptian taskmasters, to require of the people any thing like real faith, which always pre-supposes some information given, and some knowledge acquired, of the subject. A merely nominal faith (and such intirely is this scholastic fiction of implicit faith) suited much better a merely mechanical service. In this manner the knowledge of God, which is declared in scripture to be more valuable than burnt offerings, and faith in him, and in the doctrine of revelation, are superseded to make room for an unbounded submission to, and confidence in men, to wit, those ghostly instructors, whom the populace must invariably regard as the mouth of the unerring church.

I would not, however, be understood as signifying by what has been now advanced on the subject of implicit faith, that in this point all Romanists are perfectly agreed. What I have adduced is supported by great names among their doctors, and mostly quoted in their words.

Nor

Nor was the doctrine, though every where publicly taught in their schools and in their writings, ever censured by either pope or council, ecumenical or provincial. But though all the Romish doctors pay great deference, they do not all, I acknowledge, pay equal deference to implicit faith. Some seem to think it sufficient for every thing; others are curious in distinguishing what those articles are, whereof an explicit faith is requisite, and what those are, on the other hand, whereof an implicit faith will answer. But it is not necessary here to enter into their scholastic cavils.

So much shall suffice for the first expedient employed by *superstition* for the suppression of her deadly foe *knowledge*, which is, by perverting the rational service of religion into a mere amusement of the senses.

LECTURE XXIV.

BUT though by such means as those now illustrated, religious knowledge might long be kept low, it was not so easy a matter to suppress it altogether. Such a variety of circumstances have an influence on its progress, that when the things which have been long in confusion begin to settle, it is impossible to guard every avenue against its entrance. One particular art, and one particular branch of science, has a nearer connection with other arts and other branches of science than is commonly imagined. If you would exclude one species of knowledge totally, it is not safe to admit any. This, however, is a point of political wisdom, which, luckily, has not been sufficiently understood even by politicians. When the western part of the Roman empire was overrun, and rather desolated than conquered by barbarians; matters, after many long and terrible conflicts, came by degrees to settle; and several new states and new kingdoms arose out of the stupendous ruin. As these

these came to assume a regular form, the arts of peace revived and were cultivated, knowledge of course revived with them. Of all kinds of knowledge, I own that religious knowledge was the latest. And that it should be so, we cannot be surprized, when we consider the many terrible clogs by which it was borne down. But notwithstanding these, the progress of letters could not fail to have an influence even here. History, languages, criticism, all tended to open the eyes of mankind, and disclose the origin of many corruptions and abuses in respect of sacred as well as profane literature. How much this was accelerated by the invention of printing, which renders the communication of knowledge so easy, bringing it within the reach of those to whom it was inaccessible before, it would be superfluous to attempt to prove. Suffice it to remark, that towards the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, the visible face of things in Europe was, in respect of cultivation, and the liberal as well as useful arts, very much altered.

The change had been insensibly advancing for some centuries before. As this was an indication of a second dawn of reason, and the return of thought, after a long night of barbarity and ignorance, it proved the means of preparing the minds of men for a corresponding change in

greater

greater matters. Indeed, there began to be disseminated such a dissatisfaction with the corruptions that had invaded all the provinces of religion, that murmurs and complaints were almost universal. In every part of Christendom, the absolute necessity of a reformation in the church was become a common topic. It is true, the clamour regarded chiefly discipline and manners, but by no means solely. It had, indeed, long before that time, been rendered very unsafe to glance at received doctrines, though in the most cursory, or even guarded manner. Yet it was impossible, that the abuses in practice should not lead to those errours in principle, which had proved the parents of those abuses. The increase of knowledge brought an increase of curiosity. The little that men had discovered, raised an insatiable appetite for discovering more. The increase of knowledge, by undeceiving men in regard to some inveterate prejudices, occasioned, not less infallibly, the decrease of credulity; and the decrease of credulity sapped the very foundations of sacerdotal power. Now as the principal means of conveying knowledge was by books, the spiritual powers were quickly led to devise proper methods for stopping the progress of those books, which might prove of dangerous consequence to their pretensions.

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This was the second expedient abovementioned, adopted by superstition, or rather by spiritual tyranny, of whose throne superstition is the chief support, for checking the progress of knowledge. The origin and growth of this expedient, till it arrived at full maturity, I shall relate to you nearly in the terms of a celebrated writer, to whom I have oftener than once had recourse before. In the earliest ages of the church, though there was no ecclesiastical prohibition in regard to books, pious persons, from a principle of conscience, always thought it right to avoid reading bad books, that they might not transgress the sense of the divine law, which prohibits us from spending the time unprofitably, and which commands us to abstain from all appearance of evil, to avoid every thing by which we may be led, without necessity, to expose ourselves to temptation, and be drawn into sin. These are obligations arising from the principles of the law of nature, and therefore perpetually in force. We are all, doubtless, obliged, though there were no ecclesiastical law to that purpose, to beware of mispending the precious hours in the perusal of worthless writings. But, in process of time, when these considerations were less minded than at the beginning, Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, a celebrated doctor, about the year 240, being reproved

proved by his own presbyters, for reading books which they accounted dangerous, found it convenient to plead in his excuse, that his doubts on this head had been removed by a vision, wherewith he had been favoured from heaven, which permitted him to read any book, because he had discernment sufficient to enable him to do it with safety. It was, however, the general opinion in those days, that there was greater danger in the books of pagans, than in those of heretics, which were much more abhorred.

The reading of the former, the Greek and the Latin books which we now call classics, was more severely censured, not as being intrinsically worse than the other, but because those books were more engaging, and the reading of them was more frequently practised by many christian doctors, through a desire of learning eloquence, and the rules of composition. And, for indulging himself in this practice, Jerom was said to have been either in vision, or in dream, buffeted by the devil. Much about that time, to wit, in the year 400, a council in Carthage prohibited the bishops from reading the books of gentiles, but permitted them to read those of heretics. This is the first prohibition in form of a canon. Nor is there any thing else, on this subject, to be found in the fathers, except in the

way

way of advice, on the general principles of the divine law, as represented above.

The books of the heretics, whose doctrine had been condemned by councils, were indeed often, for political reasons, prohibited by the emperours. Thus Constantine prohibited the books of Arius. Arcadius those of the Eunomians and Manichees. Theodosius those of Nestorius, and Martian the writings of the Eutychians. In Spain, king Ricaredo prohibited those of the Arians. Councils and bishops thought it sufficient to declare what books contained doctrine condemned or apocryphal. They proceeded no further, leaving it to the conscience of every one either to avoid them entirely, or to read them with a good intention. After the year 800, the Roman pontiffs, who had usurped the greater part of ecclesiastical government, expressly forbade men to read, nay, gave orders to burn the books whose authors they had condemned as guilty of heresy. Nevertheless, till the age of the reformation, the number of books actually prohibited was but small.

The general papal prohibition, on pain of excommunication, and without any other sentence, to all those who read books containing the doctrine of heretics, or of persons suspected of heresy, was grown into disuse. Martin the fifth, in his bull, excommunicated all heretical sects, especially Wickliffites and Hussites; but made

no mention of those who read their books, though many of them were then every where circulated. Leo the tenth, when he condemned Luther, prohibited, at the same time, on pain of excommunication, the keeping and the reading of his books. The succeeding pontiffs, in the bull called *in cœna*, having condemned and excommunicated all heretics, did, together with them, excommunicate also those who read their books. This produced greater confusion, because the heretics not being condemned by name, the books would be discovered rather by the quality of the doctrine contained in them, than by the names of their authors. Now the quality of the doctrine contained could not be known till the book was read, and consequently, till the excommunication was incurred, if the doctrine was heretical. Besides, the doctrine might appear very different to different readers. Hence arose innumerable scruples in the minds of those weak but conscientious persons, who paid an implicit deference to the authority of the church. The inquisitors, who were more diligent than others, made catalogues of such as came to their knowledge, which, however, as the copies taken of those catalogues were not collated, did not entirely remove the difficulty. King Philip of Spain was the first who gave them a more convenient form, having enacted a law in 1558, that the catalogue of

books,

books, prohibited by the Spanish inquisition, should be printed. After this example, Paul the fourth ordered the inquisition in Rome to prepare, and cause to be printed, an index of books proper to be forbidden, which was executed in the following year 1559. In this they proceeded much further than had ever been done before, and laid the foundations of a very curious system of policy, for maintaining and exalting, to the utmost, the authority of the court of Rome, by depriving men of the knowledge necessary for defending themselves against her usurpations.

Hitherto the prohibition had been confined to the books of heretics, nor had any book been prohibited whose author had not been condemned. They now judged it expedient to go more boldly to work. Accordingly, the new index, which, from its known purpose, came to be called *index expurgatorius*, was divided into three parts. The first contained the names of those authors, whose whole works, whether the subject were sacred or profane, were forbidden; and in this number are included not only those who have professed a doctrine contrary to that of Rome, but even many who continued all their life, and died in her communion. In the second part were contained the names of particular books, which are condemned, though other books of the same authors be not. In the third, beside some anony-

anonymous writings specified, there is one general rule, whereby all those books are forbidden, which do not bear the author's name, published since the year 1519. Nay, many authors and books are condemned, which for three hundred, two hundred, or one hundred years, had passed through the hands of all the men of letters in the church, and of which the Roman pontiffs had been in the knowledge for so long a time without finding fault. Nay, what is still more extraordinary, some modern books were included in the prohibition, which had been printed in Italy, even in Rome, with the approbation of the inquisitors, nay, of the pope himself, signified by his brief accompanying the publication. Of this kind are the annotations of Erasmus on the New Testament, to which Leo the tenth, after having read them, gave his approbation in a brief, dated at Rome 1518. Above all, it is worthy of notice, that under colour of faith and religion, those books are prohibited, and their authors condemned, wherein the authority of princes and civil magistrates is defended against ecclesiastical usurpations; those wherein the authority of bishops and councils is defended against the usurpations of the court of Rome; and those wherein are disclosed the tyranny and hypocrisy with which, under pretence of religion, the people is abused either by deceit, or by violence. In

brief,

brief, a better expedient was never devised, (had it been a little more capable of being carried into effect) for employing religion, so as to divest men not only of all knowledge, but of every vestige of rationality. So far did the Roman inquisition, at that time, proceed, that they made a list of sixty-two printers, prohibiting all the books printed by them, of whatever author, subject, or language, with an additional clause still more comprehensive, to wit, and all the books printed by other such like printers, who have printed the books of heretics. In consequence of which, there hardly remained any books to read. Nay, to show the incredible excess of their rigour, the prohibition of every book, contained in the catalogue, was on pain of excommunication to the reader *ipso facto*, reserving to the pope the power of inflicting the deprivation of offices, and benefices, incapacitation, perpetual infamy, and other arbitrary pains. Thus was the court of Rome, in defence, as was falsely pretended, of the doctrine of Christ, but in reality of her own despotism, as the Turks and Saracens, in defence of the superstition of the impostor Mahomet, engaged in a war against literature and knowledge, tending evidently to the extermination of arts and sciences, and to the transformation of men, in every thing but external form, into brutes. And with equal rea-

son was this the aim of both mahometism and popery. False religion, of every kind, must be a mortal enemy to knowledge: for nothing is more certain, than that knowledge is a mortal enemy to all false religion.

How similar have been the aims and the pretensions of pagan and of papal Rome! Both aspired, and with amazing success, at universal empire. But how dissimilar have been the means employed for the attainment of the end. The former, pagan Rome, secured the superiority which her arms had gained, by diffusing knowledge, and civilizing the conquered nations: thus making, as it were, compensation to them by her arts for the injustice she had done them by her arms. The latter, papal Rome, who, for a long time indeed, employed more fraud than violence, (though far from rejecting the aid of either) secured her conquests by lulling the people in ignorance, diverting their curiosity with monstrous legends, and monkish tales, and by doing what she could to render and keep them barbarians.

In regard to the expedient, of which I have here been treating, the prohibition of books by an index expurgatorius, there seem to have been two capital errours in Rome's method of managing this affair, notwithstanding her political wisdom. But nothing human is on all sides perfect. One was, that she was some centuries too late in

adopting

adopting this measure. It would be difficult to say what might have been effected, had the attempt been earlier made, and supported with her usual firmness. The other errour was, that things had proceeded too far for so violent a remedy. Had less been attempted, more would have been attained. The inquisitors, in the true spirit of their calling, and in compliance with the impetuous temper of the reigning pontiff, breathed nothing but extirpation and perdition. They had not so much knowledge of legislation as to perceive, that when a certain point is exceeded in the severity of laws, they are actually enfeebled by what was intended to invigorate them. Hardly was there a man that could read, who was not involved in the excommunication denounced by an act so extravagant. Nor could any thing render the sentence more contemptible, or prove a greater bar to its execution, than its being made thus to comprehend almost every body.

This errour was quickly perceived. Recourse was had, not without effect, to Paul's successor, Pius the fourth, who, being a man of more temper than his predecessor, remitted to the council of Trent, then sitting, the consideration of the affair. They, accordingly, committed to some of the fathers and doctors the examination of suspected books, and the revisal and correction

of that absurd act of pope Paul, acknowledging, that it had produced scruples, and given cause for complaints. Since that time, the prohibitory laws, though, in other respects, far from being more moderate, have avoided the most exceptionable of those indefinite and comprehensive clauses complained of in the former; and I suspect, have by consequence proved more effectual, at least in Italy and Spain, in retarding the progress of knowledge.

Indeed, for some ages past, no heresy has appeared so damnable in Italy to the ghostly fathers, to whom the revisal of books is intrusted, as that which ascribes any kind of authority to magistrates, independent of the pope: no doctrine so divine, as that which exalts the ecclesiastical authority above the civil, not only in spiritual matters, but in secular. Nay, the tenet on this subject, in highest vogue, with the canonists, is that which stands in direct opposition to the apostle Paul's. The very pinnacle of orthodoxy with those gentlemen is, that the lawful commands of the civil magistrate do not bind the conscience; that our only motive to obedience here is prudence, from fear of the temporal punishment denounced by him; and that, if we have the address to elude his vigilance, and escape the punishment, our disobedience is no sin in the sight of God. It is impossible for any thing

thing to be more flatly contradictory to the doctrine of all antiquity, particularly that of the great apostle, who commands us to be subject to those powers, not only for fear of their wrath, but for conscience sake. It was lucky for Paul, the apostle I mean, not the pope, that he had published his sentiments, on this subject, about 1500 years before that terrible expedient of the *index* was devised. He had, by this means, obtained an authority in the christian world, which Rome herself, though she may, where her influence is greatest, for a time, elude it, cannot totally destroy. Otherwise that missionary of Christ must have long ago had a place in the Index expurgatorius.

But to return; Rome has obstructed the progress of knowledge, not only by suppressing altogether books not calculated to favour her views, but by reprinting works, which had too great a currency for them to suppress, mutilated and grossly adulterated. Those editions, when they came abroad, being for the most part neatly, many of them elegantly, printed, and well executed, were ignorantly copied by the printers of other countries, who knew not their defects. In this way those corruptions have been propagated. Besides, Rome wants not her instruments in most countries, protestant as well as popish, such as priests and confessors, who are always ready to

lend their assistance in forwarding her views. Hence it is often rendered extremely difficult to distinguish the genuine editions from the spurious. For let it be observed, that their visitors of books do not think it enough to cancel whatever displeases them in the authors they examine: they even venture to foist in what they judge proper, in the room of what they have expunged. In the year 1607, the *index expurgatorius*, published at Rome, specified and condemned all the obnoxious places in certain authors, which were judged worthy to be blotted out. This, to those who possess that *index*, shows plainly what were the things which, in several authors of reputation, were either altered or rased. But such indexes, which, in the hands of a critic, would prove extremely useful for restoring old books to their primitive purity and integrity, are now to be found only in the libraries of a very few, in the southern parts of Europe. Whether there be any of them in this island I cannot say. But the consequence of the freedom, above related, which has been taken by the court of Rome with christian writers of the early ages, (for it luckily did not answer their purpose to meddle with the works of pagans) has rendered it, at this day, almost impossible to know the real sentiments of many old authors of great name, both ecclesiastics and historians: there

being

being of several of them scarcely any edition extant at present, except those which have been so miserably garbled by the court of Rome, or, which amounts to the same thing, editions copied from those which they had vitiated by their interpolations and corrections.

But what would appear the most incredible of all, if the act were not still in being, pope Clement the eighth, in the year 1595, in his catalogue of forbidden books, published a decree, that all the books of catholic authors, written since the year 1515, should be corrected, not only by retrenching what is not conformable to the doctrine of Rome, but also by adding what may be judged proper by the correctors. That ye may see I do not wrong him, (for that, in corruptions of this kind, they should be so barefaced is indeed beyond belief) it is necessary to subjoin his own words: *In libris catholicorum recentiorum, qui post annum christianæ salutis* 1515 *conscripti sint, si id quod corrigendum occurrit, paucis demptis aut additis emendari posse videatur, id correctores faciendum curent; sin minus, omnino deleatur.* The reason why the year 1515 is particularly specified, as that after which the writings, even of Roman catholics, were to undergo a more strict examination and scrutiny than any published by such before, is plainly this: It was in the year immediately following,

that Luther began to declaim against indulgences, which proved the first dawn of the reformation. His preaching and publications produced a very hot controversy. Now many of those who defended what was called the catholic cause, and strenuously maintained the perfect purity of the church's doctrine, did not hesitate to acknowledge corruptions in her discipline, and particularly in the conduct of Rome, which needed to be reformed. They affected to distinguish between the court and the church of Rome, a distinction no way palatable to the former. Now it would have been exceedingly imprudent to suppress those controversial pieces altogether, especially at that time, when they were universally considered as being, and in fact were, the best defence of the Romish cause against the encroachments of protestantism, and the reformation. On the other hand, the concessions made in them, in regard to discipline, and the court of Rome, and the distinctions they contained, bore an aspect very unfavourable to Roman despotism. Hence the determination of correcting them, not only by expunging what was not relished at court, but by altering and inserting whatever was judged proper to alter, or insert, by the ruling powers in the church. Authors had been often falsified before, and made to say what they never meant, nay, the reverse of what they actually

ally said: but of a falsification so imprudently conducted, this of pope Clement was the first example. Their interpolations, however, of the works even of Roman catholics, though not so avowedly made, have by no means been confined to those who have written since the year 1515. Platina, a writer of the fifteenth, and therefore of the former century, who gave the world a history of the popes, though far from being unfavourable to the pretensions of Rome, has not escaped unhurt their jealous vigilance. For though he had said very little, as Bower well observes, that could be suspected of being any way offensive, that *very little* has been thought too much. Accordingly, he has been taught, in all the editions of his work, since the middle of the sixteenth century, to speak with more reserve, and to suppress, or disguise, some truths which he had formerly told.

Hence it happens, that in regard to all the books which have passed through the hands of Roman licensers, or inquisitors, we can conclude nothing from what we find in them, in regard to the sentiments of their authors, but solely in regard to the sentiments of Rome, to an exact conformity to which, it was judged necessary, that by all possible methods of squeezing and wrenching, maiming and interpolating, they should be brought. Nor has the revisal been

confined

confined to books written on religious subjects, but extended to all subjects, politics, history, works of science, and of amusement. Nay, what is more, the pope came at last to claim it as an exclusive privilege, to prohibit, and to license, not for Rome only, and the ecclesiastical state, but for all christendom, at least for all the countries wherein his authority is acknowledged, insisting, that what he prohibits, no prince whatever, even in his own dominions, dares license, and what he licenses, none dares prohibit. The first of these has been generally conceded to him, though not perhaps punctually obeyed.

The second occasioned a violent struggle in the beginning of the last century, between the pope and the king of Spain, on occasion of a book written by cardinal Baronius, containing many things in derogation of that monarch's government and title, and traducing, with much asperity, many of his ancestors, the kings of Arragon. The book was licenced at Rome, but prohibited in the Spanish dominions. The monarch stood firm in his purpose, and the pope thought fit to drop the controversy, but not to renounce the claim. This Rome never does, actuated by a political maxim formerly suggested, of which she has often availed herself when a proper opportunity appeared. A more particular account of this contest ye have in father Paul's

discourse

discourse on the constitution and rules of the inquisition at Venice. How great would be the consequence of this papal privilege, if universally acquiesced in, any person of reflection will easily conceive. Who knows not the power of first impressions on any question, the influence of education, and the force of habit, in riveting opinions formed in consequence of being uniformly accustomed to attend to one side only of the question. All these advantages the pontiff would have clearly in his favour, could he but secure to himself that high prerogative, and become, in effect, our supreme or only teacher.

