

at home in all nations, and kings and queens shall bow down before the Pope, and lick the dust of his feet.—If this is not claiming pretty and extensive jurisdiction in behalf of his holiness in *Italy*, we do not know what is."

Christian Guardian, April 16.

Protestant, or negative faith, refuted, and the Catholic, or affirmative faith, demonstrated from Scripture.

XXXII.

ON THE PROTESTANT'S RULE OF FAITH.

Concluded.

In relying on the testimony of the Catholic Church, the acknowledged first and oldest of all Christian Churches; consequently the only one, to which all the promises of Christ were made: the one therefore, which he said, *he built upon the rock*; and against which, he assured us, *the gates of hell should not prevail*: which he commands us *all to hear, or be accounted as Heathens and publicans*: to the legitimate Pastors of which he bids us hearken, as to himself; declaring that *he himself would be with them at all times even to the end of the world*: together with his holy spirit, the spirit of truth; who would guide them into all truth; and bring to their minds all things, whatsoever he had spoken to them: concluding the whole of his promises with the solemn asseveration that *Heaven and Earth should pass away*; but that his words should never pass away: in relying on the testimony and interpretation of such a Church, we but obey the Saviour's command. But who is a Luther, a Calvin, a Wesley; or that any man of sound judgment; whose interpretative authority is greater than hers; or where in all scripture, the Protestant's Rule of Faith, is any mention made of such individuals, and their interpretative authority?

We admit not, say the Protestants, any interpretation as human, or the word of man; but, as divinely inspired: For the spirit breatheth where it will—John iii. 8—and we consider all those, whose interpretation we prefer, as having the Holy Ghost for their interpreter.

If the Holy Ghost is their interpreter, he interprets then either to all; or only to some. If to all; why do not all agree in their interpretations of Scripture: for the spirit of truth cannot say yea and nay to the same thing? If only to some; how am I to know that some: for no miracle is wrought in proof of their opinion? The Presbyterians tell me they are that some. The Anglicans say, no: for we are that some. The Methodists assure me that they are the very some. Nay, the unchristened Quakers maintain that they are the only some. There is not a sect; no, nor a single individual, man, woman, or child among them, who may not claim an equal right to press, all and each, their particular opinion upon you, as the sole inspired and true one. And who can shew me the vanity of such a pretension, where an equal right to interpret is granted to all; & no miracle is wrought to decide the question?

Thus do they, in the application of their Rule of Faith, make perfect fools of one another. & by their endless variations, mad freaks, inconsistencies, and contradictions, induce those, whom they have

led away from the knowledge and consideration of the first revealed and only true religion; to regard Christianity at large as one huge mass of absurd and irreconcilable contradictions. How, indeed, can such do otherwise, judging, as they must, of the whole, by the odd and uncouth fractions of it, with which alone they are acquainted? In this, at last, do we see fast ending their so much boasted Reformation.

But the rare absurdity in their Rule of Faith is, that it grants, and at the same time denies to each, the right of interpreting. It grants it to every one interpreting for himself: it denies it to every one interpreting for others. That is, it authorizes every one to consider his own private interpretation, as divinely inspired, and unquestionably true: but it forbids him to press it, as such on the belief of others; who are not bound to receive it; nay, who are bound to reject it, as but the fallible and unsure interpretation of Jack, Martin, Henry, or whom you please. Thus, their Rule divides, but does not unite. It scuttles, but does not gather with Christ. Luke xi. 23. And, hence, the foolish man's house is justly said to be built upon sand; no two particles of which unite, or adhere together.

