

unfeigned; by the word of truth, by the power of God" attending it, "by the armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left." Hence they were "instant in season, out of season," being never afraid of the faces of men, never ashamed of Christ or of his words, even before an adulterous and sinful generation. They went on unmoved through "honour and dishonour," through "evil report and good report." They regarded not father or mother, or wife or children, or houses or lands, or ease or pleasure; but, having this single end in view, to save their own souls, and those that heard them, they "counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might" make full proof of their ministry, so that they might "finish their course with joy, and testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Let all the Right Reverend the Bishops, and the Reverend the Clergy, only walk by this rule,—let them thus live, and thus testify, with one heart and one voice, the gospel of the grace of God, and every Papist within these four seas will soon acknowledge the truth as it is in Jesus.

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## THE ADVANTAGE

OF THE

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

OVER

THOSE OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

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I LAY this down as an undoubted truth:—The more the doctrine of any Church agrees with the Scripture, the more readily ought it to be received. And, on the other hand, the more the doctrine of any Church differs from the Scripture, the greater cause we have to doubt of it.

2. Now, it is a known principle of the Church of England, that nothing is to be received as an article of faith, which is

not read in the Holy Scripture, or to be inferred therefrom by just and plain consequence. Hence it follows, that every Christian has a right to know and read the Scripture, that he may be sure what he hears from his teachers agrees with the revealed word of God.

3. On the contrary, at the very beginning of the Reformation, the Church of Rome began to oppose this principle, that all articles of faith must be provable from Scripture, (till then received throughout the whole Christian world,) and to add, if not prefer, to Holy Scripture, tradition, or the doctrine of Fathers and Councils, with the decrees of Popes. And soon after she determined in the Council of Trent, "that the Old and New Testament, and the traditions of the Church, ought to be received *pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia*, 'with equal piety and reverence;'" and that "it suffices for laymen if they believe and practise what the Church believes and requires, whether they understand the ground of that doctrine and practice or not." (*Sess. 4.*)

4. How plain is it that this remedy was found out because they themselves observed that many doctrines, practices, and ceremonies of their Church, not only could not be proved by Scripture, but were flatly contradictory thereto?

As to the Fathers and Councils, we cannot but observe, that in an hundred instances they contradict one another: Consequently, they can no more be a rule of faith to us, than the Papal decrees, which are not grounded on Scripture.

5. But the Church of Rome does not stop here. She not only makes tradition of equal authority with the Scripture, but also takes away the Scripture from the people, and denies them the use of it.

For, soon after, her writers began to teach, yea, and assert in entire volumes, "that the Scripture is obscure, and hard to be understood; that it gives an handle to error and heresies; that it is not a perfect or sufficient rule of life; that it ought to be understood no otherwise than the Church, that is, the Pope, explains it; that, consequently, the reading the Scripture is of more hurt than use to the generality of Christians."

And, in fact, they not only publicly spoke against the reading the Holy Scriptures, but in most countries absolutely forbade the laity to read them, yea, and the Clergy too, till they were ordered to preach.

And if any did read it without a particular license, they condemned and punished it as a great crime.

6. Thus the case stands to this day; yea, the late controversies in France make it undeniably plain, that the Church of Rome does now labour, more earnestly than ever, to take away the use of the Scriptures, even from those who have hitherto enjoyed them.

Seeing, therefore, the Church of England contends for the word of God, and the Church of Rome against it, it is easy to discern on which side the advantage lies, with regard to the grand principle of Christianity.

7. But that it may more clearly appear how widely the Church of Rome differs from the Holy Scriptures, we have set down a few instances wherein they flatly contradict the written word of God.

Thus the Church of Rome, after acknowledging that the Apostle terms concupiscence sin, yet scruples not to add immediately, "The Catholic Church never understood that this is truly and properly sin; and if any think the contrary, let him be accursed." (*Conc. Trid., Sess. 5.*)

Thus, although Christ himself says to all his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing," yet the Church of Rome condemns this very proposition as false and heretical:—"The grace of Jesus Christ, the effectual principle of all good, is necessary to every good work. Not only nothing good is done without it, but nothing can be done." (*In the Bull Unigenitus.*)

8. In like manner, the Church of Rome does not scruple to impose upon the consciences of men, in the doctrine of the mass, various traditions, that have no authority from holy writ; and also takes away the cup in the Lord's supper from the laity, contrary to the plain institution of Christ, as well as to the acknowledged custom of the primitive Church. Whence it manifestly appears, that it is not the design of the Roman Church to conform itself to the rule of the written word.