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LECTURE XXV.

HAVING discussed, in the two preceding lectures, what relates to the concealment of scripture, and of all the public offices of religion, by the use of an unknown tongue, and to the check given to the advancement of knowledge by the *index expurgatorius*, I intend, in this discourse, to consider the third grand expedient adopted by Rome for securing the implicit obedience of her votaries, namely, persecution.

Nothing is clearer, from the New Testament, than that this method of promoting the faith is totally unwarranted, as well by the great author, as by the first propagators of our religion. His disciples were sent out as sheep amidst wolves, exposed to the most dreadful persecutions, but incapable of ever giving to their enemies a return in kind, in a consistency with this signature of Christ's servants; for in no change of circumstances will it suit the nature of the sheep to persecute the wolf. As it was not an earthly kingdom which our Lord came to establish, so it was

not

not by carnal weapons that his spiritual warfare was to be conducted. The means must be adapted to the end. *My kingdom*, said he, *is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.* Worldly weapons are suited to the conquest of worldly kingdoms. But nothing can be worse adapted to inform the understanding, and conquer the heart, than such coarse implements. Lactantius says with reason, *Defendenda est religio non occidendo, sed moriendo, non sævitia sed patientia.* To convince, and to persuade, both by teaching and by example, was the express commission given to the apostles. The only weapons which they were to employ, or which could be employed, for this purpose, were arguments and motives from reason and scripture. Their only armour, faith and patience, prudence and innocence, the comforts arising from the consciousness of doing their duty, and the unshaken hope of the promised reward. By means of this panoply, however lightly it may be accounted of by those who cannot look beyond the present scene, they were, in the spiritual, that is, the most important sense, invulnerable; and by means of their faith, as the spring which set all their other virtues in motion, they obtained a victory over the world.

Beside the declared enemies from without, pagans and infidel Jews, whom christians had, from the

the beginning, to contend with, there arose very early, in the bosom of the church, as had been foretold by the apostles, certain internal foes, first to the primitive simplicity of christian doctrine, and afterwards by a natural progress, to the unity, sympathy, and love, which, as members of the same society, having one common head, they were under the strongest obligations to observe inviolate. From the very commencement of the church, the tares of errour had, by divine permission, for the exercise and probation of the faithful, been sown among the good seed of the word. The only remedies which had been prescribed by the apostles against those who made divisions in the christian community, founding new sects, which commonly distinguished themselves by the profession of some erroneous doctrine, or at least some idle and unedifying speculation, were first, repeatedly to admonish them, and afterwards, when admonitions should prove ineffectual, to renounce their company, that is, to exclude them from their brotherhood, or excommunicate them: for the original import of these expressions is nearly the same. On this footing matters remained till Constantine, in the beginning of the fourth century, embraced the faith, and gave the church a sort of political establishment in the empire.

From

From the apologies of the fathers before that period, (so the defences of our religion written by them are named) it is evident, that they universally considered persecution for any opinions, whether true or false, as the heighth of injustice and oppression. Nothing can be juster than the sentiment of Tertullian, which was, indeed, as far as appears, the sentiment of all the fathers of the first three centuries. "Non religionis "est cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi de- "beat, non vi." And to the same purpose Lactantius, "Quis imponat mihi necessitatem "vel colendi quod nolim, vel quod velim non "colendi? Quid jam nobis ulterius relinquitur, "si etiam hoc, quod voluntate fieri oportet, li- "bido extorqueat aliena?" Again, "Non est "opus vi et injuria; quia religio cogi non po- "test, verbis potius quam verberibus res agenda "est, ut sit voluntas." Once more, "Longe "diversa sunt carnificina et pietas, nec potest "aut veritas cum vi, aut justitia cum crudelitate, "conjungi." Their notions in those days, in regard to civil government, seem also to have been much more correct than they became soon after. For all christians, in the ages of the martyrs, appear to have agreed in this, that the magistrate's only object ought to be the peace and temporal prosperity of the commonwealth.

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But (such alas! is the depravity of human nature) when the church was put on a different footing, men began, not all at once, but gradually, to change their system in regard to those articles, and seemed strongly inclined to think, that there was no injustice in retaliating upon their enemies, by employing those unhallowed weapons in defence of the true religion, which had been so cruelly employed in support of a false: not considering, that by this dangerous position, that one may justly persecute in support of the truth, the right of persecuting for any opinions will be effectually secured to him who holds them, provided he have the power. For what is every man's immediate standard of orthodoxy but his own opinions? And if he have a right to persecute in support of them, because of the ineffable importance of sound opinions to our eternal happiness, it must be even his duty to do it when he can. For if that interest, the interest of the soul and eternity, come at all within the magistrate's province, it is unquestionably the most important part of it. Now as it is impossible he can have any other immediate directory, in regard to what is orthodox, but his own opinions, and as the opinions of different men are totally different, it will be incumbent, by the strongest of all obligations, on one magistrate

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to persecute in support of a faith, which it is equally incumbent on another by persecution to destroy. Should ye object, that the standard is not any thing so fleeting as opinion: it is the word of God, and right reason. This, if ye attend to it, will bring you back to the very same point which ye seek to avoid. The dictates both of scripture and of reason, we see but too plainly, are differently interpreted by different persons, of whose sincerity we have no ground to doubt. Now to every individual, that only amongst all the varieties of sentiments can be his rule, which to the best of his judgment, that is, in his opinion, is the import of either. Nor is there a possibility of avoiding this recurrence at last. But such is the intoxication of power, that men, blinded by it, will not allow themselves to look forward to those dreadful consequences. And such is the presumption of vain man, (of which bad quality the weakest judgments have commonly the greatest share) that it is with difficulty any one person can be brought to think, that any other person has, or can have, as strong conviction of a different set of opinions, as he has of his.

But to return to our narrative. When the secular powers had changed sides, and were now come to be on the side of christianity, this was the manner, on the subject of religion, in which some

men among the clergy began to argue. Princes ought to be considered in a twofold capacity; one is, that of christians, the other, that of princes, in both which characters they are bound to serve God: as christians, by observing the divine commandments, like every other disciple of Christ: as princes, by purging the church of all schisms, heresies, and blasphemies, punishing all transgressors of the divine precepts, but more especially those who, by the transgressions above mentioned, violate the first table of the decalogue: for as those sins are committed more immediately against God, they are much more heinous than theft, adultery, murder, or any sins committed against our neighbour. Now under the general denomination of sins of the first table, every sect (were their verdicts to be severally taken) would comprehend almost all the distinguishing tenets of every other sect. And though, in support of their plea, they might have many specious things to advance, they would all be found to lean on a false hypothesis.

First, it is false, that the concerns of the soul and eternity fall under the cognizance and jurisdiction of the magistrate. To say that they do, is to blend the very different and hardly compatible characters of magistrate and pastor in the same person; or, which is worse, to graft the latter upon the former, the sure method of producing

ing a most absurd and cruel despotism, such as obtains in all Mahometan countries: nor is that much better which prevails more or less in popish countries, especially in the ecclesiastical state, and in Spain and Portugal, where the magistrate is grafted on the pastor, or rather on the priest.

Secondly, it is false, that spiritual concerns, if they did fall under the cognizance of the magistrate, are capable of being regulated by such expedients as are proper for restraining the injuries of violence and fraud, and preserving tranquillity and good order in society. Though, by coercion, crimes, which are outward and overt acts, may effectually be restrained, it is not by coercion that those inward effects can be produced, conviction in the understanding, or conversion in the heart. Now these in religion are all in all. By racks and gibbets, fire and faggot, we may as rationally propose to mend the sight of a man who squints, or is purblind, as by these means to enlighten the infidel's or the heretic's understanding, confute his errours, and bring him to the belief of what he disbelieved before. That by such methods he may be constrained to profess what he disbelieves still, nobody can deny, or even doubt. But to extort a hypocritical profession, is so far from being to promote the cause of God and religion, that nothing, by the ac-

knowledgment of men of all parties, can stand more directly in opposition to it. *Nihil est tam voluntarium quam religio,* says Lactantius, *in qua, si animus sacrificantis aversus est, jam sublata, jam nulla est.*

Thirdly, it is a false, though a very common notion, that errours concerning the divine nature and perfections ought to be denominated blasphemies, or considered as civil crimes. Blasphemy, in regard to God, corresponds to calumny in regard to man. The original name for both is the same. As the latter always implies what, in the language of the law, is called *malus animus,* a disposition to calumniate, so does the former. Mere mistake, in regard to character, especially when the mistake is not conceived by him who entertains it to derogate from the character, constitutes neither of those crimes. That no imputation, however, is commoner, can be ascribed solely to that malevolence, which bigotry and contention never fail to produce. Thus the arminian and the calvinist, the protestant and the papist, the jesuit and the jansenist, throw and retort on each other the unchristian reproach of blasphemy. Yet each is so far from intending to lessen, in the opinion of others, the honour of the divine majesty, that he is fully convinced that his own principles are better adapted to raise

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it than those of his antagonist, and for that very reason he is so strenuous in maintaining them. But to blacken, as much as possible, the designs of an antagonist, in order the more easily to bring odium on his opinions, is the too common, though detestable, resource of theological controvertists *.

I proceed to show the advances which, from time to time, were made, till that system of persecution which, in a great part of the world, still obtains, was brought to maturity and established. For ages after the opinion first took place among christians, that it was the magistrate's duty to restrain heretics by the infliction of civil penalties, they retained so much moderation, as not to think that the punishment could justly extend to death, or mutilation, or even to the effusion of blood. But now that the empire was become christian, there gradually arose in it diverse laws against this new crime *heresy*, which are still extant in the codes of Theodosian and Justinian, imposing on the delinquents fines, banishments, or confiscations, according to the circumstances, and supposed degree, of the delinquency. All that regarded the execution of those laws, the

* For the scripture import of blasphemy, and the nature of that crime, see "Preliminary Dissertations to a Version of the four Gospels," by the Author, vol. 1, p. 395, &c.

trial as well as the sentence, devolved on the magistrate. Only the nature of the crime, what was heresy or schism, was determined by the ecclesiastical judge. One step in an evil course naturally leads to another. The first step was made when civil penalties were denounced against particular opinions and modes of thinking. This may be considered as the first stage of the doctrine and practice of intolerance, in the christian church. Nor could any thing be more explicitly, or more universally, condemned than this had been, by the fathers of the first three centuries, and several of the fourth. *Humani juris et naturalis potestatis est*, said Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century, *unicuique quod putaverit colere*, and Hilary of Poitiers, in the fourth, in opposition to those who favoured the interposition of the magistrate. *Deus cognitionem sui docuit, potius quam exegit, et operationum cælestium admiratione, præceptis suis concilians auctoritatem coactam confitendi se aspernatus est voluntatem.* Again, *Deus universitatis est, obsequio non eget necessario, non requirit coactam confessionem; non fallendus est sed promerendus, simplicitate quærendus est, confessione discendus est, charitate amandus est*, timore venerandus est, *voluntatis probitate retinendus est. At vero quid istud, quod sacerdotes timere Deum vinculis coguntur, pœnis jubentur? Sacerdotes carceribus continentur?*

ncntur? Men's system of conduct may come, we see, to be totally reversed. But this is always the work of time. Every advance has its difficulty, and is made with hesitation. But one difficulty surmounted emboldens a man, and renders it easier for him to surmount another. That again makes way for the next, and so on till the change be total.

Several bishops and pastors, who had not yet been able to divest themselves of the more pure and harmless maxims of primitive times, or rather of their divine master, who totally reprobated all secular weapons in this warfare, thought, that after they had declared opinions heretical, and denied their communion to those who held them, they could not innocently intermeddle further, or give information to the magistrate, dreading that such a conduct would be irreconcileable to the great law of charity. Others more hardy, (for there will always be such differences among men) resolved, by any means, to silence such as they could not confute, and to compel those to dissemble, whom they despaired of convincing: the plain language of which conduct was, If we cannot make them better, we will make them worse,—If they will not be believers, they shall be hypocrites. And whoever will not be induced to be of what we account the family of God, we

shall be sure to render twofold more the children of the devil than they were before.

People of this stamp, possessed of a pride, (misnamed zeal) which cannot brook contradiction, were forward in giving information to the magistrate on those whom they called heretics, and in prompting him, where there appeared a remissness, to inflict the punishments which the imperial edicts had denounced. To such are these words of Hilary very pertinently addressed: *Misereri licet nostræ ætatis laborem, et præsentium temporum stultas opiniones congemiscere, quibus patrocinari Deo humana credunitur, et ad tuendam Christi ecclesiam ambitione seculari laboratur. Oro vos, episcopi, quibusnam suffragiis ad prædicandum evangelium apostoli usi sunt? Quibus adjuti potestatibus Christum prædicaverunt, gentasque fere omnes ex idolis ad Deum transtulerunt? Anne aliquam sibi assumebant e palatio dignitatem, hymnum Deo in carcere inter catenas et flagella cantantes? Edictisque regis Paulus Christo ecclesiam congregabat? Nerone se, credo, aut Vespasiano patrocinantibus, tuebatur, quorum in nos odiis confessio divinæ prædicationis effloruit? At nunc, proh dolor! divinam fidem suffragia terrena commendant inopsque virtutis suæ Christus, dum ambitio nomini suo conciliatur, arguitur. Terret exiliis et carceribus ecclesia, credique sibi cogit,*

cogit, quæ exiliis et carceribus credita est; pendet a dignatione communicantium, quæ persequentium est consecrata terrore; fugat sacerdotes, quæ fugatis est sacerdotibus propagata, diligi sese gloriatur a mundo, quæ Christi esse non potuit, nisi mundus eam odisset. Such were the sentiments of St. Hilary, for he has obtained a place in the calendar, which I take notice of the rather, that we may perceive, in the stronger light, the different temperaments which prevailed in the saints acknowledged by Rome, who belong to different ages. Light and darkness are not more opposite than the spirit of a St. Hilary, in the fourth century, and the spirit of a St. Dominic, the inventor of the inquisition, and the butcher of the Albigenses, in the thirteenth. But this by the way. I return to the early times.

It happened, not often at first, that on account of sedition, real or pretended, the person accused of heresy was punished capitally. This, if people were not satisfied of the reality of the sedition, rarely failed, for some ages, to raise against the informers, especially if pastors, much clamour and scandal. Our Lord's words, *I came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them,* had not yet totally lost their force among christians. The spirit of the master, and that of the servant, made too glaring a contrast to escape the notice of those who had any knowledge and reflection.

Indeed,

Indeed, for several ages, those ministers who thought themselves warranted to call in the secular arm, did not think themselves authorized to proceed so far, as to be aiding in what might affect either life or members. They therefore abstained not only from giving information where there was any danger of this kind, but from appearing at the secular tribunal in any capacity, unless that of intercessor in behalf of the accused. And this office was not in them, as it is in the clergy of some Romish countries at present, under a disguise of mercy, quite transparent, a downright insult upon misery. But a long tract of time was necessary before matters could be brought to this pass. St. Martin, in France, (another instance of humanity and moderation, even in those whom Rome now adores as saints) excommunicated a bishop in the fifth century, for accusing certain heretics to the usurper Maximus, by whose means he procured their death. That worthy minister declared, that he considered any man as a murderer, who was accessary to the death of another, for being unfortunate enough to be mistaken in his opinions. On this foot, however, things remained till the year 800. It belonged to councils and synods to determine what is heresy, but (except in what relates to church censures) the trial, as well as the punishment, of the heretic, was in the magistrate. Neither

ther was the punishment legally capital, unless when the heresy was accompanied with crimes against the state. That this pretence was often made without foundation, by men of an intolerant temper, there is little ground to doubt.

About this time happened what is called the great schism of the east, the breach betwixt the Greek and the Latin churches, since which time, till the destruction of the eastern empire by the Turks, the cause of heresy and schism remained in the Greek churches on the same footing as before. In the west, however, it has undergone immense alterations; insomuch, that the popular sentiments concerning zeal and charity have long stood in direct opposition to those which obtained, and rendered the christian character so completely amiable, as well as venerable, in the days of the martyrs. Indeed, for some centuries, particularly the eighth, ninth, and tenth, remarkable for nothing so much as the vilest superstition and grossest ignorance, and for insurrections, revolutions, and confusions, every where, heretics and sectaries made but little noise, and were as little minded. With the revival of knowledge, even in its dawn, these also revived. There is no human blessing without some foil. But considering the grossness of the reigning superstition, one might be

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at a loss to say, whether any new absurdity could be, comparatively, pronounced an evil. Whatever served to rouse men out of their lethargy, seemed to promise good in its consequences.

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LECTURE XXVI.

AFTER the year 1100, in consequence of the perpetual jars which had been betwixt the popes and emperors for more than fifty years back, and which still subsisted, and in consequence of the frequent wars and scandals in the christian world, and the irreligious lives of the clergy, innumerable heretics sprang up, whose heresies (as they are called) were commonly levelled against ecclesiastical authority, the abuse of which was, indeed, so excessive, and so flagrant, as to give but too much weight with every body, to the severest reproaches that could be uttered. All attacks upon received doctrines must ultimately affect the power by which they are established. But when the assault is made directly on that power, the fabric of church authority is in the most imminent danger. The aim of the former is only to make a breach in the wall of the edifice, but that of the latter is an attempt to sap the foundation. As we have seen all along that the darling object of Rome

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is power, to which every other consideration is made to yield, we may believe that attempts of this kind would excite a more than ordinary resentment. This, in fact, was the consequence: an unusual degree of rancour in the ecclesiastics, more especially in the pontiff and his minions, mingled itself with their bigotry or mistaken zeal, (for it would be unjust to impute the effect to either cause separately) and produced the many bloody, and, till then, unexampled scenes of cruelty, which ensued. The popes, by letter, frequently excited the bishops as well as princes, the bishops instigated the magistrates, by all possible means, to subdue or exterminate the enemies of the church. When the number of these enemies was so great, that it was impossible to attain this end by means of judicatories, civil or ecclesiastical, princes were enjoined, on pain of excommunication, interdict, deprivation, &c., to make war upon them, and extirpate them by fire and sword. And in order to allure, by rewards, as well as terrify by punishments, the same indulgences and privileges were bestowed on them who engaged in those holy battles, and with equal reason, as had been bestowed on the crusaders, who fought for the recovery of the holy sepulchre against the Saracens in the east.

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It was not till the year 1200 that the names *inquisition* into heresy, and *inquisitor*, were heard of. The bishops and their vicars being, in the pope's apprehension, neither so fit nor so diligent as he desired and thought necessary in such a cause, there were, at that time, opportunely for his purpose, two new orders of regulars instituted, those of St. Dominic, and those of St. Francis, both zealously devoted to the church, and men with whom the advancement of christianity, and the exaltation of the pontifical power, were terms perfectly synonymous. To St. Dominic, indeed, the honour of first suggesting the erection of this extraordinary court, the inquisition, is commonly ascribed. It was not, however, in the beginning, on the same footing on which it has been settled since, and still continues. The first inquisitors were vested with a double capacity, not very happily conjoined in the same persons; one was, that of preachers, to convince the heretics by argument; the other, that of persecutors, to instigate magistrates, without intermission, to employ every possible method of extirpating the contumacious, that is, all such as were unreasonable enough not to be convinced by the profound reasonings of those merciless fanatics and wretched sophisters. I may add a third, that of being spies for Rome, on the bishops, on the secular powers, and on the

the people, both Romish and heretical. They had it in charge to make strict inquiry, and report to his holiness the number and quality of the heretics, the zeal discovered in those called catholics, the diligence of the bishops, and the forwardness or backwardness which they found in the secular powers, to comply with the desires of the pope. It was from this part of their charge in particular, that they were denominated inquisitors. They had, however, no tribunals. Only they stirred up judges to banish, or otherwise chastise those heretics, whom they brought before them. Sometimes they excited potentates to arm their subjects against them; at other times they addressed themselves to the mob, and inflamed the populace whom they headed, to arm themselves, and join together in extirpating them. For this purpose they put a cross of cloth upon the garments of those, who were willing to devote themselves to this service, and titled them crusaders. This badge (for a badge in such cases is of great consequence, it matters little what it be, whether a red cross, or a blue cockade) operated like a charm on those holy idiots, (pardon the misapplication of the epithet *holy* in conformity to the style of the barbarians spoken of) and gave the finishing stroke to their delusion. If they were inflamed before, they now became infuriate, and raised to a super-

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celestial sort of virtue, which defies all the humbler restraints of reason and humanity. In this way things continued till the year 1250, that is, for half a century.

