

# The Theological Instructor.

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## WHAT DO THEY MEAN BY RITUALISM?

To hear the writers of the Church Association talk one could not help imagining but that the much hated Ritualism was to be found in every portion of our widely extended Dominion. All ecclesiastical authority that does not emanate from the people is classed by these gentlemen with Puseyism, Ritualism, and Popery; and what is regarded as exceedingly innocent among the self-constituted societies of Dissenters when it happens to be found in any one branch of Christ's Catholic and Apostolic Church is regarded as the harbinger of Popery; because the advocates of schism are inwardly convinced in their own hearts that they have no authority from Christ, or his Church, as teachers of his religion, while the true authority of the Church appears as an epistle known and read of all men. The theory of church government which the Associationists would feel justified in calling their own is by no means intelligible from their published papers in opposition to their own spiritual rulers, but we may justly infer from the tenor of their industriously circulated and well written remarks that they intend, if possible, not only to sever between the people and their lawful pastors, but to annihilate every thing existing in Christendom in

the shape of a hierarchy, and to reduce the members of the Church to an indefinite number of independent units, to give the Bible to all, with an equal right to form their own opinion of its meaning, without the slightest reference to their incapacity or ignorance, or the least apprehension that they might happen to err in their exposition of the sacred text.

On page 22 of Dr. D'Aubigne's Puseyism examined, a work highly prized, we feel sure, by every Church Associationist, we find their own views and feelings recorded in relation to the subject of the article which we now quote: "I admit, he says, that the Church is the judge of controversies *judex controversiarum*. But what is the Church? It is not the clergy, it is not the councils, still less is it the Pope. It is the Christian people, it is the faithful. 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good,' is said to the children of God, and not to some assembly, or to a certain Bishop; and it is they who are constituted, on the part of God *judges of controversies*: If animals have the instinct which leads them not to eat that which is injurious to them, we cannot do less than allow to the Christian this instinct, or rather this intelligence, which emanates from the virtue of the Holy Spirit."