9. Again: The Church of Rome pronounces all those accursed who say, "that baptism, confirmation, the Lord's supper, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, are not sacraments instituted by Christ himself; or, that there are more or fewer sacraments than seven; or, that any of these is not truly and properly a sacrament; or, that they do not confer grace barely by the work done." (*Conc. Trid., Sess. 7.*)

Now, whereas these positions cannot be proved by Scripture, and yet are enjoined to be believed under pain of an anathema, it is hence also plain, that the Church of Rome does purposely teach, and also maintain by open force, things which partly are not founded on holy writ, partly are contrary thereto.

10. As to their sacraments in particular, it is easy to show that they require in each of them such doctrines and customs to be received, as are wholly unsupported by, if not also contrary to, the word of God.

For example: They teach, that in baptism "the right intention of the Minister is so indispensably necessary, that if it be wanting the baptized receives no benefit; that confirmation was a true and proper sacrament from the beginning; (*ibid.*;) that in the Lord's supper the bread and wine are converted into the natural body and blood of Christ; that every particle of what is consecrated is no longer bread, but the entire body of Christ; that it ought to be worshipped and adored; and that the laity ought not to receive the cup." (*Sess. 13, 22.*)

In penance: "That a full confession of all our sins to the Priest is absolutely necessary, or they cannot be pardoned; that the penances imposed, (such as pilgrimages, whipping themselves, and the like,) do meritoriously co-operate toward the forgiveness of sins; that this forgiveness is obtained, not through the merits of Christ alone, but also through the merits and intercession of the Virgin Mary and other saints; that extreme unction is a true and proper sacrament instituted by Christ; that the oil blessed by the Bishop eases the soul of the sick, and preserves him from the temptations of the devil;" (*Sess. 14.*) "that ordination is a true and proper sacrament, instituted by Christ; that an indelible character is given thereby; that there were from the beginning those seven orders in the Church,—Priest, Deacon, Sub-Deacon, acolythe, exorcist, reader, and door-keeper; that the proper business of a Priest is, to consecrate and offer the body and blood of Christ, and to remit or retain sins in the chair of confession; that marriage is a true and proper sacrament, instituted by Christ; that, nevertheless, marriage may be dissolved by either party's entering into a convent, even against the consent of the other; that it is unlawful for any of the Clergy to marry." (*Sess. 23.*)

11. Now, seeing all these doctrines are unsupported by, if not also contrary to, the word of God, which yet the Church of Rome requires to be received as true, and pronounces all accursed who do not receive them, we cannot but conclude that the Church of England enjoys an unspeakable advantage over the Church of Rome, with respect to her doctrines, which are wholly agreeable to, and founded on, the written word of God.

12. The advantage of the Church of England over the Church of Rome is equally great with regard to public worship.

For it is manifest that the public worship of the Roman Church is wholly degenerated from the nature of Christ's kingdom and the simplicity of the first Christians: That at present it consists in magnificent buildings, altars, images, ornaments, and habits; in splendid ceremonies; in processions and pilgrimages, and prayers in an unknown tongue; and in reciting the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ave-Maria, over and over, according to the number of their beads: That they are not instructed to "worship God in spirit and in truth," as their loving and most beloved Father; and to praise him, and comfort one another, with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs: That their souls are not edified by sermons and catechising out of the word of God, the Scriptures being cited very sparingly in their sermons, and generally in a strained and allegorical sense: That they are not permitted to search the Scriptures at home, and seek food for their souls therein: That the common people are by this means purposely kept in the grossest ignorance and superstition.

13. It is manifest also that they are held in doubt as to the salvation both of the living and the dead, by the doctrine of purgatory; that hereby the minds of those who want to be assured of the state of their souls, are disquieted and disturbed; that pardon of sins, release from punishment due thereto, and redemption from purgatory by masses and indulgences, either for the living or dead, are daily sold for money.

14. It is no less manifest that their trust in Christ alone, the one Mediator between God and man, is hindered so much the more, the more the people are referred to the merits and intercession of the blessed Virgin, and other saints; the more they are taught to adore their images and relics; to make vows to them, and to implore their help in any trouble; yea, and to place therein a very considerable part of their worship and

devotion ; as well as in a bare outward observance of saints' days, and other festivals of the Church, and in the abstaining from some particular kinds of meat on what they call fast-days.

15. All these practices, wholly unsupported by Scripture, the Church of Rome retains to this day ; at the same time that she rejects and pronounces accursed all (whether practices or doctrines) that make against her, be they ever so plainly contained in, and grounded on, the word of God.