The attempts of the fathers inquisitors during that period, were greatly aided by the emperor Frederic the second, who, in the year 1224, being in Padua, had promulged four edicts in relation to this matter, taking the inquisitors under his protection, imposing on obstinate heretics the punishment of fire, and perpetual imprisonment on the penitent, committing the cognizance of the crime to the ecclesiastical, and the condemnation of the criminal to the secular judges. This was the first law which made heresy capital. This, however, at first, by reason of the circumstances of the times, and the differences which soon arose betwixt the pope and the emperor, had not all the effect that might have been expected from it. However, it proved very pernicious in example, in denouncing against heresy the punishment of death, to which, before that time, it had never been by law subjected. The example was, besides, of a most cruel death; which, nevertheless, came gradually to be adopted, almost universally, into the laws of other countries.

After the death of Frederic, which happened about the middle of the century, pope Innocent

the fourth remaining, as it were, sole arbiter of affairs in Lombardy, and some other parts of Italy, applied his mind to the extirpation of heresies, which, during the late troubles in the state, had increased exceedingly. And, considering the labour which had hitherto been employed in this service, by the Franciscan friars, as well as the Dominican, whose zeal and diligence, unrestrained by either the respect of persons, or the fear of dangers, by any regards to justice, or feelings of humanity, recommended them highly to the pontiff; he judged it the surest remedy, to avail himself of their ardour and abilities, not as formerly, in preaching, or even enlisting crusaders, and inflicting military execution, but by erecting them into a standing tribunal, with very extensive authority, and no other charge than that of the expurgation of heretical pravity.

There were two objections against this expedient. One was, that this judicatory appeared an incroachment on the jurisdiction of the ordinary, or bishop of the place; the other was, that it was unprecedented, that the secular magistrate, to whom the punishment of heretics was committed, should be excluded from the trial and judgment. All the imperial laws hitherto, even the last severe law of Frederic, and the municipal statutes of every country, had

had put the cognizance of the fact, and the trial of the accused, though not the description of the crime, into the hands of the magistrate. For removing the first difficulty, the pope devised this temperament: he made the tribunal consist of the inquisitor, and the bishop of the place; wherein, however, the inquisitor was not only to be principal, but, in effect, every thing, the bishop having little more than the name of a judge. For removing the second, and in order to give some appearance of authority to the secular powers, they were allowed to appoint the officers to the inquisition, but still with the approbation of the inquisitors, and to send with the inquisitor, when he should go into the country, one of their assessors, whom the inquisitors should chuse. A third part of the confiscations was to go to the community, in return for which the community was to be at all the expence of keeping the prisons, supporting the prisoners, &c. These things made the magistrate, in appearance, co-ordinate with the inquisitor, but, in reality, his servant. The infliction of the legal punishment was also in the magistrate, after the heretic had been tried and condemned by the inquisitors. But this was so much a thing of course, and which he well knew he could not avoid executing, without incurring the vengeance of the church, that in this he

was, in fact, no better than the spiritual judge's executioner. His office was, in no respect, magisterial, it was merely servile.

On this footing the inquisition was erected in the year 1251, in those provinces in Italy most under the pope's eye, Romania, Lombardy, Marca Trevigiana, and entrusted to Dominican friars. Afterwards it was extended to more distant provinces. Thirty-one rules, or articles, defining the powers and jurisdiction, and regulating the procedure of this new judicatory, were devised; and all rulers and magistrates were commanded, by a bull issued for the purpose, to give, under pain of excommunication and interdicts, punctual obedience, and every possible assistance to this holy court. The inquisitors were empowered to fulminate against the refractory.

Afterwards, in the year 1484, king Ferdinand the catholic, having put a period to the reign of the Mahometans in Granada, did, to purge his own, and his consort Elizabeth's dominions, from both Moors and Jews, erect, with consent of pope Sextus the fourth, a tribunal of inquisition in all the kingdoms possessed by him, which took cognizance not only of judaism and mahometism, but also of heresy and witchcraft. The form of the judicatory then introduced, and still remaining there is, that the king nomi-

nates an ecclesiastic to be general inquisitor for all his dominions, and his holiness confirms him, if he approve the choice; for he may reject him if he please. The inquisitor named by the king, and confirmed by the pontiff, names the particular inquisitors destined for every place, who, before entering on their office, must obtain the royal approbation. The king, besides, deputes a council, or senate, over this business, who sit where the court resides, and of which the inquisitor general is president. This council has supreme jurisdiction, makes new regulations when it sees occasion, determines differences between particular inquisitors, punishes the faults of their officers, and receives appeals. From Spain it extended to its dependencies, and was introduced into Sicily, Sardinia, and the Indies.

Attempts, however, of this kind, have not proved equally successful in all Roman Catholic states, or even the greater part of them. It was never in the power of the pope to obtain the establishment of this tribunal in many of the most populous countries in subjection to the see of Rome. In some it was introduced, and soon after expelled, in such a manner as effectually to preclude a renewal of the attempt. The difficulties arose from two causes: one was, the conduct of the inquisitors, and their immoderate severity, as well as their unbounded extortion

and avarice, to which I may add, the propensity they showed, on every occasion, to extend, beyond measure, their own authority; insomuch, that they were proceeding to engross, on one pretext or other, all the criminal jurisdiction of the magistrate. Under heresy, they insisted that *infidelity*, *blasphemy*, *perjury*, *sorcery*, *poisoning*, *bigamy*, *usury*, were comprehended. The other cause was, that the tribunal was found to be so burdensome, that the community refused to be at the expence. In several places it was found necessary to ease the public of this charge; and in order to abate somewhat of the excessive rigour, which had raised so much clamour against it, a greater share of the power was given to the bishop. These things served to facilitate its introduction into Tuscany and Arragon, and even into some cities of France; but in this last country it was not long permitted to remain.

It is not intirely on the same footing in the different places where it has been received. In Spain and Portugal this scourge and disgrace of humanity glares, monster like, with its most frightful aspect. In Rome it is much more tolerable. Papal avarice has served to counterbalance papal tyranny, and, in defect of a better principle, produced what, if it do not deserve the name, has some of the good consequences of moderation. The wealth of modern Rome arises

arises very much from the constant resort of strangers of all countries and denominations, and, for the most part, of the higher ranks. Nothing would prove a more effectual check to that resort, and, consequently, to the unceasing influx of riches into that capital, than such a horrid tribunal as those which, from Lisbon and Madrid, diffuse a terrour which is felt in the utmost confines of those miserable kingdoms. In Venice it is, indeed, as moderate as it is possible for a judicatory to be, which is founded on a principle not more false than tyrannical, that men are responsible for their opinions to any human tribunal. But the particular constitution of that court was settled by an express stipulation between the pontiff and the state. The Venetian senate would not admit an inquisition into their dominions on any other terms, than such as secured at least some regard to justice and humanity in their proceedings, and prevented them from extending their jurisdiction beyond the original limits, or arriving at an independency on the secular powers. With so much caution and jealousy did that wise aristocracy guard against the incroachment of the church.

It is no more than doing justice to many Roman Catholic states to acknowledge, that they are almost as much enemies to that infernal

tribunal, as even protestants themselves. Nor can I in this be justly accused of advancing any thing rashly, the tumults which the attempts to introduce it into some parts of Italy, Milan and Naples in particular, and afterwards into France, and other countries called catholic, and its actual expulsion from some places, when, to appearance, settled, are the strongest evidences of the general sentiments of the people concerning it. It is only to be regretted, that those who, in this matter, think as we do, should be inconsistent enough to imagine, that a despotism, which required for its support such diabolical engines, could, with any propriety, be said to come from God. But so far have those called christians departed from the simplicity that is in Christ, that they will admit any rule for judging of the title of prophets, or teachers, in divine things, rather than the rule given by him whom they call Master. *By their fruits shall ye know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* No test of a divine mission, if Jesus Christ may be credited, is of any significance without this.

It may not be improper to conclude our account of the origin of the inquisition, with a few things in illustration of the spirit in which it proceeds, that every one may have it in his power to judge, whether the relation it bears to

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the spirit of Christ be denominated more properly resemblance, or contrariety. It is so far from following the rules of almost all other tribunals, where any regard is shown to equity, or the rights of human nature, that, in every respect, where the ecclesiastic power has not been checked by the secular, those rules have been reversed. The account is intirely just, as far as it goes, which is given by Voltaire of the Spanish inquisition, and he might have added, of the Portuguese, for both are on the same model. "Their form of proceeding is an infallible way "to destroy whomsoever the inquisitors please." And let it be observed, that they have strong motives for destroying a rich culprit, as their sentence of condemnation is followed by the confiscation of all his estate, real and personal, of which two-thirds go to the church, and one-third to the state; so that it may be said, with the strictest propriety, that the judges themselves are parties, having a personal interest in the issue against the prisoner. "The prisoners are "not confronted with the accuser or informer." Nay, they are not so much as told who it is that informs. His name is kept secret to encourage the trade of informing. And, surely, a better expedient could not have been devised for promoting this dark business, than by thus securing at once concealment and gratification, with im-

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punity, to private malice, envy, and revenge. Further, "there is no informer, or witness, who "is not listened to. A public convict, a noto-"rious malefactor, an infamous person, a com-"mon prostitute, a child, are in the holy office, "though no where else, creditable accusers and "witnesses. Even the son may depose against "his father, the wife against her husband." The detection of the grossest prevarication in the delator and witnesses is hardly ever punished, unless with a very gentle rebuke; let it be observed, by the way, that to the profligate and abandoned they can be very gentle, for they dread, above all things, to do aught that might discourage informers, spies, and witnesses. And that there may be no risk of a want of information, they have, in all parts of the kingdom, spies of all different qualities, who are denominated the familiars of the holy office, a place of which even men of high rank are sometimes ambitious, from different motives, some for the greater personal security, others because it empowers them to take a severe revenge on their enemies, and others, no doubt, because they think they do God good service. The wretched prisoner is no more made acquainted with his crime than with his accuser. His being told the one, might possibly lead him to guess the other. To avoid this, he is compelled, by tedious confinement,

finement, in a noisome dungeon, where he never sees a face but the jailor's, and is not permitted the use either of books, or of pen and ink, or, when confinement does not succeed, he is compelled, by a train of the most excruciating tortures, "to inform against himself; to divine "and to confess the crime laid to his charge, of "which often he is ignorant." An effectual method to bring nine-tenths of mankind to confess any thing, true or false, which may gratify their tormentors, and put an end to their misery. "This procedure," adds our historian, "unheard of till the institution of this court, "makes the whole kingdom tremble. Suspicion "reigns in every breast. Friendship and openness are at an end. The brother dreads his "brother, the father his son. Hence taciturnity "is become the characteristic of a nation endued with all the vivacity natural to the inhabitants of a warm and fruitful climate. To "this tribunal we must likewise impute that "profound ignorance of sound philosophy, in "which Spain lies buried, whilst Germany, "England, France, and even Italy, have discovered so many truths, and enlarged the sphere "of our knowledge. Never is human nature "so debased, as where ignorance is armed with "power."

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In regard to the extent of power given to inquisitors by papal bulls, and generally admitted by the secular authority in those countries where the inquisition is established, I shall give the few following instances out of many that might be produced. First, it is ordered, that the convicts be burnt alive, and in public; and that all they have be confiscated: all princes and rulers who refuse their concurrence in executing these and the other sentences authorized by the church, shall be brought under censure, that is, anathematized and excommunicated, their states or kingdoms laid under an interdict, &c. The house also, in which the heretic is apprehended, must be razed to the ground, even though it be not his, but the property of a person totally unsuspected. This ferocious kind of barbarity, so utterly irreconcilable to all the principles of equity, is, nevertheless, extremely politic, as it is a powerful means of raising horrour in the ignorant populace, and of increasing the awe of this tribunal in men of all denominations, who must consider it as extremely dangerous to have the smallest connection with any person suspected of heresy, or so much as to admit him into their houses. The inquisitors are also empowered to demand of any person whom they suspect, (and, for their suspicions, they are not obliged to give a reason) that he solemnly adjure heretical opinions,

nions, and even give pecuniary security that he shall continue a good catholic. The court of inquisition are also privileged to have their own guards, and are authorized to give licences to others to carry arms, and to enlist crusaders. One of Paul the IVth's bulls does not allow a reprieve from the sentence to one who, on the first conviction, recants his opinion, if the heresy be in any of the five articles mentioned in that bull. But what is, if possible, still more intolerable, is that, by a bull of Pius the Vth, no sentence in favour of the accused shall be held a final acquittal, though pronounced after canonical purgation; but the holy office shall have it in their power, though no new evidence or presumption has appeared, to recommence the trial, on the very same grounds they had examined formerly. This ordinance ensures to the wretch, who has been once accused, a course of terrour and torment for life, from which no discovery of innocence, though clear as day, no judgment of the court can release him. Another bull of the same pontiff ordains, that whoever shall behave injuriously, or so much as threaten a notary, or other servant of the inquisition, or a witness examined in the court, shall, beside excommunication, be held guilty of high treason, be punished capitally, his goods confiscated, his children rendered infamous, and incapable

capable of succeeding to any body by testament. Every one is subjected to the same punishment, who makes an escape out of the prison of the office, or who attempts, though unsuccessfully, to make it; and whoever favours or intercedes for any such. In these clauses, persons of the highest rank, even princes, are comprehended.

Every one must be sensible, that there is something in the constitution of this tribunal so monstrously unjust, so exorbitantly cruel, that it is matter of astonishment, that in any country, the people, as well as the secular powers, would not rather have encountered any danger, than have submitted to receive it. Nor can there be a stronger evidence of the brutish ignorance, as well as gross depravity of any nation, than that such a judicatory has an establishment among them. The exorbitance of their power, as well as the pernicious tendency of their rules, are, in effect, acknowledged by their superiours at Rome. In a directory printed there, by authority, in 1584, it is said expressly, that if the inquisitors were resolved to exercise their power in its utmost extent, they could, with facility, drive the whole people into rebellion. Now if the power be so excessive and so hazardous, what shall we say to this additional circumstance that attends it, that it is, in several instances, so ill defined, as to furnish a pretext

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to him who is possessed of it, whenever his ambition or inclination leads him, of stretching it to any extent. This, indeed, may be said to be consequent on all exorbitant power. Though all the power of a state or nation be not formally given to one particular branch or member, if so much is given to it, that what remains is too weak to serve as a control upon it, the whole is virtually given to it. And if, in Spain and Portugal, the ecclesiastical power has not swallowed up the secular, and thereby engrossed the whole authority, they are more indebted to the light which has been diffused through the rest of Europe, in these latter centuries, and the jealousy of the other European states, than to any remains of either sense or virtue in those nations themselves. It must be attended to, that the ecclesiastic power, in every country, which acknowledges the pope, is but a branch of a foreign jurisdiction, namely, that of Rome. Now it is the interest of the secular powers, in every kingdom and state, to take care that the foreign power, the papal, (absurdly called *the spiritual*) do not quite overwhelm the temporal, either among themselves, or in any other kingdom or state. For if it should in any country, there would be ground to dread, that with such acquisitions it might gradually prove an overmatch for the civil powers in every other. Now

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this is a danger to which popish countries are much more exposed than protestant. In the former, Rome is already possessed of a considerable share of jurisdiction, and has great influence on the minds of the people; whereas, in the latter, she has neither jurisdiction nor influence; and, consequently, could have no hold for effecting a revolution in her favour. With these she could do nothing but by invasion and conquest, for which, with all her advantages, she is very ill furnished. That Spain and Portugal, therefore, as civil powers, are of any weight in the balance of Europe, they owe more to the discernment, the vigilance, and the virtue of others, than to their own.

From what has been said, we may remark by the way, the injustice there is in so connecting, or associating the Romish religion with the inquisition, as to conclude, that to be a Romanist, and to be a friend to that tribunal, denote one and the same thing. The case is so far otherwise, that we are, on the best grounds, warranted to affirm, that nine-tenths of that communion detest the inquisition as much as we do. And of this the most irrefragable evidences have been given in France, in Germany, and even in Italy itself. How they should have the inconsistency, notwithstanding this, to acknowledge a power as from God, which has found it necessary to recur

recur to expedients so manifestly from hell, so subversive of every principle of sound morality and religion, can be regarded only as one of those contradictions, for which human characters, both in individuals and in nations, are often so remarkable. That the policy of Rome bears the marks not of the wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; but of that which flows from a very different source, and is earthly, sensual, devilish, is so manifest, that the person who needs to be convinced of it, seems to be beyond the power of argument and reason.

Upon the whole, how amazingly different, nay, how perfectly opposite in disposition, in maxims, and in effects, are the spirit of primitive christianity, and the spirit of modern Rome? Let any considerate and ingenuous mind impartially examine and say, Are heaven and hell, Christ and Belial, more adverse than the pictures I have, in this discourse, and the preceding, exhibited to your view? Let it be observed also, that these are not caricatures drawn by enemies, but the genuine features, as exhibited in the works of their own authors.

LECTURE XXVII.

I HAVE now given you some account of the rise and progress of the spirit of persecution in the church, and have particularly traced the origin, and unfolded the constitution of that dreadful tribunal, the inquisition. Ye must have perceived, that in every thing which relates to the procedure of that court, there is an unrelenting barbarity, which bids defiance to all the principles of justice; and as, in all respects, it is without example in past ages, so I hope it will remain without a parallel in future. The favourers of ecclesiastic tyranny, sensible of the horrid appearance which the rapacity, as well as the ferocity of this tribunal exhibits, and the very unfavourable conclusion it suggests to the discerning, have put their ingenuity to the rack to devise reasons, or what may pass with their votaries for reasons, in support of it.

According to Fra Paolo, in his account of the inquisition of Venice, amongst other peculiarities of the holy office in that state, which were, I may say,

say, extorted by the secular from the ecclesiastic power, one is, that they do not admit the confiscation of the property of the accused, whether he be present and convicted, or declared contumacious, and condemned in absence; but appoint that his estate, both real and personal, shall go to his lawful heirs, as though he had died a natural death. He says, very justly, in vindication of this article, that it is always pernicious, to mingle pecuniary matters with what concerns religion, which ought to proceed solely from a view to the glory of God. For when men see, that the zeal of the judges, in consigning heretics to the flames, is the sure means of procuring great acquisitions of worldly pelf, it will be impossible to prevent their being scandalized, or to persuade them, however true, that the service of God was the sole, or even the primary motive. He adds, the court of Rome never ceases, on every occurrence, to blame this Venetian ordinance, reckoning, that the moderation enjoined by the most serene republic reproaches the Roman ordinance with excessive severity. That, says he, which their partizans maintain in public in defence of their own practice is, that heresy is treason against the divine Majesty, which it is proper to avenge more severely than treason committed against a human creature; and that therefore it is a perversion of

order, when he who offends man receives a greater punishment, than he who offends God. Now treason against man is punished with the confiscation of goods, much more then ought treason against God, a crime always incurred by heresy, to be so punished.

