

of acknowledged reputation and authority take very different ground, and one man will lay great stress on an argument which another entirely repudiates. Then, there are the dissensions of the monastic orders. The Franciscans maintain the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin: the Dominicans stoutly deny it;—the latter incline to Calvinistic views of doctrine; the Jesuits are Armenians. Party is ranged against party, and uninterested observers cannot fail to form the conclusion that pre-eminence and power are valued much more than truth. In short, Bossuet thought he had achieved a great victory when he published his *Histoire des Variations*, but his was a vain boast: to the “Variations of Protestantism,” we can add the “Variations of Popery.”

Dr. Edgar's work has been many years before the public, and is highly esteemed. It is a convincing and complete exposure of Papal diversity. Mr. Sparry's edition deserves universal patronage. It is well executed, and it is to be furnished (it is issuing in parts) at the astonishingly low price of one dollar.

We give an extract, as a specimen of the style and manner of the writer:—

“Paul's words to the Corinthians have also been pressed into the service, for the support of Purgatory. The Apostle of Tarsus taught the Christians of Corinth that the professor, building ‘wood, hay, or stubble,’ on the foundation, though his ‘work shall be burnt, shall be saved, yet so as by fire.’ This fire, say Bellarmin, Ward, Challenor, the Council of Sens, the Latins in the Council of Florence, and many other advocates of Romanism, awaits the perpetrator of trifling transgressions in the middle state.

The difficulty of this passage might have caused some hesitation in making it the basis of any system. Its difficulty has been acknowledged, in emphatic language, by Augustin, Beda, Bellarmin, Alexander, and Estius. Bellarmin represents it as one of the obscurest, and, at the same time, one of the usefulest passages in all Revelation. Its obscurity, in Bellarmin's opinion, contributed to its utility, as it enabled the Jesuit, with a little management, to explain it as he pleased. But Alexander, with more sense, candour, and honesty, has, on account of its want of

perspicuity, rejected it as a demonstration of Purgatory.

Its obscurity, says Estius, has occasioned many and various expositions. Bellarmin, Alexander, and Calmet have collected a copious specimen of the jarring interpretations of Saints, Expositors, and Divines, on this part of the Inspired Volume, and their collections afford no very flattering view of the unity of Romanism.

The principal significations which have been attached to the Apostolic expression, are three. Gregory, Augustin, Bernard, and Beda account the fire a metaphor for tribulation, temptation, or trial in this life. The Roman Pontiff and Saints, as well as the English Monk, refer the expression to the pains endured, not after, but before death; and so exclude posthumous expiation. Similar to this is Cajetan's explanation, who makes it signify severe judgments.

Origin, Ambrosius, Lactantius, Basil, Jerome, and Augustin, according to Estius, reckon the language literal, and refer it to the general conflagration, on the day of the last judgment; though Purgatory, at that period, will, according to Bellarmin, be evacuated and left empty. This ancient interpretation has been followed by Lombard, Aquinas, Haimo, Alcuin, and Estius. This party make saint and sinner pass through the fiery ordeal, which will try the work of every one, whether he build gold or silver on the foundation, or wood, hay, and stubble. But the intermediate place of purgation, in the theology of Romanism, contains only the middling class, who are guilty of a frailty.

Chrysostom and Theodoret interpret Paul's diction, to signify the unquenchable fire of hell, and these two Grecian commentators have been followed, say Bellarmin, Calmet, and Alexander, by Theophylact, Sedulius, and Anselm. This was the opinion of the whole Grecian communion. The Greeks, accordingly, in the Council of Florence, represented the fire mentioned by the Apostle, not as Purgatorian, but eternal. Alexander and Erasmus also declare against the Popish exposition of Paul's language; and display the singular unanimity of Romish theologians, commentators, and saints. Gregory, Augustin, Bernard, and Beda appear, on this