Our Reformers seeing this, judged it needful to inquire whether it could be proved by holy writ that the Bishop of Rome is the successor of St. Peter ; that he is Christ's Vicar upon earth, and the visible head of the Church ; that he has a right of interpreting the word of God according to his own pleasure ; to introduce and prohibit doctrines, besides and against the written word ; to license things which the Scripture forbids ; to exercise a spiritual, and in many cases a secular, power over all Christians, — Kings and Emperors not excepted ; to anathematize all that oppose his will, depose Princes, and absolve subjects from their allegiance ; to pronounce heretics, to curse, kill, torture, and burn alive, all who do not submit to him in every point.

16. Some of the reasons they had to doubt of these things were those which follow :—

That neither St. Peter, nor any of the ancient Bishops, had the same doctrine or manner of governing the Church which the Bishop of Rome now has, as is clear both from the Epistles of St. Peter, from the Acts of the Apostles, and the ancient ecclesiastical history ; that Christ alone “ is made of God Head over all things to the Church,” (Eph. i. 22 ; iv. 15 ; Col. i. 18,) who is “ with them always, even to the end of the world ;” that the kingdom of Christ, being not of this world, bears no resemblance to the hierarchy and monarchy of the Papal kingdom ; that the possessing the See of Rome no more proves the Pope to be the successor of St. Peter, than the possessing the city of Constantinople proves the Great Turk to be the successor of Constantine the Great ; that if the Pope were the Vicar of Christ, (which is not yet proved,) still he would have no authority to change or abrogate the laws of his Lord and King ; much less to make laws just contrary to them, or to exempt any from obeying the laws of Christ ; that attempts of this kind denote an adversary, rather than a faithful and upright Vicar, of Christ.

17. They doubt of these things the more, because the primitive Church knew of no such thing as an universal head; because no Bishop was acknowledged as such at the time of the Council of Nice; because Gregory the Great declared, he should account any man to be antichrist who called himself by such a title; because it is apparent, that Boniface III., the next Pope but one to him, about the year 606, was the first to whom the title of universal Bishop was given, as a reward for his absolving the tyrant Phocas, after he had murdered his master, the Emperor Mauritius, with his Empress, and eight children; because the succeeding Popes acquired one part of their power after another, by various methods, either of fraud or force; because many of them have been notoriously wicked men, and encouragers of all manner of wickedness; notwithstanding all which, men are required to believe that they are all enlightened by the Holy Ghost, in so extraordinary a manner as to be rendered infallible; although one Pope is continually contradicting another, and reversing the decrees which his predecessors had most solemnly established.

18. When the Romanists are desired to prove by Scripture, that the Pope is the head of the Church, they urge, that Christ said to St. Peter, (1.) "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (2.) "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep." Therefore we answer, These texts by no means prove that Christ made St. Peter himself his Vicar; much less that he gave that dominion to the Pope, which he now usurps over the consciences of men. And hence we are the more clearly convinced, that the papal power is not of divine original; and that we have great cause to bless God, whom the Pope has excluded from his communion, and thereby restored to that unshaken liberty of conscience wherein, by the grace of God, we shall always stand.

19. In this liberty every member of our Church, if he gives himself up to the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, may learn the foundation of his faith from the written word of God; may read and meditate therein day and night; may devoutly pray in the Spirit of adoption, like the holy men of ancient times; may comfort and quicken himself and others, with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; may enjoy all the ordinances of Christ, according to his own institution; may be assured of the remission of his sins, and of his justification

through faith in Christ, the Spirit of God witnessing with his spirit that he is a child of God; may study to have a conscience void of offence, both toward God and toward man: He may freely enjoy every blessing which God hath bestowed upon our own Church; and may make advantage of whatever good the providence of God has still preserved in the Church of Rome: He may cheerfully look for a happy death, and a blessed eternity; and at length, by resting on Christ alone, and patiently partaking of his sufferings, he may, with certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life, without any fear either of purgatory or hell, resign his spirit into the hand of God, and so be ever with the Lord.

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## POPERY CALMLY CONSIDERED.

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### TO THE READER.

IN the following Tract, I propose, First, to lay down and examine the chief doctrines of the Church of Rome: Secondly, to show the natural tendency of a few of those doctrines; and that with all the plainness and all the calmness I can.

### SECTION I.

#### OF THE CHURCH, AND THE RULE OF FAITH.

1. THE Papists judge it necessary to salvation, to be subject to the Pope, as the one visible head of the Church.

But we read in Scripture, that Christ is the Head of the Church, "from whom the whole body is fitly joined together." (Col. ii. 19.) The Scripture does not mention any visible head of the Church; much less does it mention the Pope as such; and least of all does it say, that it is necessary to salvation to be subject to him.

2. The Papists say, The Pope is Christ's Vicar, St. Peter's successor, and has the supreme power on earth over the whole Church.

We answer, Christ gave no such power to St. Peter himself. He gave no Apostle pre-eminence over the rest. Yea,