I shall give you this author's answer, rendered literally from his own words, in a work written in Italian, published at Venice, a Roman Catholic state, and composed by order of the Doge, the chief magistrate of the republic, to whom it is dedicated. And I desire you further to take notice, that the author is not only a Roman Catholic, but a priest, nay, a friar. When this is considered, you will be surprized much more at what he controverts with the advocates of papal despotism, than at what he yields to them. "This argument," says he, "more specious "than solid, is as a shadow without a body. "For it would condemn their own constitutions, "which pardon heresy the first time, upon "being recanted; whereas treason against the "sovereign is not, on any terms, pardoned even "the first time; whence it would follow, that "by their own reasoning, they make less ac-"count of offending God than of offending "man. But the truth is, that in imposing "punishments, respect is had not solely to the "heinousness of the transgression, but to the

"attendant

"attendant circumstances of the injury done "to others, of the baseness wherewith the "action was accompanied, or of the malignity "of disposition shown by it. Royal majesty is "not injured, unless through the evident malice "and intention of the offender, whereas heresy "is commonly the effect of ignorance. Hence "this almost always merits compassion, that "never. Penalties are intended more for an "example to others, than for the chastisement "of the delinquent. The confiscation of goods "for treason terrifies others, who are restrained, "through love to their offspring, preferring "their interest to the gratification of those pas-"sions, which instigate them against the prince. "But in the case of heresy, every one conceives "himself incited by spiritual motives, to which "all regards to family ought to be postponed. "The event demonstrates, that through divine "grace, this most happy state of Venice, whose "clemency gives great and universal satisfac-"tion, remains as free from the tares of heresy, "without pillaging any man, as other states "where this pillage is made with the utmost "rigour. Wherefore, without regard to the "rules, examples, or reflections of others, it is "proper for us to preserve those usages, of "whose utility we are ascertained by experi-"ence."

Thus far our author. He admits the argument used by Rome to be specious. And so it is, doubtless, to a Roman Catholic. It falls in with his earliest and most rooted prejudices, and suits the mode of reasoning, to which he has been habituated from his infancy. To a judicious and consistent protestant, it is a palpable sophism, and has as little speciousness as solidity. It is, in effect, the same argument, of which I showed the futility in a former discourse, with only the change of the term. There the misapplication was of the word *blasphemy*; here it is of the word *treason*. The abuse of the term is, in this instance, if possible, still more flagrant than in the other. In *treason* there is always a malicious design against the life or crown of the sovereign; there is nothing analogous to this in what they call *heresy*. On the contrary, the principal inducement with the alleged heretic, to bear his suffering patiently, is an opinion (which, whether true or false, is genuinely his opinion) that he thereby honours God, does his duty, and discharges his conscience. What they call *obstinacy*, he cannot avoid considering as *perseverance* and christian *fortitude*, both of which are incumbent, and very important duties. A retractation not produced by conviction, but extorted by terrour, for himself and his children, he does and must

consider, as a real defection from God, a betraying of the rights of conscience and of the interests of truth, as the vilest hypocrisy and impiety. Nay, it cannot be considered otherwise even by his tormentors themselves, who are always ready to acknowledge the guilt of a false confession, (to which they are doing their utmost to bring the prisoner). At the same time, I acknowledge, that there is a sort of treason in heresy; but it is not treason against God, nor is it treason against the state, but it is treason against the priesthood; for whatever calls its infallibity in question, as an avowed difference in religious opinions undoubtedly does, is an attack upon the hierarchy, and, consequently, subversive of the more than royal pretensions of church authority. This is the true source of that rancour and virulence, with which this imaginary crime has been persecuted by popes and ecclesiastics, and by none more than by those, whose whole lives bore witness, that they regarded no more the principles than the precepts of that religion, for which they seemed to be inflamed with a zeal so violent.

I shall only add on this subject, that if there were no other article, (as there are more than fifty) we should have here sufficient ground for confuting those bold pretensions to constancy and uniformity in religious sentiments, in what

is called the catholic church, with which the bishop of Meaux introduces his history of the variations of protestants *. Opinions, on the subject I have been treating, more opposite to those held universally by christians of the first three centuries, than those openly avowed by the Romish church in latter ages, and strenuously supported by her rulers, it would be impossible to conceive. But of this I have given sufficient evidence in the two preceding discourses. The difference is, indeed, great in this respect, between romanists of the two last ages and christians of the fourth and fifth; but in these there cannot be said to be a direct contrariety. Changes of this kind are always gradual. In regard to the present century, there are some evident symptoms, that even in Roman Catholic countries, the tide of opinion on these articles begins to turn, and that their notions are becoming daily more favourable to right reason, justice, and humanity. Every sincere protestant will rejoice in the change. But how much, on the other hand, will it prove to such a subject of heart-felt sorrow, when he sees, in any protestant nation, (as sometimes undeniably happens, and of which we had some terrible examples in this very island, no farther back than the

* See the preface to that work.

years

years seventeen hundred and seventy-nine, and eighty) a strong propensity to those very principles, which are the surest badge of spiritual tyranny, and have long remained the distinguishing disgrace of Roman usurpation.

I have now illustrated, with as much brevity as the subject would admit, Rome's three great engines for promoting catholic ignorance, and preventing every acquisition in knowledge which might prove subversive of her high pretensions; first, the concealment of scripture from the people, and even of the import of the forms of public worship, by the daily use of a dead language; secondly, the prohibition, under the severest penalties, of every thing which might serve to enlighten and undeceive the world; and thirdly, their system of persecution. The first two were chiefly calculated for preventing all intercourse with that most formidable enemy of superstition, knowledge; the third intended principally for checking its progress wherever it appears to have made any advances; and that both by silencing all who had ventured to listen to her dictates; and, by deterring others from the imitation of those over-curious enquirers, who are not satisfied to see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears, but would have more light and information on the most interesting of all subjects,

jects, than their ghostly fathers think their organs capable of bearing.

The second expedient, however, is of a later date than the other two; for, though there were prohibitions of books some centuries before the reformation, they were very general, and related only to the books of those, who had been by the church declared heretics. It was not till after the invention of printing, nay, and after the reformation, that the *indices expurgatorii* were devised. These have improved this engine, by giving it all the perfection whereof it is susceptible. If they had timely thought of smothering the art of printing in its infancy, which was about the middle of the fifteenth century, I believe this preventive device, as it was simpler, would have been more easily executed, and more effectual, than that corrective expedient of the *index*, which was adopted afterwards. *Simpler*, because preventive, doing the business at once; whereas, the corrective method stands incessantly in need of additions made to it, on account of the many volumes which are annually, in all parts of Europe, issuing from the press; and which, from the easy intercourse that now obtains between different, and even distant, nations, are quickly circulated through the whole. It might also have been more easily executed; for, though there

there were many of those called heretics then scattered through the world, they were not persons of any rank or influence, nor was there, at that time, any nation in the west, which had separated from Rome. And though, as was before observed to you, every state had not admitted the inquisition, the paramount authority of Rome, in spirituals, was acknowledged, and in matters that seemed to regard solely the purity of the faith, very implicitly submitted to by all.

Nay, the ignorance and most absurd prejudices of the age might have been of great service to the ecclesiastics in securing success to the preventive remedy, if it had but occurred to their reverences, and been attempted in time. There was then not only a strong, and, I may say, an universal belief in sorcery, and judicial astrology, but the first specimens that were exhibited of the typographical art were, in fact, strongly suspected to be derived from the suggestion of evil spirits. And this itself proved the foundation of a great deal of trouble and persecution to John Faust, the inventor, (whom some of you perhaps will know better by the name of Doctor Faustus.) Nor did his acquittal by the parliament of Paris, when prosecuted before them for magic, remove the suspicions, which the people had entertained concerning him; insomuch, that there was no defect of combustible materials for the ecclesiastic

thunders

thunders to set on fire, if the matter had been timely attended to. But Mentz, the city where printing was first attempted, lay luckily at a great distance from Rome; in consequence of which, this admirable invention had advanced too far, was grown too considerable, and had gotten too many rich, and great, and learned patrons, to support it, before an alarm of sufficient force to destroy it could be given; whereas, had the attempt at printing been first made in the heart of Italy, where that terrible Argus, the pope and conclave, is ever on the watch, or in Spain, or Portugal, under the eye of a vigilant and able inquisitor, capable of foreseeing the consequences to the empire of ignorance and superstition, there is reason to believe, that the inventor, though in effect a greater benefactor to the human race, than all the conquerors and heroes that ever existed, one who has done more to enlighten and civilize mankind than even the wisest legislators, had, in reward of his ingenuity, been put to an ignominious and tormenting death, his name branded with indelible infamy, and this most useful and beautiful invention had been stifled in the cradle, and never more heard of. If this had been accomplished, no body can doubt, that it would have been a much more effectual method than the index for answering their purpose; for that would have struck at the root of the

evil,

evil, whereof this serves only to lop off the branches.

But it pleased providence to bless with success the noble discovery, which has brought learning, formerly inaccessible to all but men of princely fortunes, within the reach of persons in moderate circumstances, and has diffused, almost every where, a knowledge which has proved more baneful to the cause of superstition and tyranny, than any event that has happened since the first promulgation of the gospel. Knowledge had, indeed, been gaining ground for some centuries before, but its progress was slow. This served to accelerate its progress to an inconceivable degree. Light, acquired by one, was quickly diffused every where, and communicated to multitudes. Nor was it only by a wider diffusion, but by occasioning also an immense increase of knowledge, that the discovery of the typographic art proved the source of the changes, which were soon after effected. When, by the remarkable facility of communication, learning was brought within the reach of the middle ranks, the dead languages became a very general study. The scriptures were read by most students in the Latin vulgate, and, by a few deeper scholars, in the Greek. The early writers of the church were also read. Reading naturally brought reflection, and occasioned comparison. They could hardly avoid

avoid comparing the simplicity, and poverty, and meanness, in respect of worldly circumstances, of our Lord, and his apostles, and most of the primitive saints and martyrs, with the pomp, and splendour, and opulence, of the rulers of the church in their own days. It is said, that a picture which Huss had procured, and exhibited to the people, wherein the entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, riding on an ass, attended by his disciples on foot, in a very homely garb, was contrasted by a procession of the pope and cardinals, in their pontifical habits, and magnificently mounted on the finest horses, richly caparisoned, and adorned with gold and silver and jewels, did not a little contribute to excite the indignation of spectators against their spiritual lords, as bearing no resemblance to those meek, humble, and unassuming men, from whom they pretended to derive all their high powers and prerogatives.

But the difference, in respect of wealth and worldly grandeur between the predecessors and their pretended successors, would not have had a great effect, had this been the only difference. It was but too evident, that the disparity was not less in disposition and character than in external circumstances. When once the clergy of any note had gotten considerably above the middling ranks of life, and lived not only in ease, but in

opulence,

opulence, and even in splendour, it was but too visible, that, in proportion as they became more rich and powerful, they grew less active and useful. They lived in luxury and idleness, often in the most gross and scandalous vices. As to what were properly the duties of their charge, the instruction of the people, and presiding in the public worship, and sacred offices among them, these were but too commonly considered as a sort of drudgery, very unsuitable to men of their dignity and figure, and were therefore either totally neglected, or devolved on those whose poverty, however ill qualified they were, might induce them, for a living, to undertake the task. At the same time, whatever could be considered as a prerogative, or privilege of the office, whatever could contribute to the augmentation of their riches, or of their power, was contended for with such an earnestness and zeal, as the apostles and primitive martyrs never displayed, unless in support of the faith and religious institution once delivered by their master unto the saints.

Thus every thing had run into extremes among them. The dignified clergy, as they were both wealthy and powerful, were generally lazy, proud, ambitious, envious, vindictive, and sometimes profligate. Those again, on whom the burden of the service was devolved, as they were both needy and dependent, and often ignorant, had a

share of the vices, which commonly accompany those circumstances. They were false, mercenary, and servile. How much men were confirmed in the very worst opinions, which had been formed of the order, by the great schism in the papacy, which lasted about half a century, when the christian world was divided between two, at first, and afterwards three, rival popes, some nations adhering to one, and others to another, each claiming to be the only true head of the church, and calling every other an usurper, it would be superfluous to remark. It was this division in the popedom, both in the head, and in the members, which, as much as any thing, exposed, in the strongest light, the irreligion, the worldly ends, the vile intrigues, and even the infamy, of ecclesiastic leaders. I would not, however, be understood, in the character now given, as meaning to include all without exception. I know that, even in the worst times, there were both in the higher and in the lower ranks of clergymen, exceptions of persons, whose characters were irreproachable, and lives exemplary. But what I say regards the generality, or the much greater number, of the clerical body. And for the truth of it, I desire no other vouchers, than their own most celebrated historians and writers, men who not only lived and died in the communion of Rome, but also were zealous for

preserving

preserving her unity, and advancing her honour. It will readily be admitted, as a circumstance of additional weight, that the different kingdoms and states of Europe had, at length, attained a better defined and more settled constitution than formerly; that statesmen had begun to entertain more extensive views of policy, and princes to understand better their own rights and interests. As men's eyes were opened, they saw more clearly the encroachments and usurpations of the priesthood. This discovery, co-operating with the abhorrence and contempt they entertained of many of the priests themselves on personal accounts, namely, the neglect or prostitution of the sacred functions, and the dissoluteness of their lives, led them to enquire a little into the foundations of the high powers and privileges which they claimed. This was a subject, that would not bear examination. As the great foundations of the hierarchy were in the people's ignorance, superstition, and credulity, when these are removed, the whole fabric falls to pieces.

Now it is remarkable, that in all the heresies which sprang up in the different parts of Europe, since the revival of letters, church power seems to have been the principal object struck at. Whereas, in ancient times, it was only incidentally affected. This will appear manifest to one who considers the accusations brought against

Waldo, of Lions, or at least his followers, Wicliff of England, Huss of Bohemia, Luther of Germany, and Zuinglius of Switzerland; and compares them with those brought against the heresiarchs of the primitive ages, such as Arius, Pelagius, Nestorius, Eutychius, in none of whom was there any direct or pointed aim against ecclesiastics. In those early times, indeed, church power, far from being grown up to such an enormous pitch as it arrived at afterwards, was but in its nonage; nor were churchmen themselves become obnoxious to universal odium, by their laziness and arrogance, as well as by the immorality of their lives. This difference of circumstances gave a taint to the modern sects, which plainly distinguished them from the ancient, and contributed not a little to the virulence, which their disputes excited in their adversaries. The wounds given to these were the deeper, and the more apt to fester, inasmuch as they awaked in their breasts a consciousness, that they were not unmerited. Those antagonists saw but too clearly, that the majority, even of their friends, who would not admit the conclusions drawn by the *reformers*, (as they called themselves, or *heretics*, as their enemies called them) agreed but too much with them in their premises: a reflection which could not fail to gall them exceedingly.

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The usurpation and tyranny of ecclesiastical superiours, the ignorance in which they kept the people, were at first almost the only topics. From this they proceeded to censure practical abuses in ceremonies and discipline. The third and last step of their progress was to expose errours in doctrine. In these, indeed, when once they were propounded for discussion to the public, they laid the principal stress of their cause. These they considered as the source of every thing else that was amiss. But it was not with them that they began. The shameful incontinence and debauchery of the clergy were the occasion, that very early and very generally the canons, which enjoin celibacy, became the subject of offence and clamour. The absurdity of reading the scriptures to the people, and performing the public offices of religion in a language which they do not understand, it required but a small share of knowledge, or rather of reflection and common sense, to enable them to discover. The manifest inconsistency of the practice, which had been introduced, had gradually spread, and was at last become universal, of administrating the eucharist to the people in one kind only, the bread, (the inconsistency of this I say) with the express words of the institution, recorded in no fewer than four books of scripture; the exorbitant power and immunities, which, through the cri-

minal, as well as weak, indulgence of the secular powers, clergymen had obtained, and of which they made so bad a use, afforded matter of loud and universal outcry.

For some centuries before Luther's days, these, and the like corruptions, had been the subject of complaint and murmur in various places. But from the time of Wicliff's preaching in England, and sending abroad his sentiments to the world in Latin tracts, which was near a century and a half before the reformation, men's attention was roused to such topics, and people grew bolder every day in speaking out their opinions. What they had ventured only to mutter, as it were, in a whisper before, they did not hesitate to proclaim in the most public manner. Ye know the influence which Wicliff's doctrine had, even in the remote kingdom of Bohemia, and the unhappy fate (I mean to outward appearance) of his two famous disciples, John Huss and Jerom of Prague. I do not say that in all things they adhered to the opinions of the celebrated English doctor. But as in what relates to the corruptions of the church, and of the clergy, the exorbitance and abuse of ecclesiastic power, they were evidently his followers; so by his writings and example they were emboldened to give an open testimony to the truth in their native country, and to seal it with their blood in Constance. This,

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though it be not considered as the era of the reformation, for it happened about a century before the public remonstrances of Luther, is justly regarded as having paved the way for it. Wicliff had left a seed of reformation in England, which it was not in the power of the combined rulers, both spiritual and temporal, to destroy. The martyrdom of Huss and Jerom by the Romish sanhedrim, at Constance, confederated with the imperial authority basely prostituted in violation of plighted faith, through the accursed casuistry of those bloody and deceitful men, proved, as in primitive times, the means of promoting, and not of obstructing, the cause. In short, men were now arrived at such a measure of knowledge, as rendered the methods employed to keep their minds in subjection, formerly so successful, perfectly ridiculous. The clergy had lost that veneration and respect from the people, which mere external trappings, and arrogant pretensions, had once been found sufficient to secure to them. Nay, so much were the sentiments of many of the laity changed in regard to those articles, that the spiritual denunciations and curses, (when unaided by the secular arm) which would have made their forefathers tremble, served only to make them smile.

Thus stood matters, in regard to religion, throughout Europe, about the end of the fifteenth,

and beginning of the sixteenth, century. Nothing could be more evident to men of discernment, than that christendom was ripe for a revolution in its ecclesiastical polity, and seemed only to wait for a favourable occasion. Such an occasion, the avarice of pope Leo the tenth, and the impiety, as well as indiscretion, of his ministers and agents, soon furnished. The use that was made of that occasion, and the effects produced by it, I shall briefly consider in my next lecture.

LEC-

LECTURE XXVIII.

IN spite of all the endeavours, so assiduously used by Rome, to shut out the light of the understanding, and to keep men's minds in bondage, in spite of all her affected mysteriousness in religious offices, and even in the lessons she gives publicly from the word of God, by employing a language unknown to the vulgar, in spite of her prohibitions with regard to books, and her inquisitions into heresy, it was impossible for her so to exclude the dawn of truth, now rising on the world, after a long and dreary night of superstition and ignorance, as to prevent the discovery both of the weakness of her empire, and of the badness of the foundation on which it stands. Men were become at length pretty generally disposed to listen to those, who declaimed against their spiritual guides, whose faults they could not now avoid perceiving. They no longer entertained for them the blind veneration, wherewith they had formerly been affected. Nay, they seemed to be running fast into the opposite extreme,

treme, that of entertaining for their ecclesiastical superiours an immoderate aversion and contempt. The pride, the avarice, the ambition, the laziness, and the sensuality of the clergy were never-failing topics of satire every where.

If things had not been in this train, when Luther began his public declamations against the validity of indulgences, and other powers, which Rome had usurped over the christian people, converting their ignorance and brutishness into useful engines for filling her coffers; that great reformer had never been so successful amongst all ranks and degrees of people, as he evidently proved. But as the knowledge and personal experience of the much greater part of his hearers perfectly confirmed the severest of his censures, he found no difficulty in fixing their attention, and in exposing, to the conviction of many, the total want of support from scripture, reason, and antiquity, of the arrogant claims to dominion, which had been raised by their spiritual guides. It is indeed manifest, that when Luther first assumed the character of reformer, he had no intention, nor even idea, of proceeding so far as he afterwards found himself under a necessity of going. He first struck only at the abuse, which had proved the immediate handle of examining the papal prerogatives. And though from the beginning he did not ascribe to the pope that omni-

omnipotence, which has not very decently been attributed to him by the canonists, he was, on the other hand, far from disputing his primacy, or even his supremacy, in any sense short of absolute despotism.