Protestants unite but in heaps together, like the dust, or sand, loosely agglomerated by the winds: as Lutherans; Zuinglians, or Sacramentarians, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Baptists, Pedo Baptists; Anglicans; Hugonots; Presbyterians; Independents; Seceders; Puritans; Arminians; Burghers; Anti-Burghers; Swedenburghers; Ubiquitarians, Libertines, Servetians, Muncerians, Beucheldians, Socinians; Bidillians, Unitarians; Antitrinitarians; Latitudinarians, Antinomians; Oscendrians; Johnsonians; Menonists; Labadists; Methodists; Wesleyans; Whitfieldites; Huntingdonites; Melchiorites; Adamites; Heutites; Killhamites; New Jerusalemites; Millenarians; Stancarians; Cameronians; Muggletonians; Hutchinsonians; Southcotmians, Haldnians; Supralapsarians; Sublapsarians; Sabbatarians; Baxterians; Necessitarians, Svenkfeldians, Sindimarians, or Glassites; Moravians; Denkiens, Avesdorfians, Bereans; Libertines, Seekers; Sliders, Swaddlers; Tumblers; Jumpers, Quakers; Shakers; Dunkers; Ranters, Revivers; Expectants; Familists; Catharists; Separatists, Destructionists; Materialists; Universalists; Freethinkers; Deists; Sceptics; and our whole Mock-Philosopher-Tribe; with a thousand other dissentient sects; all the foul spawn of Luther's reformation; to which we might add all the heresies, that ever went before it; but whose names, except with the learned, are buried in oblivion; only those of its immediate pioneers and forerunners being ever mentioned in modern controversy; such as the Waldenses; the Albigenses; the Wickliffites; the Hussites; &c. &c. But, like the sand, they have all a tendency to separate. Their Rule of Faith destroys all their cohesive quality, by making every one independent of all the rest: authorizing every man of sound judgment; and who is not a man of sound judgment, at least in his own opinion; to interpret; judge and

decide for himself: nay, forbidding him to rely on the judgment of others: for that were contrary to his adopted rule; and subversive of his reforming principle. Thus every particle of their several heaps remains; and should, from its disjunctive principle, remain quite unconnected with the rest. And, indeed, in proclaiming themselves the followers of any one's opinions, they are evidently transgressing their professed Rule of Faith, by thus building their faith, not, as they pretend, on the purely written word; but on its interpretation by the individuals, men or women, whose disciples they profess themselves to be.

The truth is, the Protestant is forced by his Rule of Faith, to affirm and deny the same thing: He is the yea and the nay together; which Saint Paul in his preaching so loudly disclaims. 2 Cor. i. 18, 19. He declares by his Rule, in rejecting the instructive authority of the Catholic Church, that he will abide by no man's interpretation, but his own; nor acknowledge any directing authority on earth, in the choice of his creed: and yet he abides by the interpretation, and submits to the directing authority, of him or her, who formed the sect, to which he belongs; the appellation of which he has assumed.

Still, after all, in rejecting, according to his Rule of Faith, all human interpretation as fallible, and the word of man; ought he not, for consistency's sake, to reject also his own, which is likewise human, and as fallible as that of every other, which his Rule compels him to reject? And then, what would his Rule of Faith be reduced to? To the dead letter of the Scripture, without any interpretation whatever. To the letter that kills; without the spirit that gives life. 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Still, if the Protestant must err; and err he must, without what he does not pretend to have, an infallible guide; and the moment he steps aside from the sole path of truth, the further he goes, the more he strays: it were less inconsistent and absurd for him, even in his error, to abide by his originally adopted separative principle, the scripture, as interpreted by himself alone: and not so contradict himself, by proclaiming this to be his Rule of Faith, and yet, while he rejects the interpretation of the whole Catholic Church; and affects to be his own sole interpreter, allowing himself to be swayed by the interpretation of every upstart dogmatizer: for by such discrepancy betwixt his words and deeds, he verifies the saying of the Psalmist. MEMITA EST INIQUITAS SIBI. Iniquity hath lied to herself. Ps. xxvi. 12. Of this, indeed he seems sensible at last: and is resolved to be no more guilty of such glaring inconsistency. He now therefore resumes his original rule, the purely written word; and claims that right, which Luther did, of being his own sole interpreter; an unfettered, independent self-taught expounder. It has however been wisely affirmed that he, who hath himself for his master, hath a fool for his scholar. And Solomon says that there is more hope for a fool, than for one, who is wise in his own conceit. Prov. xxvi. 12. Still, unwilling to look back to that Church, whose au-