It has often been objected to him, and his followers, under which denomination the Romanists are wont to include all protestants, that he himself appealed to the pope from the judgment of his antagonists, that he declared repeatedly, that he would be determined by his judgment; and yet, when his holiness interposed, and gave judgment on the question in debate, he did not depart, in the smallest circumstance, from the doctrine he had maintained in direct contradiction to that judgment. The truth, I believe, is: when Luther declared his submission to Rome, he spoke sincerely, though unadvisedly: he flattered himself, that the reasons which had influenced his opinion were exceedingly plain, and could not fail to influence the pontiff's, when examined seriously. I do not question, that he was then willing to impute the scandals and abuses committed in preaching the indulgences, more to the instruments employed than to the employer; and persuaded himself, that when the pope should be informed of the whole, he could not avoid being ashamed of the conduct of his agents, and would justify Luther, so far, at least,

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as either to recal, or to qualify, the powers which had been given in relation to indulgences, and to pronounce no censure on the principles, which, on this subject, had been maintained by that appellant. Perhaps he even thought that, through the superintendency of providence, (for at that time he seems to have entertained no sentiments hostile to the monarchical form of church government) such a scandal would be prevented, as the public justification of a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency, disseminated by many of the monks on this occasion.

But whatever was his opinion in regard to the conduct which would be held by Rome, certain it is, that he was egregiously disappointed. His doctrine was solemnly anathematized and condemned by the pope as heretical; he himself was commanded, within a limited time, to recant, on pain of incurring all the censures and punishments denounced against obstinate heretics. Luther then but too plainly perceived, that he had not sufficiently known himself, when he professed such implicit submission to the pope. By his preaching and publications he had involved himself in controversy, and brought a number of adversaries upon him. This set him upon enquiring into the foundations of the received doctrine, and examining the fabric of ecclesiastic dominion which had been erected. Both these

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he had, before that time, received as submissively as any the most implicit son of the church. Neither of them could bear a critical examination. Of this, the further he went, he had the fuller evidence.

It was not easy for any man, especially a man of so sanguine a temper, and of so great acuteness, to confine himself entirely to those topics, which gave rise to the debate. We must be sensible, it would have been the more difficult, when the humour of his antagonists is duly considered. They argued from principles generally received at the time, and which he thought himself under a necessity either to admit or to deny. This led him to enquire into those principles, and the enquiry often terminated in a detection, as he thought, of their falsehood. He was too honest, and too intrepid, not to avow the discovery, and this always engaged him in a new controversy. The scholastic art of disputation then in vogue, which abounded with subtle, but unmeaning, distinctions, might have given him considerable assistance in eluding the address and malice of his enemies, without explicitly declaring himself on several points, which they had very artfully dragged into the dispute. That this should be their method we cannot be surprized. The more articles of the received doctrine they could, by plausible inference, show his principles to be subversive

subversive of, the more they exposed him to popular odium, and embarrassed him for a reply. The success, however, of his preaching, and of his writings, was so far beyond expectation, that he was not discouraged from going as far into every question as his adversaries could desire.

Nay, now that he was led into the discussion, now that Rome had gone all the lengths which his enemies could desire, now that the rupture was complete, he seemed forward to examine every thing to the bottom. He was no longer desirous of keeping any measures with the ecclesiastical establishment. The whole fabric appeared ruinous. No soundness in the materials of which it had been raised. Rottenness was discernible in every part. In spite of all the arts of his enemies, who to argument were not slow in employing more formidable weapons, in spite of the power, as well as number, of those he had to contend with, his doctrine spread and gained proselytes every day. Among these were some of high rank and consideration, who were able to protect him, and did protect him, against all the dangers with which he was environed. The influence of his doctrine is not to be judged of barely by the converts which he made. The conversion of so many kingdoms and principalities to his system, though the greatest, was not the only effect of his teaching. It waked men thoroughly

roughly out of that profound sleep, in which the understandings of the far greater part lay buried, and roused a spirit of enquiry, that has not been without effect in countries which still continue Roman catholic, in humanizing the spirit, and bringing even their theologians to extenuate, by refined explanations, not dreamt of in former ages, the absurdities of popery itself.

It has been objected to protestants, that Luther preserved no uniformity, or even consistency, of conduct, with regard to Rome: that he professed the utmost submission to whatever sentence she should pronounce, before it was pronounced, and paid no regard to common decency afterwards; allowed himself to be so much transported by passion and resentment, as to give vent to the grossest scurrilities and abuse; nay, that adopting the very spirit of that power against which he declaimed, he, as it were, erected himself into a counter-pope, retaliated upon the Roman pontiff, by returning excommunication for excommunication, and burning the pope's bulls and decretals, in return for the burning of his books.

Rational protestants do not hesitate to acknowledge both the inconsistency of his conduct, and the violence of his passion. Their faith standeth not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. It pleased God to make men the instruments,

ments of effecting the wonderful revolution, which, in the course of his providence, was to be produced. And doubtless, those men are entitled to some honour, on account of the character which they bore, and the virtues which they displayed, as instruments of providence for promoting our good. They served as monitors from God, for rousing our attention to the dangers wherewith we were surrounded, for bringing us to assert the rights of men, and of christians, of using the reason which God hath given us, in judging for ourselves, in what concerns our highest interest, for time and for eternity. But then, we say, they were sent, not to command us to receive the doctrine of eternal life implicitly from them, but to excite us to search the scriptures, to enquire and decide for ourselves. Their interposition, in offering their sentiments in contradiction to their superiours, could be defended only on the right of private judgment, and on this fundamental tenet, that God, having given us his written word for our rule, had seen no necessity for empowering any man, or number of men, to serve as an infallible interpreter of his will. A character, therefore, which they had declared unnecessary, and which they found no man or society entitled to assume, they could not consistently arrogate to themselves. And if any of them presumed to do so, or acted in such

a man-

a manner as implied this presumption, they were entitled to no regard from their hearers. Protestants, so far from asserting the infallibility of the reformers, do not affirm that they were inspired. They were admonishers, not dictators. If even of the apostles, who were endowed with the miraculous gifts of the spirit, and often both spoke and wrote by inspiration, much more of the reformers, concerning whom the same things cannot be affirmed, we ought to be followers no further than they were of Christ. They spoke as to wise men—it belonged to the hearers to judge what they said.

It is admitted also as undeniable, that the reformers, who arose about the same time in different places, differed on several articles in the doctrine which they taught. This was particularly the case of Luther and Zuinglius, the two earliest. As long as they confined themselves to the abuses which had, from worldly motives, been introduced into the church, there was a wonderful harmony among them all. The sale of indulgences, the celibacy of the clergy enforced by canon, the with-holding of the eucharistical cup from the people, the religious service in an unknown tongue, the worship paid to images and relics, the invocation of saints and angels, the clerical usurpations of secular power, the rendering of church censures subservient to the avarice

and

and ambition of ecclesiastics, were practical corruptions in worship and discipline, wherein all the reformers were agreed. In these points, and several others such as these, a majority of the people would, I am persuaded, in most christian countries, have been found to concur.

We ought to consider it as a very strong proof of this, that some of those articles had afforded matter of general complaint for a long time before. Thus the permitting of the clergy to marry, the allowing of the cup to the people, the performing of the religious offices in the language of the country, had afforded matter of application to popes and councils for more than a century back. In regard to the corrupt use so flagrantly made of excommunications and indulgences, the scandal was in a manner universal; nor was there a country, province, or city of note, where there were not frequent murmurs against the exorbitant power and wealth, and the consequent laziness and arrogance, of churchmen. And if their idolatries and superstitious usages did not excite the like general offence, it is more to be ascribed to this consideration, that the knowledge of the scriptures had hardly yet descended to the lower ranks. But we may rest assured of it, that the increase of this knowledge, and the decrease of superstition and idolatry, must have accompanied each other.

When

When a man enters keenly into controversy on any subject, it is impossible to say (unless he is uncommonly circumspect) how far it may carry him. It generally leads to the discussion of questions little connected with that which began the dispute. In this warfare, a man is so much at the mercy of his antagonist, that if he enter into it with more warmth than circumspection, he will follow his enemy that he may fight him, wheresoever he shall shelter himself; and in this way, both combatants come to be soon off the ground on which the combat began. Exactly such a disputant was Luther. And this may be said, in a great measure, of all who had a leading hand in the reformation. To conquer the foe, wherever he was, came, ere they were aware, to be more an object to them, than to drive him off the field, and keep possession of it. In consequence of this tendency, they were often diverted from the subject. From plain and practical questions, both parties soon turned aside into the dark recesses of metaphysics, where they quickly bewildered themselves in a labyrinth of words. Such was the unhappy consequence of their dogmatizing on abstruse, not to say unintelligible, points of scholastic theology, wherein it might often admit a doubt, whether the same thing was meant by them under different expressions, or different things under the same expression; nay,

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sometimes whether either party had any meaning at all to what he said. Though the reformers, and Luther in particular, were far from being deficient in the powers of reasoning, they were men of strong passions, and great ardour of spirit. This rendered them liable to be drawn off from the subject; and, when heated with contradiction, to go such lengths as cool reflection could not justify. We ought to remember too, that, being ecclesiastics, some of them regulars, they had been inured to all the scholastic quibbles and chicanery in vogue at the time, and from which it was impossible, that, without a miracle, they should entirely emancipate themselves. We ought, also, to make allowances for some theological opinions, with which their minds had been strongly prepossessed, long before they thought of a breach with Rome.

Of this sort of rooted prejudices was the doctrine of the *real presence*, as it was called with the reformer Luther. This, on the one hand, seems with him to have been a favourite principle, at the same time that, on the other, the hatred he had contracted to Rome, made him that he could not bear to think of agreeing with her almost in any thing. Therefore, though he would have a *real presence* of Christ in the eucharist, it must not be the popish *real presence*. His ingenuity soon devised another. Accordingly, *tran-*

transubstantiation was rejected, and *consubstantiation* adopted in its stead. That is, the bread and wine were not transubstantiated, or changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, but the body and blood of Christ were consubstantiated, that is, actually present in, with, and under, the elements of bread and wine, and were therefore literally eaten and drunk by the communicants. In no part of Luther's conduct does he appear so extravagant as in this absurd conceit, as to which I agree with the bishop of Meaux, that it has all the disadvantages which the Romanists, and the Sacramentarians, charge on one another, without having a single advantage that can be claimed by either. It has all the absurdity which the latter charge upon the former, inasmuch as it represents the same body existing in different places at the same time, and inasmuch as it represents a substance existing without its accidents, or under the accidents of another substance, but has not the advantage of simplicity which the Romish doctrine has, in interpreting literally the words, *This is my body.* The expression, on the Lutheran hypothesis, ought to have been, not *This is my body*, but *In, with, and under, this is my body.* For they maintain, that the bread remains unchanged, and is that which is seen, touched, and tasted; but that the body of Christ, the same which he had

upon the earth, and has now in heaven, accompanies the bread. It has all the obscurity which the Romanists charge upon the Sacramentarians, nay, a great deal more, inasmuch as the words are to be understood neither according to the letter, nor according to any figure of speech ever heard of before. For, by their account, it is neither literally Christ's body, nor figuratively the sign or symbol of his body; but it is something with which his body is accompanied. Indeed, this novel hypothesis is, in every view, so extravagant, that it is impossible to conceive whence it could have originated, but from the collision (if I may so express myself) of a strong prejudice in favour of the *real presence*, and a violent inclination to dissent from Rome, as much as possible, on every subject.

The controversies in which this novelty of consubstantiation involved him, not only with the papists, but with the Zuinglians, and other reformers, drew him at last to take refuge in a doctrine, if possible, still more extraordinary, the ubiquity, that is, the omnipresence, and consequently, the immensity, of the body and human nature of Christ: hence they were called *ubiquitarians*. This monstrous hypothesis was imagined to remove all difficulties; as though a less absurdity (if there be degrees in absurdities) could be removed by substituting a greater in its place.

But

But if this did in fact solve the difficulty, in regard to the presence of Christ in the eucharist, it solved it by annihilating the sacrament. For what, I pray, on that hypothesis, were the sacramental elements? They will not call them signs, or figures, for that suits only the language of those whom they denominated sacramentarians. They could not, with the church of Rome, call them the identical body and blood of Christ; for they do not think the elements changed or transubstantiated. They remain as they were. And if they should call them barely accompaniments of the body and blood of Christ, wherein do they raise them above any other kind of food; for according to the ubiquitarian doctrine, the body and blood of Christ being every where, may be justly said to be *in*, *with*, and *under*, every morsel we eat, and every drop of liquor we drink, and every breath we draw. Instead of raising the sacrament, therefore, by this extravagant conception, they destroy the distinction between it and every ordinary meal. Nothing more common, when one attempts to explain what is inexplicable, and to defend what is absurd, than to multiply absurdities, as one advances, and to give one's self every moment more nonsense to explain, and more to defend.

Let it not be imagined, that by these free remarks on that first and most eminent reformer, I

mean either to lessen his character, or to depreciate his work. Few, on the contrary, have a greater veneration for the one, or set a higher value on the other. Luther had certainly great qualities and virtues: he had also great faults; but the former much preponderated. His penetration and abilities were considerable. I mean his knowledge, his eloquence, his skill in disputation, and his readiness in finding resources, even in the greatest difficulties. But these are only intellectual talents: he was largely supplied with those active virtues, which are necessary for putting the afore-named qualities to the best account. An unconquerable zeal for what he believed to be truth, constancy in maintaining it, intrepidity in facing danger, an indefatigable industry in employing every opportunity that offered for exposing errour and superstition, and defending what he thought the unadulterated religion of Jesus Christ. But his virtues were not without defects. Nay, his great qualities themselves were not untainted with those vices, to which they are thought to bear an affinity. His logical acuteness sometimes degenerated into chicane. But this was the fault of the age he lived in, and of his education. His zeal, and the warmth of his temper, often betrayed him into an unjustifiable violence. His magnanimity was not untinctured with pride and resentment. His

transports

transports of rage, and even his buffooneries, against the pope, did unspeakable injury to his cause with the wiser and more intelligent part of mankind; even with those who desired nothing more ardently than a reformation from the corruptions which prevailed, and a defence of christian liberty against the too well established tyranny of ecclesiastical superiours. His perseverance would, perhaps, on some occasions, be more properly termed obstinacy. When he had once publicly supported a tenet, he seemed incapable of lending an impartial ear to any thing advanced in opposition to it. In short, what he did, and what he was, notwithstanding his errours, justly merit our admiration, especially when we consider the times in which, and the people amongst, whom he lived; I may add, the kind of education he had obtained.

No true protestant considers him, or any of the reformers, as either apostle or evangelist. It is a fundamental principle with such, to call no man upon the earth *master*, knowing that we have one master, one only infallible teacher, in heaven, who is Christ. All human teachers are no further to be regarded, than they appear, to the best of our judgment, on impartial examination, to be his interpreters, and to speak his words. The right of private judgment, in opposition to all human claims to a dictatorial autho-

rity, in matters of faith, is a point so essential to protestantism, that were it to be given up, there would be no possibility of eluding the worst reproaches, with which the Romanist charges the reformation; namely, schism, sedition, heresy, rebellion, and I know not what. But if our Lord, the great author and finisher of the faith, had ever meant that we should receive implicitly its articles from any human authority, he would never have so expressly prohibited our calling any man upon the earth master, καθηγητης, leader, or guide.

A general dissatisfaction prevailed at the time. By universal acknowledgment, things were not as they ought to be. Abuses and corruptions were on every hand complained of, and a cry for reformation was every where raised. Such men as Luther, at such a time, were well entitled to a fair and patient hearing. But, on the other hand, the hearers were also entitled to put this honour upon themselves; namely, to receive what was spoken both by them, and by their antagonists, as spoken to wise men, to weigh and judge what was said. We are doubtless now, when the ferment of disputation is over, in a better situation for judging coolly and equitably of the merits of those extraordinary preachers, than the people who lived in that age. And upon the most deliberate examination, I believe the unprejudiced will

will admit, that, with all their imperfections, they did unspeakable service to the interests of knowledge, of christianity, and of human liberty.

Having said so much of their talents and virtues, I shall, with all the deference due to the judgment of my hearers, offer a few things in regard to their defects and blemishes, particularly considered as teachers. The first I shall observe is an unavoidable consequence of the education they had received, and the habits to which they were inured; a sort of metaphysical reasoning, or rather sophistry, the genuine spawn of the scholastic logic, which had for ages been in vogue, and which, in some measure, tainted all their disputes. This led them to dogmatize on every point, and was that which first produced dissention among themselves. As long as they confined their declamation to church tyranny, to the correction of superstitious and idolatrous practices, to those clerical artifices for enhancing power and wealth, which were subversive of sound morality, they concurred harmoniously in every thing; but no sooner did they enter on the endless and unprofitable discussion of abstruse and unedifying questions, of which holy writ has either said nothing, or given no decision, than their harmony was at an end. They subdivided immediately. They alarmed those who were inclined to think favourably of their cause. They made

made many retreat who had made advances. They supplied their enemies with arms against them, and made enemies of friends; inasmuch as many became enemies one to another. Then arose the distinctions of Lutheran, and Zuinglian, and Calvinist, and Sacramentarian, and Ubiquitarian: the first three as implying not barely the disciples of such particular teachers, but as the partizans of different systems. By this conduct, also, they furnished an argument to the common enemy, to which I do not find that any sect has yet given a satisfactory reply. "If these nice "and abstract questions," said the Romanist, "about which ye make so great a bustle, are "really so essential to salvation, as ye pretend, "it is impossible that the scriptures can be so "perspicuous as ye account them, else ye would "never, after a careful examination, entertain "sentiments so opposite in regard to those ques-"tions." What made the impropriety of their conduct more flagrant, was, that they did not treat those differences in opinion as matters of small moment, as curious speculations with which the pious and contemplative might amuse themselves, but on which, without affecting their christian character, persons might think differently. Far otherwise; they treated them as equally fundamental with those which they made the subject of their declamations against the common

mon foe; and were often transported with equal fury against one another, on account of those differences, as they were against him. "Ye all "appeal" (said Erasmus, whom they wanted to gain, and who at first appeared favourable, being as much an enemy to superstition and ecclesiastic tyranny as any of them, ye all appeal, said he) "to the pure word of God, whereof ye think "yourselves true interpreters. Agree then amongst "yourselves about its meaning, before ye pre-"tend to give law to the world." "It is of "importance," said Calvin, in a letter to his friend Melancthon, "that no suspicion of the "divisions which are amongst us descend to fu-"ture ages; for it is ridiculous beyond imagi-"nation, that, after having broken with all the "world, we should, from the beginning of our "reformation, agree so ill amongst ourselves." Indeed, this bad agreement, as it was a great stumbling-block in the way of those, who inclined to examine the matter to the bottom, so it proved a greater check to the cause of the reformers, than any which the open or the secret assaults of their enemies had yet, either by spiritual weapons, or by carnal, been able to give it.

But unfortunately, (for the truth ought, without respect of persons, to be spoken) they had not sufficiently purged their own minds from the old leaven; they still retained too much of the

spirit

spirit of that corrupt church which they had left. As they were men, we ought to form a judgment of them not only with candour, but with all the lenity to which their education, the circumstances of the times, the difficulties they had to surmount, and the adversaries they had to encounter, so justly entitle them. But as they were teachers of religion, we ought to be at least as careful not to allow an excessive veneration for their great and good qualities, to mislead us into a respect for their errours, or to adopt implicitly the system of any one of them; that we must learn not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of us be puffed up for one against another. The spirit of the church, especially that nourished in the cloisters, was a spirit of wrangling and altercation. Never could any thing better suit the unimportant and undeterminable questions there canvassed by the recluses, than the words of the apostle, *vain janglings and oppositions of science falsely so called.* As therefore they had not avoided these, nor taken the apostolical warning not to dote about questions and strifes of words, they soon experienced in themselves, and in their followers, the truth of the apostolical prediction, that envy, contention, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings, would come of them; but that they would never minister to the edifying of themselves in love;

that

that so far would their disputations be from answering the end, and terminating their differences, that they would incessantly give birth to new questions, and would increase unto more ungodliness. This contentious spirit, derived from the schoolmen, and commonly accompanied with spiritual pride, and a vitiated understanding, did not fail of producing its usual consequences, uncharitableness in judging of others, on account of difference of opinion, and intolerance in the manner of treating them. Of the first of these, the evidences are coeval with the questions, and perfectly unequivocal; and of the last, that is, of the intolerant spirit they had retained of the church they had deserted, it must not be dissembled, that they gave but too manifest proofs as soon as they had power.

Ye will do me the justice to believe me, when I add, that it proceeds not from any pleasure in depreciating, that I have taken so much of the invidious task of exposing the blemishes in those truly meritorious characters. But of men so much exposed to public view, and so highly distinguishable, as were our reformers from popery, there is a considerable danger on either side in forming a wrong judgment. One is, indeed, that a prejudice against the instruments may endanger our contracting a prejudice against the cause. Of this extreme, in this protestant country,

try, I imagine, we are in little danger. To prevent it, however, their faults ought not to be mentioned without doing justice to their virtues. The other is, lest a prepossession in favour of the cause prove the source of a blind devotion to the instruments. Of this extreme, the danger here is, I think, very great. Nay, though different men's attention, according to their various circumstances, has been fixed on different instruments in the hand of providence, in effecting the wonderful revolution then brought about, yet an immoderate attachment to one, or other, has been, since the beginning, the rock on which the far greater part of protestants have split.

ESSAY

ESSAY

ON

CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE

AND

SELF-DENIAL.

Ne croyez jamais rien de bon de ceux qui outrent la vertu.

BOSSUET.

ADVERTISEMENT.

ESSAY

[illegible] Dr. Campbell's [illegible] that appear to have been neglected [illegible] it is to be [illegible] that they are not [illegible]. The [illegible] is adopted, as well on account of the importance of the subject, as of the [illegible] manner in which the [illegible] is treated with the Evangelical History; it [illegible] that it may not improperly have a place in this work.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE were found among Dr. Campbell's papers a few Essays, that appear to have been intended for the press. It is to be regretted, that they are left unfinished. The following Essay is selected, as well on account of the importance of the subject, as of the superiour merit of the execution. And as it is connected with the Ecclesiastical History, it was thought, that it might not improperly have a place in this work.

ESSAY, &c.

TEMPERANCE, which has been considered in the schools as denoting a superiority over the *concupiscible* affections, like what is implied in meekness over those called *irascible*, pride, anger, and impatience, is as necessary for the government of the appetites, as the other is for the regulation of the passions. There is no human virtue, which has been deemed more essential to the christian character; there is none which has been more generally misunderstood, or which false religion has dressed out in more fantastic colours. It is acknowledged on all sides, that it would ill befit the students of a doctrine so divine as the christian, to be the slaves of appetite. To be voluptuous, and to be heavenly-minded, can scarcely, to any understanding, appear compatible.

But what must we do to subdue appetite? Must we extirpate it altogether? No; it is impossible; and even if it were possible, it would not be virtuous. In taming a wild beast, and

rendering him not only harmless, but useful, greater ability is displayed, and, consequently, more glory is attained, than would be attained by killing him. The bodily appetites were given for necessary and important purposes; for the preservation, comfort, and continuation of the human race. How absurd then is it to suppose, that we either requite our benefactor with gratitude, by spurning his benefits, or recommend ourselves to the all-wise Creatour, by counteracting his intention, so clearly manifested in our frame? Still, however, it was intended, that the appetites should be in subordination to the mind. So much care has not been taken by Providence, both of the individuals, and of the species, merely that they may exist. Existence itself is given to man for a further and a nobler end. The light of nature, as well as revelation, points to this great end, the perfecting of his nature by effecting a conformity to the will of God, the highest felicity of which man is susceptible. Wherever, therefore, the indulgence of appetite contravenes this ultimate design of our being, it must be unlawful, and ought to be restrained. The well-instructed christian distinguishes not only between the means and the end, but even of ends, when they interfere, he distinguishes those of a higher from those of a lower order. The sensualist, on the contrary,

 converts

converts the means into the end, and the end into the means. What is the lowest in the order of nature, is, in his account, the highest. The former eats that he may live; the latter lives that he may eat. As to the particular restraints which the christian religion lays on the appetites of its votaries;

The first, in my judgment, is when the gratification of our own appetite proves, in any respect, detrimental to another. It is a conscientious and habitual regard to this check, that constitutes the virtue of chastity; a trespass against which always implies injury to our neighbour, and a violation of laws essential to the good order, and therefore to the welfare of society. From the transgression of these laws result the crimes of fornication, adultery, rape, incest, and the like. The same consideration of hurt to others may also, occasionally, restrain from indulgences, which have no immediate connection with the virtue of chastity, as when a person, in respect of food, dress, and things indifferent, abstains from what is not otherwise unlawful, and is to him not necessary, that he may avoid giving scandal to the weak.

The second restraint, which christianity lays us under, is moderation in the indulgence, even though the rights of others should be no wise affected. This implies not only that we guard

against excess, but that we be free from every thing that savours of epicurism in those inferiour gratifications. This appears not only from the injunctions of our Lord, against all anxiety about food or raiment, but also from the charge he gave his disciples, to eat such things as were set before them. It would as ill befit the christian temperance to ask questions, like the voluptuary, for the sake of palate, as it would the liberal spirit of the gospel to ask questions, like the judaizing christian of the apostolic age, for the sake of conscience. From a due regard to this restraint arise the virtues of continence and sobriety; and from the want of such regard, the opposite vices, lasciviousness, effeminacy, inordinate affection, drunkenness, gluttony, sloth; for the desire of rest, till our exhausted powers shall be recruited, is a corporal appetite as necessary for our preservation, as either hunger or thirst; but, like all other appetites, it is liable to abuse, and when indulged to excess, degenerates into vice. There is a certain degree, beyond which, if we proceed, the end of nature is not only unanswered, but the reverse is promoted. Food is necessary for preserving health, and prolonging life; but debauchery of every kind tends directly to ruin health, and shorten life. Rest, at proper intervals, is necessary, but laziness and inactivity are pernicious, as they

debilitate

debilitate the powers both of body and of mind. Excessive indulgence in this way produces habitual indolence and lassitude, in consequence of which, men are, in a great measure, indisposed for the discharge of the most momentous duties in life.

It is necessary, on this head, to remark, that, as the immediate end of Providence, which is the health and preservation of the individual, may be equally frustrated by either extreme, an excess of indulgence, or an excess of abstinence, the latter, when not the consequence of dire necessity, but the result of choice, must be accounted vicious as well as the former. Every voluntary action in reasonable agents, which evidently tends to defeat the intention of the Creatour, manifested in their constitution, is an opposition to the law of nature, (which is the will of God) and consequently immoral.

As, however, the motives which lead to this extreme are very different from those which lead to immoderate indulgence, it is neither the same in kind with the other, nor equal in depravity. Abstemiousness, though it were to a degree perniciously excessive, cannot be considered as a species of intemperance, or ascribed to sensuality. We do not, therefore, view it with the indignation, which is excited by the opposite extreme; but still, with disapprobation mingled

with pity, such as are incurred by a culpable ignorance of right, when the knowledge of duty is within the reach of an ordinary capacity. If ever we be disposed to excuse it altogether, our indulgence will be found to arise from such a supposed imbecility in the intellectual powers, as degrades the person below the rank of a reasonable being.

But to return; we have noted the two principal restrictions in all gratifications of this nature, which require, that we avoid an indulgence to ourselves that may prove injurious to another, and that we avoid excessive indulgences, which never fail, one way or other, to prove injurious to ourselves, either in body, or in mind, if not in both. It must, at the same time, be owned, that the utmost we can be said to attain, even by an uninterrupted submission to these restraints, is barely not to be vicious. The man who is only thus far temperate, is intitled to no more than the negative praise of being, in this article, blameless.

Would we attain that command over the body, which the spirit of our religion implies, and which is truly praiseworthy, we must aim still higher. It deserves our notice, that our blessed Lord, who, in all things, ought to be regarded as our standard, could not, though he twice fed the multitude miraculously, be induced to work

a miracle

a miracle to allay his own hunger. Why this difference in cases so similar? The difference arose from the nature of the cases. The first mentioned, the feeding of the multitude, who were exhausted with want, and long attendance on his teaching in the desert, was an act of humanity. The second, the miraculous conversion of stones in the wilderness into bread, to supply the cravings of hunger, to which he was advised by the tempter, might have been construed, had he complied, into a want of superiority over appetite. The one was intended to serve, to a cloud of witnesses, as an evidence of his mission; for this way all his miracles pointed: the other, which could not answer that purpose, where there were no human spectators, would have appeared, to every reader, to betray a distrust in Providence. It became him, therefore, our great pattern in faith, as well as in patience and self-command, to avoid even the appearance of distrusting the care of heaven, or of impatience under suffering, by recurring to means of relief, to which he knew that his followers, in the latter ages, expressly called to the imitation of his example, could not recur.

It ought, therefore, to be accounted a third limitation on the indulgence of appetite, which the law of christian temperance enjoins, that when the indulgence, in itself lawful, but not necessary,

necessary, is foreseen to prove the occasion of evil to any, or to cause the prevention of good, the law of charity requires our forbearance. In the variety of incidents to which human life is, in every station, exposed, it often happens, that even the most innocent gratifications may interfere with those favourable opportunities of doing good, which, if lost, are never afterwards to be recovered. When these, therefore, occur, they ought not to be let pass unimproved. What admirable lessons, in this way, does the example of our Lord present us with! His actions bore witness more strikingly than his words, that it was as his meat, and more than his meat, to do the will of him who sent him, and to finish his work. He never, for the sake of ease, refreshment, or convenience to himself, let slip a favourable occasion of conferring benefits on others. Never did hunger, or thirst, or cold, or fatigue, set bounds to the exercise of his piety, his humanity, and beneficence. He went about doing good, instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the profligate, exposing the absurd pretensions of superstition, vindicating the character of genuine religion, pulling off the mask from hypocrisy, and relieving distress. His uncommon assiduity in these exercises appears not only from the whole tenour of his history, but particularly from the unfavourable constructions

tions which even some of his relatives put on his extraordinary ardour, application, and exertions. Such, I conceive, is the true law of christian temperance; a law, in every respect, rational and manly. Whilst it exacts no suffering, for the sake of suffering, it gives no permission to an indulgence, which is prejudicial to others, hurtful to ourselves, may prove, though indirectly, the source of bad consequences to any, or deprive us of an opportunity, not afterwards to be recalled, of doing good. Other limits it knows none.

But I am aware that, whilst some will think, that the restraints I have mentioned are both too numerous and too rigid; others, on the contrary, will imagine, they are far from being either numerous, or rigid enough. Truth lies commonly in the middle, between both extremes. The limitations enjoined by the gospel, and above deduced, are, I acknowledge, no other than such as good sense, with a little reflection, will show to be reasonable. It must be owned, that the christian temperance, or moderation, in regard to appetite, as I have described it, is not the temperance of the anchoret. To the sanctimonious pharisees of old, our Lord's doctrine, on this article, was offensive; they charged it even with licentiousness. Hence the calumnies they vented against him, founded on this single circum-

circumstance, his neither affecting a monastic severity in his own manner of living, nor recommending it to his followers. *The son of man,* he says himself, * *came eating and drinking:* he did not distinguish himself by any austerities, or peculiar abstinences from things indifferent; and they, agreeably to the common exaggerations of malice, exclaim, *Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*

That our Saviour did not consider what conduced to social festivity, within the bounds of sobriety, as incompatible with innocence, is evident from various passages of his life, particularly from the assistance which he gave, in supplying the company with wine, at the marriage in Cana. And that he did not place any merit in distinctions merely ceremonial, or rank them with genuine morality, (though these distinctions ever were, and ever will be, of capital importance with the superstitious) is perfectly manifest from the maxims on the head of moral pollution, so repeatedly inculcated by him, and so loudly reprobated by the chief priests and scribes.

But wherein, then, it will be asked, consists the virtue of self-denial, so positively required

* Matt. xi. 19.

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of christians? A little reflection on what has been said will furnish the intelligent reader with a satisfactory answer. Whoever habitually pays due regard to the restraints on self-indulgence above enumerated, has obtained that mastery over himself, in which the essence of self-denial consists. Let us attend to what our Lord himself has delivered on this head, in these nervous expressions, *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple**. I purposely select this passage, because it has an appearance the most favourable for an opponent. On hearing this, the question naturally arises, What are we to understand by hating father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, here so expressly required? All denominations of christians are agreed, (for I know not a single exception) that it does not imply, that we should wish evil, or bear ill will to our parents and nearest relatives; for this is what we are not permitted to bear to any man, even an enemy: all sides are agreed, that it does not imply, that we should be indifferent about their interests; nay, more, it does not imply, that we should refuse gratifying their lawful desires, or contributing to their

* Luke xiv, 26.

happiness,

happiness, as far as we can. What, then, does it imply? It implies only, in the unanimous judgment of interpreters, that, if there should be an opposition between the will of our dearest relations, and the commandments of Christ, between the enjoyment of their company, and the enjoyment of the divine favour, we should not hesitate a moment in our choice. The former as, by infinite degrees, inferiour in obligation, must, on such a competition, give place to the latter. Now, by all laws of interpretation, this must ascertain the meaning of the last clause, *yea, and his own life also*, and show, that it serves only to express, in the same emphatic idiom, the preference which the love of Christ ought to have with the disciple, before the love of life. The import of the whole is briefly this: 'He is not a genuine disciple of Jesus, who will 'not resign wife, children, and friends, posses-'sions and pleasures, yea, and life itself, rather 'than make shipwreck of the faith, and of a 'good conscience. He is not worthy the name 'of christian, who does not abhor a defection 'from his Master more than death, or any tor-'tures, which it is in the power of man to in-'flict.' Common sense leads to this interpretation, and, though there were no other, is here sufficient evidence. But, to stop the mouth of contradiction, if possible, the expression used as

equivalent

equivalent in a parallel place, is, *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me**. As, therefore, the hatred of parents required by the evangelical law does not warrant our doing them the smallest injury; so neither does the hatred of life also required, in the very same terms, warrant the unnecessary and self-inflicted torments, and other penances of ascetics, upon their own bodies.

This may serve also to explain other oriental figures used by the apostles, such as *crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts. Mortify*, says Paul †, νεκρωσατε, kill, put to death, *your members which are upon the earth.* No warrant, one would think, could be clearer for all the rigours of the ascetic: yet, we no sooner read the whole sentence, than we perceive, that no more is meant, than that we must lop off from our manner of living every vicious and intemperate excess. For, what are those members which we are so expressly commanded to kill? Not flesh and blood. Not the members of the natural body, but *fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness,*

* Matt. x, 37, 38. † Col. iii, 5.

which

which is idolatry; all flagrant immoralities, to which the law of our religion gives no quarter. The diction employed by our apostle is often very bold, and his figures poetical. He considers all the propensities, inclinations, and appetites of our frame, which lead in any way to the transgression of God's law, as constituting an organic body, which he denominates *the body of sin*, from its occupation, and *the body of death*, from its effect. The maxims and principles, which predominate in such a constitution, he calls *the law of sin*, which, in his flesh, warred against the law of his mind. Nothing, therefore, can be more evident, than that they are not literally our flesh and bones, the members, of the natural body, which the apostle enjoins us to crucify or kill.

It is not denied, that there may be occasions on which abstraction from the world, and its enjoyments, may be more necessary than at other times. It is not denied, that certain abstinences, or even mortifications, may be requisite to some, on several accounts, which are not requisite to others, or may be expedient at one time, and improper at another. The propriety of occasional fasting, when found, from experience, to be conducive to devout reflections, to self-knowledge and self-command, is not, by any thing advanced above, meant to be controverted.

verted. It is of the nature of sorrow, when the mind is engrossed by it, to make a man reject, nay, nauseate those pleasures, which, without the censure of the most scrupulous, he allowed himself before. This is so universally understood, that we readily infer, that grief, for any calamitous event, is but superficial, when we observe, in the person affected with it, the same disposition as formerly to customary amusements. Calamities, both public and private, have ever been justly considered, by the pious, as providential calls to reflection and repentance. Repentance necessarily implies sorrow and humiliation, resulting from the most important cause, the consciousness of guilt. Whilst the mind is under the influence of this impression, mirth, levity, and gratifications, in themselves innocent, are effectually precluded. Nay, more, the mind seems to take a pleasure, which, at another time, would be accounted unnatural, in cherishing its grief, and augmenting its own anguish. It is this which, in the prophet Daniel, is emphatically styled chastening himself*. But such a state is, to the mind, what sickness is to the body. For this bodily state also requires its abstinences, nay, often, most unpalatable medicines, which no physician ever thought of pre-

* Dan. x, 12.

scribing for the ordinary diet of people in health. Our Lord, in that very passage, which has been pleaded as authorizing in christians the observance of fasts, approves them only as suited to certain occasions; and is no less explicit in declaring, that there are other occasions, on which fasting would be unseasonable. If so, his doctrine, far from giving countenance to perpetual abstinence, does, by representing fasts as adapted solely to particular occasions, totally subvert the foundation of monastic vows.

An expression in the Apocalypse* has been adduced, to show the high value, which the christian religion puts upon virginity. Of the 144,000, who were with the Lamb on mount Sion, it is said, *These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins.* Let it be observed, that this book is intirely in the idiom of the prophets, to whom it is familiar to call idolatry *whoredom*, which, in the heathens, who know not God, is *fornication*; and in Jews or Christians, whom he had espoused to himself, *adultery*. This is the exposition given by all commentators of any name, popish or protestant. Richard Simon (than whom the last century did not produce a greater stickler for *tradition*, and the traditionary expositions of the church) says,

* Rev. xiv, 4.

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in a note on this passage, in his own translation, "that is, they have not fallen into *idolatry*, but "have always preserved themselves pure in the "holy religion *." He does not mention this as a probable interpretation, but as one, of which there could be no reasonable doubt. In the literal mode of interpreting, what will one make of the royal harlot, described in chap. xvii, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication?

We cannot wonder that, after the times of the apostles, in the church's infancy, whilst the heathen raged, and the *rulers took counsel together against the Lord, and against his Messiah*, many pious christians, male and female, married and unmarried, justly accounting, that no human felicity ought to come in competition with their fidelity to Christ, and modestly distrustful of their ability to persevere in resisting the temptations, wherewith they were harassed by their persecutors, formed the resolution to abandon their possessions and worldly prospects, and, whilst the storm lasted, to retire to unfrequented places, far from the haunts of men, that they might enjoy, in quietness, their faith and hope, and, without temptations to apostacy, employ them-

* C. D. ils ne sont point tombés dans l'idolatrie, mais ils se sont toujours conservés purs dans la sainte religion.

selves principally in the worship and service of their Maker. The cause was reasonable, and the motive praiseworthy. But the reasonableness arose solely from the circumstances, and vanished with them.

When there was no peculiar danger in society, there was no reason for seeking security in solitude. Accordingly, when the affairs of the church were put on a different footing, and the profession of christianity rendered safe, many returned, without blame, from their retirement, and lived like other men. Some, indeed, familiarized by time, to a solitary life, preferred, through habit, what they had originally adopted through prudence. They did not waste their time in idleness, they supported themselves by their labour, and bestowed the overplus, if there was an overplus, in acts of beneficence and charity. These, likewise, without blame, remained in their retreat. But, as it was to avoid temptation and danger, that men first took refuge in such recesses, they never thought of fettering themselves by vows and engagements. They knew that, by so doing, they would expose their souls to new temptations, and involve them in more, and perhaps greater dangers, than at first. This would have shown a disposition very unlike to that self-diffidence, which had originally suggested so extraordinary a measure. This, therefore,

fore, was not monachism, though, most probably, it gave rise to the idea of it, and may therefore be considered as the first step towards it.

Such signal sacrifices, not only of property, but of all secular pursuits, have a lustre in them, which dazzles the eyes of the weak, and powerfully engages imitation. Blind imitators, regardless of the circumstances which alone can render the conduct laudable, are often, by a strong perversion of intellect, led to consider it as the more meritorious, the less it is rational, and the more eligible, the less it is useful. Nay, the spirit of the measure comes in time to be reversed. What at first, through humble diffidence, appeared necessary, for avoiding the most imminent peril, is, through presumption, voluntarily adopted, though in itself a source of perpetual peril. And as irrefragable evidence of the intrinsic merit, independent of utility, which they then ascribed (for, from the beginning, it was not so) to abstinence, poverty, celibacy and virginity; they imposed vows upon themselves, solemnly engaging in an uninterrupted observance of these virtues (as they accounted them) to the end of their lives. So little did the additional peril of perjury deter them, that they seemed to think this danger also necessary, to give consequence to what they did; and, by a very subtle

strain of reasoning, converted the danger into an argument for the solemnity of an oath, "because," said they, "nothing can more en-"hance the merit of the action than the cir-"cumstance of danger."

That the view which the apostles had of this matter was totally different, is manifest from their manner of treating the subject. When it occurs in their writings, one is at no loss to perceive, that the argument turns on this fundamental maxim of prudence, that we ought to submit to a less evil, in order to avoid a greater. It was solely from this consideration, that Paul advised those Corinthians against marrying, who had no reason, from constitution, or former experience, to dread their being tempted to violate the laws of chastity. His arguments are intirely of a prudential nature, founded on the distressful circumstances of the church at that time, and the additional temptations to apostacy to which married people, from their natural solicitude about their families, would be exposed. For this reason he balances matters, and expressly enjoins them, if they should find a difficulty in preserving their chastity, or even purity of mind, (*for it is better to marry than to burn*) to avoid what should appear the greater danger. Nothing can be more evident, tha that the apostle does not proceed on the supposition, that,

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in a state of virginity or celibacy, considered in itself, there is either merit or demerit: he would only have them reflect that, from the unhappy circumstances of the times, there was in marriage a greater peril, in one particular of the last importance. It gave their enemies a much stronger hold of them, and more ways whereby they could persecute them. Consequently that state involved them in cares, which, at that critical period, greatly endangered their perseverance, and, consequently, their salvation.

It is from the same consideration of the times, that we account for the injunction given by our Lord to the young ruler, who came to consult him about the way to obtain eternal life. *Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; then come and follow me.* This was intimating to him, in plain terms, that the time was approaching, when, to retain his earthly possessions, and to be, at the same time, a follower of Christ, would be found impossible; and that, therefore, if he really preferred the latter, he ought betimes, before his wealth should prove a snare to him, to dispose of it to the best advantage, by giving it to relieve the distressed. But this is totally different from an abjuration of property

* Luke xviii, 22.

in all time to come. The practice of christians, in the apostolic age, best explains the import of the precept. They made no account of any worldly possession, of which their master's cause demanded the sacrifice. But in no other respect did they abjure the gifts of Providence, though fully sensible, that they were accountable to their Lord for the use they made of them.

Both the example and the reasoning of Paul the disciple, on the subject of marriage, are the best comment on the words of his master, when he spoke of those, who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Such was this apostle, and such were those primitive christians, who, from the like motives, were induced to forego all the advantages and comforts of a state, declared in scripture to be, in all classes, not only lawful, but honourable. This state they, nevertheless, though without abjuring it, were induced to deny themselves, purely from the consideration of the advantages against the christian cause, which their marrying might give the common enemy, and the much greater hazard of apostacy, in which it might involve themselves.

It is worthy of notice, that, in the very earnest dissuasive from marriage, which the apostle, in those lowering days, wrote to the Corinthians, his sole argument is the temporary inexpediency,

from

from the calamities of the church at that period; but the remotest hint is not given, that there is, in the matrimonial state abstractly considered, greater impurity than in the state of celibacy, or that the latter is in its own nature, or in God's account, any way preferable to the former. A supposed purity is what I call the intrinsic merit ascribed by superstition to some species of abstinence, independent of utility. Now, if celibacy had really so eminent an ascendant, it is strange, that it should have escaped so acute a reasoner, in supporting a measure which he had so much at heart. For, if there was truth in this plea, it was doubtless the most cogent argument he could have urged. But it is manifest, that if celibacy had, in his days, this high prerogative over marriage, the apostle knew nothing of the matter. This, it seems, with many other articles, was left for the discovery of after ages. If we have it not in the Acts of the Apostles, or in any part of sacred writ, we have it, at least, in the acts of the council of Trent, published near the end of the sixteenth century, and sanctioned, in their usual laconic manner of refuting gainsayers, by a curse. "If any man say, that the "matrimonial state ought to be preferred to the "state of virginity, or celibacy, and that it is "not better and more blessed to remain in vir-

"ginity,

"ginity, or celibacy, than to be joined in wed-
"lock, let him be accursed *."

In the eye of true religion, self-denial, as was signified above, is valuable only as means to an end, that is, when it appears necessary for the avoiding of evil, or when it may prove subservient to our doing good. That this is in the spirit, and agreeable to the doctrine, of the gospel, Christ and his apostles have taught us in the most explicit terms. *It is not that which goeth in at the mouth, that defileth the man*, appears to have been a maxim of our Lord's †, which, on different occasions, he introduced: a maxim which greatly scandalized the pharisees of his day, and which still no less scandalizes the pharisees of ours. In the same spirit writes his apostle ‡. *Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better; or, if we eat not, are we the worse.* Again: *Marriage is honourable in all* §. No room is left for the exception of any rank or station. Yea, not satisfied with these plain declarations, our apostle stigma-

* Si quis dixerit, statum conjugalem anteponendum esse statui virginitatis, vel cœlibatus, et non esse melius ac beatius manere in virginitate, aut cœlibatu, quam jungi matrimonio, anathema sit. Con. Trid. Sess. xxiv, Can. 10.

† Mat. xv, 11, 12, 16, 17. Mar. vii, 15. ‡ 1 Cor. viii, 8. § Heb. xiii, 4.

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tizes the contrary tenets in the severest manner, mentioning *the forbidding to marry, and the commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving*, as *the doctrines*, not of Christ, but *of demons* *. To the spirit of the former, the words, which immediately follow, are every way suitable. *Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.* The same apostle also tells us, in another place, *I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself* †. This persuasion, he acknowledges, he had not from Moses: for under that more servile dispensation, there was a ceremonial uncleanness attached to many things, to which it was necessary for those who lived under it, to give attention. But the church of God was then comparatively in its nonage, under the weak and beggarly elements, necessary to be used with children, before they arrive at the perfect use of reason, whose state differs not from that of servants, who must obey orders of which they discern not the reason; but not at all necessary, when the intellectual powers have attained their full vigour. In education, till children arrive at what may be called the age of rationality, stern authority must supply its place. But when that

* 1 Tim. iv, 3, 4. † Rom. xiv, 14.

period

period is once reached, the same regulations are not necessary, or even useful; and the influence of fear gives place to more generous and also more effectual motives.

"But," rejoins the religionist, "even taking "up this matter upon your own principle, that, "in usefulness alone, as the means of promoting "a valuable end, consists all the value of self-"denial, has not the ascetic a very strong plea "for his confraternity? Wherever there is dan-"ger, it is the part of a wise man to guard "against it. But is any thing more dangerous "for a christian, than to be enslaved to appetite? "Has not this slavery proved the ruin of thou-"sands? Or, can we think ourselves secure "against every hazard from this quarter, whilst "we admit gratifications not absolutely neces-"sary for preserving life? Do not the greatest "evils often proceed from small beginnings? "If, then, we would be secure against the intox-"ication of pleasure, whose advances are always "gradual, let us, as much as possible, exclude "it in every degree. This is the only sure way "of preserving our independency, and showing "ourselves proof against all the snares of that "bewitching syren." Is it then, I ask in return, to be understood as an axiom of christian ethics, that we ought to forego every advantage, which may be considered as a gift either of nature,

ture, or of providence, of which it is possible for us to make a bad use; because, in that case, the abuse of the benefit would aggravate our guilt? But what benefit, what talent, mental or corporeal, have we, that may not be abused one way or other, either by intemperate indulgence, by carelessness, or by being rendered instrumental in doing mischief? "To go into a convent," said the late Dr. Johnson *, "for fear of being "immoral, is, as if a man should cut off his "hands for fear he should steal." Suppose one were to address us in this manner: "Of all the "things you are acquainted with, fire is the "most dangerous, the most terrible. It may "burn your house, and before you are aware of "your danger, consume you and your family in "the midst of it. This has happened to thou-"sands. If, then, you would enjoy peace, and "live in safety, have nothing to do with that "destructive element. Beware of ever allowing "it to be brought over your threshold." Could we be at a loss for an answer? Should we not reply, To what purpose has God endowed men with reason and understanding, but that they may learn to enjoy the use of his creatures, and avoid the evil resulting from either negligence or abuse? And through the whole of nature, are

* Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. ii.

not

not those things, which are the most profitable, if rightly used, the most pernicious, if abused? It was on the same absurd principle, that Mahomet prohibited his followers the use of wine, and all fermented liquors.

In the way wherein some people seem to consider the duty of a christian, we should think they make the whole, or the most essential part of it, to consist in *bearing*, rather than in *doing*, in avoiding evil, but not in producing good. That to bear evil patiently when necessary, and always to avoid doing it, are important branches, cannot be questioned; but they are neither the whole, nor even the principal part, of the christian morality. Man was made for action: powers were given him for exertion; and various talents have been conferred upon him by providence, as instruments not of doing nothing, (for this requires no instruments) but of doing good, by promoting the happiness both of the individual, and of society. It is true, that the instruments of doing good may be, and often are, perverted by bad men into instruments of doing ill. But, though such a misapplication of talents implies heinous depravity, the dread of it can never justify the nonapplication of them; unless we can be absurd enough to think, that man was created, and so liberally endowed, by his maker, to no purpose whatsoever. Our faculties, both of body and

and mind, and what are called vulgarly the gifts of fortune, or our own acquisitions, are all, in the eye of religion, talents entrusted to us by our creator, not to be allowed, through negligence, to rust in our possession, and thus become useless, but to be employed in his service, by promoting the good of ourselves and others. It was not for the misapplication, but for the non-application, of his talent, which the slothful servant, in the parable, had hidden under ground, that he received so severe a sentence from his master, when he called him to account *. Yet the servant's conduct is perfectly vindicable, on the passive principles on which the patrons of monastic vows build their most unnatural system of insignificance. "When I consider," might the sluggard have said, apologizing for himself on that hypothesis, "how great a temptation, "or rather curse, wealth commonly proves to "the man who is so unhappy as to possess it, "could I do better than bind myself by oath, "never more to handle that perilous deposit, or "so much as look upon it? One man I have "seen ensnared by opulence, plunge into all "the guilt of riot and debauchery: another be-"trayed by it into the grossest injustice and "oppression: to a third it proves the instrument

* Mat. xxv, 14, &c.

of

"of gratifying, and thereby fostering, his most "malignant passions, pride, envy, and revenge. "What could I do better, than secure my escape "from all these dangers, by repositing it where "it could do no harm, to be at last restored to "the owner, unimproved indeed, but, at the "same time, unimpaired?"

There is no lesson which our Lord, in the gospel, seems more earnestly to enforce upon his hearers, than that, in the awful day of retribution, the omission of duties will, with the righteous judge, prove as certain a ground of condemnation, as the commission of crimes. To suffer with patience and fortitude, when suffering cannot be avoided otherwise than by betraying the cause of truth and virtue, in like manner to suffer, when suffering may conduce to prevent a greater evil, or to the production of some signal good, is not only virtuous but heroical. Whereas, the self-inflicted penances of the miserable hermit are the means neither of preventing evil to any, nor of producing good. These spontaneous sufferings serve as a testimony of nothing so much as of the idiocy, or the insanity, of the sufferer; for, with regard to God, they are derogatory from his perfections, and, in their tendency at least, bear false witness of his character. They exhibit him as an object more of terrour than of love, as the tyrant, rather than the parent,

rent of the universe. And, by consequence, rational devotion, which elevates the mind, and ennobles it, is degraded by them into the most abject, the most slavish, superstition, which depresses all its powers.

The ethics of monks is a mere caricature of virtue, wherein every feature is exaggerated, distorted, or out of place. "Believe no good of "those," said the bishop of Meaux, "who over-"strain virtue." If this overstraining be not a capital criterion of monachism, I have no apprehension of the meaning of the phrase. Yet I cannot allow myself to think, that, if this redoubted champion of Rome had affixed the same ideas to those words which I do, he would have uttered so cutting a reproach (not against the protestants, for these are comparatively little affected by it, but) against a whole class of men, who have always enjoyed the countenance and protection of the church of Rome. It will not be suspected of me, that it proceeds from any partiality for monachism, when I declare, (as I do most sincerely) that I cannot join the bishop in so severe (and, in my apprehension, so uncharitable) a judgment against all the order. But if, without ever thinking of monks, he meant to suggest it as a rule, founded on experience, that no good is to be expected from any system of mo-

rals which overstrains virtue, I join him cordially in this sentiment. I have ever seen, that such systems (from whatever source they spring, superstition, fanaticism, priestcraft, or a mixture of all the three) are of infinitely more disservice to religion, in every way, than of advantage to it in any.

But from reasoning to come to fact: when what was originally a prudential, voluntary, and temporary measure, degenerated into a profession, which the most sacred engagements rendered unalterable for life; when mechanical rules and lifeless forms were substituted for the free spirit and power of godliness; then, and not till then, arose monachism, which, though at best but an uncouth, artificial figure, may, nevertheless, in Shakespeare's phrase, be denominated, not improperly, *the simular of virtue.* We trace, at first, the outline of the meekness, the moderation, the humility, the patience, and the resignation, of the christian; but, on further examination, we find the resemblance merely superficial. There is some obliquity in the application made of the best qualities, which ruins their effect. Yet those of this profession have, time immemorial, arrogated to themselves as their peculiar, the epithet *religious;* (no evidence this of their modesty:) and the world yields it to them as

as their due; (no evidence this of its discernment.)

"Much of the soul they talk, but all awry."

I said that monachism is a caricature of virtue, and I may justly add, that what commonly attends other caricatures, obtains also here. Though likeness is preserved, what is beautiful in the original is hideous in the copy.

To verify this remark, we need only listen to the report made on this subject by ecclesiastical history. And that I may not be suspected of partiality in my choice of an historian, I shall recur to Mr. Fleury, a man of learning and candour. He was no protestant; but, though a Roman catholic priest, and not without partiality to monks, he appears to have possessed as much probity, in his account of those things which come under his notice, as is perhaps to be found in any of his order and profession. What Fleury has related, in the passage to which I refer *, is from St. Gregory Nazianzene, who sent to his friend Hellenius an elegy of 368 verses he had composed in praise of the monastic life; particularly of those who practised it at Nazianzum, of which place, about the middle of the fourth century, he was bishop. "He says," adds the

* Hist. Eccl. L. xvi, c. 51.

historian, "that there were some there who "loaded themselves with iron chains, in order "to bear down their bodies, who shut themselves "up in cabins, and appeared to nobody, who "continued twenty days and twenty nights "without eating, practising often the half of "Jesus Christ's fast: another abstained entirely "from speaking, not praising God except in "thought: another passed whole years in a "church, his hands extended, without sleeping, "like an animated statue. These prodigies," says our historian, "would be incredible, on a "testimony of less authority." I, for my part, do not hesitate to say, that such prodigies are incredible, notwithstanding the testimony.

I do not speak thus from any disposition to derogate from Gregory, for whose talents and virtues (for he had both) I have all due respect, but whose judgment of christian morality, and whose testimony in matters which affected his prejudices, nothing has done so much to discredit, as that most absurd encomium just now mentioned on his religious maniacs at Nazianzum. Admitting the possibility of all the particulars above specified, which may be fairly questioned of some of them, how grossly must that man's notions of truth and rectitude be perverted, who can think that God gave hands to any man to be kept constantly in a posture, which unfitted them

them for being of any service to himself, or others; that he gave the power of speech, but not to be employed in communicating knowledge, or in any way that can conduce to the benefit of the individual, the honour of the giver, or the interest of the community; and in brief, who can think, that many faculties of the soul, and members of the body, all in themselves well calculated for public, as well as private, accommodation, God has bestowed on us with the intention, that they might be occupied in such a manner as would most effectually render them incumbrances to the possessor, and useless to every body else; or, if he cannot controvert so manifest a truth, as that the hands were made for working, the feet for walking, the tongue for speaking, can, nevertheless, bring himself to believe, that the Deity is most highly pleased with those of his creatures, who do their utmost to counteract his design, and make all that he has done for the comfort, operate to the torment of their lives, who proudly reject what he has conferred, to qualify them for being helpful one to another, or who at least disqualify themselves for using it. Is this to receive God's gifts with thanksgiving? or, is it to spurn them with disdain? What would be understood to be the language of such a conduct towards a human bene-

factor, whose benefits were either in this manner rejected, or knowingly perverted to a purpose the reverse of that for which they were given? Would it not be interpreted as importing, "I value not "your favours. I think myself better without "them, and will show the world how independent I am of such baubles?" And do ye thus requite the Lord? Are ye wiser than he?

The true wisdom of men is to listen to God when he addresses them either by his works, or in his word, and to obey his voice. But such is the conceited vanity of foolish men, that, not satisfied with the plain sense of the commandment, they must improve upon the latter, and produce something of their own, more refined, more spiritual, more sublime. Hence those monstrous extravagancies of thinking to please God, in the highest degree, by counter-working his providence, and opposing, to the utmost of their power, the clearest intimations of his will, derived either from the light of nature, or from revelation. It was, at bottom, the same errour, but probably in a much inferiour degree, which the apostle so severely stigmatized in the Pharisees of old, *who being ignorant*, through culpable inattention, *of God's righteousness*, the righteousness required by him, *and going about to establish their own righteousness*, a righteousness merely of

of their own devising, *have not submitted to the righteousness of God* *.

I should have been happy to know what the celebrated controvertist, who is so great an enemy to overstraining, would have said of those wondrous acquisitions in virtue made by the Nazianzene monks. Would he have thought, that there was no overstraining, in transforming a creature, such as man, into a mere animated (and scarcely animated) statue, in annihilating as to use all the powers mental and corporeal, with which he is so richly endowed by his creator, and by which he is qualified for attaining a degree of knowledge and art beyond any known or assignable limits, and in degrading him to a speechless, viewless, handless, helpless, useless animal, not to be matched in the whole creation? If there be no overstraining here, it will not be easy to conceive, till some example shall be produced, what meaning this learned prelate, and most subtile disputant, has affixed to his words; for it would fatigue imagination to figure out greater extravagancies than those above related. But if, on the contrary, it cannot be dissembled, that many things, in the scheme of those recluses, were overstrained, I think we are entitled to plead his lordship's verdict, a plea of no little weight, if

* Rom. x, 3.

authority have any, considering his great renown in polemics, that no good whatever is to be expected from the ethics of the monastery.

If this should appear too much to be founded on so slight an example as the monks of one city, though very famous, and at one particular period, I shall recur to another example also, much famed in ecclesiastical records. The instance, I mean, is no other than St. Symeon, a Syrian monk, who lived about the middle of the fifth century, and is thought to have outstript all those who had preceded him; for history has sometimes exhibited for fact, what is too exorbitant for a correct fancy to paint, and even in fiction too incredible for criticism to pass uncensured. He is said to have lived six and thirty years on a pillar, erected on the summit of a high mountain in Syria, whence he got the name Stylites. From his pillar, we are told, he never descended, unless to take possession of another. This he did four times, having occupied, in all, five. On the top of his last pillar, which was loftier than any of the former, being sixty feet high, and only three broad, he remained, as is said, without intermission, for fifteen years, summer and winter, day and night, exposed to all the inclemencies of the seasons, in a climate liable to great and sudden changes, from the most sultry heat, to the most piercing cold. We are

told,

told, he always stood, the breadth of his pillar not permitting him to lie down. He spent the day till three in the afternoon in meditation and prayer. Thenceforward, till sun-set, he harangued the people, who flocked to him from all countries; the male part of whom were admitted into an enclosure, built round his pillar, for containing his audience. At sun-set they were all dismissed with his benediction. Females he would on no account permit to come within his precincts; not even his own mother, who is said, through grief and mortification in being refused admittance, to have died the third day after her arrival. It is added, that her son, by his prayers, raised her from the dead, till she should open her eyes, and see him; after which, she again immediately shut them, to be opened no more till the resurrection. He is said to have performed many miraculous cures, and to have solved many knotty questions to those who consulted him. Nor was this all.—In order to show how indefatigable he was in every thing which conduced to the glory of God, and the good of mankind, he spent much time daily in the exemplary exercise of bowing so low, as to make his forehead strike his toes; and so frequently, that one who went with Theodoret to see him, counted no fewer than twelve hundred and forty-four times, when being more tired in numbering than the saint was with

performing

performing these godly reverences, he gave over counting. Symeon is said also to have taken no food except on Sundays, and to have observed annually at least one Lent of forty days and forty nights, without tasting any thing. It is added by some, though Fleury does not mention this circumstance, that all the last year of his life he stood upon one leg only, the other having been rendered useless by an ulcer.

The principal evidence on which this wonderful story rests, is the testimony of Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, in Syria, a contemporary writer, and an ocular witness; for he himself once and again visited the saint standing on his pillar. He wrote his account twenty years before Symeon's death. After his death, his history was written by Antony, a disciple and neighbouring monk, who often attended him. Theodoret, though not superiour to prejudices, then almost universal, was a man of character and abilities, and his veracity, in what can be called properly his testimony, I am far from questioning. But he cannot be the witness of what passed either in his absence, or after his death, though he may give his opinion concerning the former on the report of others. Symeon's never leaving the pillar, his perpetual abstinence from food, except on Sundays, his rigorous fasts of forty complete days, are all points of which Theodoret could not

bear

bear witness. He saw him but a few hours at a time, after which he was dismissed with the multitude. As to what he did, or did not, at other times, he could only relate the testimony of those monks, and others, who were oftenest about his person. For this we must recur to Antony, whose performance is of that sort of writing, which has been since denominated *legend*, and was then in its infancy: a species of composition, which it is difficult to describe otherwise than by negatives. The legendary writing is not like the historical, whose subject being truth, requires the support of evidence; nor is it like the epic, whose object being to instruct by an ingenious fable, requires plausibility. As its aim is not like that of logic by enlightening to convince the mind, but rather by clouding the understanding to confound and silence reason, it requires not argument, nor perspicuity, nor method. Simplicity is here supplied by puerility of conception, and the marvellous by the impossible. Monachism is the natural parent of the legend, in like manner as chivalry is of the old romance; a species of composition which, if not unexceptionable, is greatly superiour to the other, in respect both of its end, and of the means which it employs.

I shall add but one other example. St. Baradatus, who, in the same century, and doubtless with the like pious and benevolent intention, betook

took himself to a wooden coffer, or rather cage, in which he was so confined by its dimensions and form, that he [was always bowed down in it, and] could not stand upright. This mansion was placed on the top of a rock, where he was exposed to the sun, the rain, and all kinds of weather. At last, the bishop of Antioch, Theodotus, in whose diocese the anchoret resided, being a man of vulgar understanding, unable to comprehend either the dignity, or the utility, of such sublimated virtue, cruelly obliged him to quit his cage, that so he might the more easily be induced to live like other men. He did accordingly quit his cage; but, to make compensation for one restraint that was thus taken off, he made choice of another, and devoutly abjured the use of his hands, in any way in which they could be serviceable to himself, or others. This he did, by devoting them to remain always in one posture, extended towards heaven, probably in commemoration of our Lord upon the cross. In this situation, we are told, he lived in the open air, that is, as I understand it, that he took no shelter in any house, or building, from the inclemencies of the sky.

That such things were all (I do not say accomplished, for as to some of them it is absolutely impossible that they should, but which is sufficient for my purpose, that they were all) pretended,

tended, believed, admired, and celebrated, by antients of no mean name, and by credible historians, is past dispute. Extravagancies the most marvellous, and the most frantic, such as dishonoured the name of religion, and rendered men worse than useless, were considered as the most sublime attainments in the christian life. I said worse than useless, because a man is useless, who is not in a capacity of being helpful to others, however urgent the occasion be; whereas, those of whom I have been speaking, not only effected this, but, by abjuring the ordinary use of some of their limbs and faculties, rendered themselves totally dependant, and consequently a burden, on others, for their assistance in all the most necessary functions of life. How should Baradatus, for instance, with his arms continually extended, have, without the aid of others, either earned his daily food, or used it when brought to him? Whether those hermits had any right to expect from others that help, which they had incapacitated themselves from giving to any, is a different question. Paul has declared explicitly, that if any man *will not work, neither should he eat.* By his verdict it is evident, that there is no obligation on any to do for others, what God both enables and requires them to do for themselves. It may be said, "they have incapacitated themselves by an oath, which it would be both

"sacrilege

"sacrilege and perjury to violate." Wretched casuistry! which puts it in a man's power whenever he will, to release himself from an obligation, by swearing that he will not perform it: for such is the import of the vow, that deprives him of the use of those faculties, by which alone he knows it must be performed, if it be performed by him. "From the moment he has sworn," say they, "the former obligation ceases, and the "contrary becomes his duty." This is an exact counterpart to the ingenious expedient, which the scribes had of old devised, for releasing children from the duty they owed their parents. Now, if the helplessness of a devotee of this character excite the compassion of christians, who are not themselves so weak as to approve such preposterous and immoral engagements, they must charitably consider him, as a diseased person labouring under a sort of phrenzy, or alienation of mind, which if curable can be cured only by gentle means, and slow degrees. It is solely in this view, that he can be regarded as an object of pity entitled to relief; and not as an object of indignation, deserving the punishment of being abandoned by his fellows to reap the fruits of his own resolution. This would have proved a punishment entirely adequate, and would, in my opinion, have been, if timely applied, fully sufficient for checking the progress of an evil, so

contagious and epidemical as the plague of monkery proved for many ages.

Will it be thought too severe a censure of practices, which manifestly counterwork providence in the application of man's natural powers, which disqualify their possessor for using them, agreeably to the dictates of religion, both natural and revealed, in promoting the benefit of the individual, and of society, Will it be thought too severe to say, of the monkish pranks above specified, (which, if the consequences were not so serious, we should justly call ridiculous) that they dishonour the name of religion? It will not, surely, by the judicious, when it is considered, that that sacred name has been arrogated, nay, in a manner appropriated, to such a gross misapplication, or nonapplication of talents, as has been above described. Can true religion, the christian religion, fail to be disgraced by fooleries, which so strongly assimilate it to the very worst of heathen superstitions? I say, *the very worst*; for, though extravagancies almost equally monstrous with those of Symeon, Baradatus, and the Nazianzene monks, are to be found amongst idolators, they are only amongst idolators who are utterly uncivilized, and in the very utmost stages of ignorance and barbarity. As far back in pagan antiquity as our acquaintance with Greece and Italy reaches, there seem

to

to have been none, in either country, who were chargeable with such a wretched depravation of intellect. And shall absurdities in practice, which intelligent persons, in antient Greece or Rome, would have thought, not unjustly, a stain upon their idolatry, be accounted no way dishonourable to the profession of the truth, as it is in Jesus, the only religion in the world which can justly be denominated a reasonable service?

There have been, I own, some who come under the general denomination of monks, that have been useful members of society. Some of the monastic orders have been famous, in these latter ages, for men of eminence, both in science and literature; and some of the learnedest works of the moderns have been productions of the cloister, and that, not in one branch of erudition only, but in several. We have had thence, grammarians, critics, antiquaries, historians, mathematicians, naturalists, civilians; and though I cannot say much for the figure they have made in theology and ethics, there are some valuable works in these also, for which the world is indebted to them. But I disapprove of monastic vows in the lump, even where there is nothing so extraordinary, not to say impious, in them, as in those of the pillared preacher, the caged saint, and others abovementioned. And I dis-

approve

approve them, because I think men's entering into such unnecessary engagements, even in things lawful, is often, in effect, laying a snare for their own souls, whose danger such measures tend more to increase, than to secure their perseverance. We are commanded to pray, in an humble sense of our frailty, that we may not be led into temptation. But to bring upon ourselves such additional engagements, what is it but to multiply our temptations, and to boast to God of our strength? To him we thereby in effect signify, "I will do more for thee than "thy law itself requireth of me, and bind my-"self on thy account, to submit to restraints "which thou hast not commanded." Can both be incumbent as duty at once? Knowingly and willingly to rush into temptation, and to pray God that we may avoid it? To me there appears more of presumption and self-confidence in this conduct, than either of piety or of christian humility. Yet I have no doubt, that men who think differently may enter into monastic engagements with a good intention, and conscientiously observe them. For whatever I think of the profession, I would not dare to say, that there are no good men in the order.

Let it be observed, that when I stigmatize the extravagancies of particular monks so early as the fourth and fifth centuries, and mark the

spirit from which those errours flowed, this cannot be called a direct attack upon popery; for popery, as we understand it, had not then an existence; and to call the christians then living *papists*, would be as absurd as to call them *protestants*. Nor would it mend the matter to change the name for *roman catholics*. Christians of those days, who were neither natives nor citizens of Rome, would have had no more title to the name *Roman* than to *Corinthian*, *Carthaginian*, or *Alexandrian*. Nor was the difference only in name, as might be easily shown, were this the proper place. At the same time, it must be acknowledged, that as not only monachism, but the individual monks above specified, have all along had the countenance and patronage of what is called the Romish church, she may, by implication, be said to be affected, by whatever attacks the abuses which she is known to patronize. And in this application of the term, the Greek church is attacked no less than the Roman Catholic. The same thing may also be affirmed of the Asiatic and African sectaries. But in consequence of the gradual changes, which, in a course of ages, silently introduce themselves into all human establishments, the monachism practised at present in the church of Rome is become, in many respects, exceedingly different from that of the early ages. We never

hear

hear now of *hermits*, they are called *cenobites*. The virtues of the primitive monks are not those, which most signally characterize their successours. We may say as much, likewise, of their vices. The absurd and pitiable extravagancies of the former have given place to the more specious, but, perhaps, more dangerous policy of the latter. Since monks have been collected into communities, those, who began with displaying merely the idiocy of fanatics, ended with an exhibition of the fury and malignity of ruffians. They are not all sinners, even in Rome's account, who have borne testimony of this from dear-bought experience. Witness the barbarous usage which St. Chrysostome met with from fellow-saints of this stamp at Cesarea. But this by the way; for it is with their temperance only, and not with their brutality, that I am here concerned.

But though the singularities, which distinguished the aforesaid monks, make no part of the monastic vows used at present in the church, and though there is no risk, that any son of Rome shall presume to emulate the matchless glory of the pillared Symeon, or dive into the mysterious devotion of the Nazianzene hermit, who locked up his tongue in his mouth, and, with a noble superiority to vulgar conceptions, consigned it in perpetuity to an inviolable taci-

turnity in praise of God*; and though Baradatus will, probably, still remain, as hitherto, unrivalled in the resolution more than heroical, of living constantly, with out-stretched arms, in the open air, yet Rome cannot be intirely unconcerned in the judgment, which may be formed of these men, and of their great achievements for the service of God and man. For as it is a thing notorious, that Symeon and Baradatus have been admitted into the calendar, and canonized, and are, by consequence, acknowledged and worshipped, by Rome's genuine offspring, as eminent saints, she has connected their fortunes with her own, and rendered it impossible for her now to disown them. Though she should think as meanly of their saintships as any protestant, she cannot now cast them off without turning *felo de se*, owning herself to have been in the wrong, and so renouncing her infallibility for ever. Now if infallibility be renounced, we may say, without hesitation, that the whole fabric of the hierarchy is undermined.

There are some points, on which the wise men of the Romish communion prudently choose to be silent: there are some of their saints, whom, they are sensible, they gain no honour by bringing into view. They cannot intirely ex-

* The monks of la Trappe still do the same.

punge

punge them from the historic page, though, for obvious reasons, the later historians pass them over much more slightly and hastily than the antient. Intelligent catholics would gladly leave them in quiet possession of their places in the legends, for the entertainment of those, now comparatively few, who can be charmed with such reading, but they do not like to meet with them any where else. The judicious Hooker has observed, that in his day, near two centuries ago, though saints of the monkish order had even then almost intirely lost credit with people of discernment, they were, nevertheless, sometimes obtruded on the public. "Some brainless men," says he*, "have, by great labour and travail, brought to "pass, that the church is now ashamed of no-"thing more than of saints. If, therefore, "pope Gelasius did so long sithence see those "defects of judgment even then, for which the "reading of the acts of martyrs ſhould be, and "was at that time, forborn in the church of "Rome, we are not to marvel that afterwards "legends being grown in a manner, to be no-"thing else but heaps of frivolous and scanda-"lous vanities, they have been, even with dis-"dain, thrown out, the very nests which bred "them abhorring them." Horace has observed,

* Eccl. Pol. B. v, C. 20.

in regard to dramatic performances, that there are some things which do very well to be told, but very ill to be acted; they pass amazingly in simple narration, but ſhock us exceedingly in a scenic representation. Put the case that the figures presented, and the feats performed or boasted by those prodigies of sanctity the antient monks, were again, in the present age, to appear on the theatre of the world, what sort of reception would such preachers, at this day, meet with in any part of the country, particularly in the ecclesiastical state? Would any person of sound intellects be found, who would think it necessary to give them audience?

"Quodcunque oſtendis mihi sic, incredulus odi."

There is no roman catholic, who would not then perceive the dishonour done to religion by such fantastic exhibitions. And it would be lucky for the poor ascetic, if the matter were allowed to terminate in a contemptuous and general neglect. But that is more than could be expected in the country supposed. The most moderate fate he could reasonably look for, would be commitment to a madhouse, for it would be only the most charitable people who would ascribe the cause to *frenzy*; whilst those who were less charitably disposed, would exclaim with vehemence

hemence, *heresy* and the *inquisition*. Yet surely if these things were once in their nature right and approvable, they are always right, and always approvable. If Symeon, Baradatus, and the rest of the fraternity, took the direct road to heaven themselves, and pointed it out to others, they must take the direct road who follow them, imitating the example they have given. It is extremely vain to talk of such an imitation as presumptuous, since there is no presumption, but, on the contrary, an incumbent duty in imitating God and Christ, wherein they are really imitable. And with regard to the saints we are specially commanded * *Be ye followers* (μιμηταὶ imitators) *of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.* The same practices could not exhibit the beauty of holiness in the fourth and fifth centuries, which can exhibit nothing but madness or heresy in the eighteenth.

To the observations already made I shall add only two, which particularly merit attention. One is, that the sentiments of a people concerning the object of their worship are best learnt from the rites and practices, by which they hope to recommend themselves to his favour. This is a much surer test, than the style they employ in

* Heb. vi. 12.

worship. Jupiter, in the hymns of his worshippers, was *the father of gods and men, the greatest and the best of beings*, yet they did not hesitate to impute to him the capricious despotism, and the flagitious actions of a tyrant. The language of their religious addresses was often the mere dictate of adulation and selfishness. Even the chosen people, whose thoughts were often grovelling (notwithstanding the sublime instructions they had received from heaven) were, in the worship of the true God, not intirely clear from this reproach. For of them the psalmist tells us, that, on certain occasions, *they flattered God with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue**. But when, with the view of pleasing the divinity, cruelty is exercised by the worshipper, either on himself or on some devoted victim, we have the strongest evidence, that the deity adored is conceived, not as a gracious, merciful, and benevolent being, but as a rigorous unfeeling exactor, and oppressive despot. When the sacred historian acquaints us, that the prophets of Baal, in addressing this idol, *cut themselves after their manner, with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them*†, every person of reflection discovers, in these words, their opinion of the God whom they served, as a blood thirsty sa-

* Psal. lxxviii. 36. † 1 Kings xviii. 28.

vage.

vage. And of the opinion of Moloch's merciless barbarity, believed by his worshippers, the many horrid sacrifices of infants consumed on his altar are a proof most terribly convincing.

Now, though the institution of Moses, which was suited to a state of pupillage, is expressly represented as a more servile dispensation than that of Christ; yet in the mosaic institution no ceremony or custom was admitted, which could convey the most remote suggestion, that God takes pleasure in the sufferings of his votaries. Punishment is indeed necessary in governing, and the Lord is a God of judgment. But there is still a difference. God delighteth in mercy, whereas judgment is his strange work. And, in all the sacred service of the Jews, nothing was commanded, or even permitted, which savoured of those inhuman austerities and castigations, not uncommon with some of the more barbarous of their pagan neighbours. For nobody will rank with these the regulations for guarding against indecorum in the sacred service, arising from the intemperance or indiscretion of the ministring priests. And let it also be observed, that though there were many festivals, some of which lasted a week, there was but one anniversary fast in the whole calendar, and that it lasted only a day, the day of expiation. Now their feasts were always celebrated with much hilarity and joy. The

voice of their religious offices, therefore, was incomparably oftener a call to rejoice together, than to mourn.

My second observation is, that there is no example recommended to us, either in the Old Testament, or in the New, which bears a similitude to any of the monkish austerities abovementioned. We are told, indeed, of fasts which were solemnly observed on particular occasions. These are, doubtless, to be considered as examples deserving our imitation, when the like occasions occur. But it merits particular notice, that in the only passage*, wherein the nature of an acceptable fast is expressly treated, the comparative insignificance of corporal penances and external signs of mortification and abasement, often hypocritical, in which the people abounded, are contrasted to the beneficent virtues of commiseration to the distressed, humanity, charity and moral improvement, without which we are certified, that their fasts secured to them neither the approbation of God, nor the reward promised to the devout and penitent. The only Jewish custom, which had any resemblance to monastic vows, and that but a remote one, was the vow of the nazarites, which, except in the instances of Samson and John the baptist, was an engage-

* Isa. lviii. 5, 6, 7.

ment

ment not for life, but for a short time, commonly a week, and had nothing either of the inhumanity or of the absurdity of those above related.

But have we not in Moses, Elijah, and above all, in Christ, examples of the fast of forty days, which, it might be expected, would, in the pious christian, awake a holy emulation. To me, I own, that emulation, in this case, appears to merit a very different epithet. For first, in the three examples mentioned, the effect was miraculous, and is recorded as an evidence, that the whole transaction was under the immediate direction of God, who in a supernatural manner supported his ministers. Now whatever cannot be otherwise effected than by miracle, the humble-minded christian will think there is more of presumption than of piety in his daring to expect. It would be precisely what is called in scripture *tempting God*, or putting his favour to the test. There is ground to think, that those extraordinary ministers suffered nothing during the forty days, not so much as the pain, which accompanies the craving of appetite. It is particularly said of our Lord by both the evangelists, who relate his temptation, that it was not till after the forty days that he became hungry; a plain indication, that, during that period, the laws of nature regarding his preservation were suspended, or perhaps more properly gave place to a law

of

of a superiour order, by which the end was answered. But secondly, in none of those instances is the fast of forty days exhibited as what was intended, but as what, having happened not through choice but necessity, was endured by those select ministers of Jehovah. It was not undertaken but undergone by them. What properly they did, what was immediately consequent on their own volition, is quite a different thing. Moses went up mount Sinai, and remained there at the command of God. Elijah set out when commanded, and followed the angel whom God sent to direct him. Jesus, led by the spirit into the desert, continued there, as long as he knew it to suit the intention of providence. The fast was to them all merely the consequence, and probably to the two first the unforeseen consequence, of the action, but by none of them previously purposed. The only practical lessons, therefore, which those passages of the sacred story seem calculated to enforce, are implicit obedience to the command of God, whatever be the trials it may expose us to, also patience and fortitude in bearing the worst that can befal us, when employed in doing our duty. I might add a third reason against those preposterous attempts at imitation, which the patrons of the ascetic life seem so highly to admire. All the three personages above-mentioned, but especially the last, were

were extraordinary ministers of religion, whose functions were, in many respects, peculiar. For us to attempt to mimic (I do not say imitate, such things being properly inimitable) what belonged peculiarly to the high characters with which God had invested them, to usurp their prerogative, so far from being an evidence of lowly respect and wisdom, would be the strongest proof we could give of extreme arrogance and folly.

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ERRATA.

Page 2, *l.* 5, *for* τρισαμος *r.* τρισαγιος.
—— 4, *l.* 8, — χρισοτακος *r.* χρισοτοκος.
—— 18, *l.* 21, — pacique *r.* pacisque.
—— 89 *is by mistake numbered* 68.
—— 121, *l.* 8, — Christ *r.* if Christ.
—— 122, *l.* 2, — Gracian *r.* Gratian.
—— 181, *l.* 26, — Sorbon *r.* Sorbonne.
—— 183, *l.* 11, — cloke *r.* cloak.
—— 214, 10 and 12, *for* ply *read* play.

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