

forgotten ceremony—emblem of better things forgotten; the professors in her colleges, her doctors, and her ministers are split in twain; her chief rulers and teachers either stand aloof in sullen reserve, or pour down upon them the shafts of a galling and biting censure from the topmost towers of her citadel.

A CHARITABLE APPEAL

FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

In favour of the doctrines of
The Catholic Church.

“Return back to judgment.”—Dan. xxxi. 49.
“To the law and to the testimony.”—Isai viii. 20.

NOTE. The scriptural quotations by which this appeal is enforced, are taken from the Protestant Bible.

POINT IV.

(Continued.)

If Protestants, to decline the force of this sentence, whereby the Son of God has so plainly established the jurisdiction of his Church for deciding controversies; if, I say, they should pretend that the words in the text relate not to articles of faith, but only to criminal matters, to trespasses of one private man against another. To give them an answer to this cavil, in the words of a learned author, let them consider, “That the greatest and most dangerous trespasses, and which more especially (as being spiritual cases) ought to be brought to the spiritual court of the Church, are such offences, by which the souls of many, the truth of religion, and the unity of the Church, are endangered: if then other trespasses of our brother are matters of complaint and of the Church’s cognizance, much more these. And if in those, where faith is not concerned, we are obliged to hear our Church guides, how much more where faith was concerned?” Unerring Authority of the Church, Sec. ii. p. 79.

In a word: the tribunal which Protestants have set up to end disputes of religion, to wit: the scriptures, as each of the contending parties shall expound it to the best of their judgment, is the very source where all controversies take their birth. It is a tribunal which has never ended any one controversy between them and their adversaries, nor even amongst themselves. For the contending parties having all an equal right to judge of the controversy by the *written word*, the dispute can never be ended till one of the parties is prevailed on by the other’s reasons to condemn themselves. But, is it not much rather to be expected, that each one will give judgment in favour of his own opinion and will remain stiff in

his own sentiments? And should all the rest of the world condemn him and his sect, he being as good a judge of the controversy as they, has he not as good a right to condemn them again? Thus, is schism irremediable in all the reformed churches. For why shall not that be lawful to the Valentinians, which was lawful to Valentinus? and what was lawful to Calvin, be lawful to Calvinists? That is, to make new sects, and prefer their judgment before that of all others. For, have they not, according to their own principles, all the same plea for dissenting from one another? The Presbyterians as good a plea to dissent from the Church of England, as the Church of England pretended to have to dissent from the Church of Rome: the Independents as good a plea to dissent from the Presbyterians: and the Quakers, as good a plea to dissent from them all? Each one, by the Reformation, being constituted a sovereign judge of the controversy between them and their adversaries, and each one having past judgment, that their own party is in the right, and their adversaries in the wrong.

But, to do Protestants justice, this tribunal of private judgment is no innovation of theirs, but a point of much higher antiquity: and in this point, it must be owned, their religion is very ancient; no custom having been more ancient, from the beginning of the world, than for the refractory party in all disputes, to appeal from the judgment of lawful superiors to their own private judgment; and, since the establishment of the Church of Christ, from the first heresy to the last, I believe there was not one but appealed from the Church to the same tribunal; the *written word of God*, of whose sense themselves were to be judges. And had all controversies been allowed to be decided by this method, no article of the Christian faith, but the being of a God, had been by this time left; every other article of the creed having been condemned as contrary to the *written word*, at the tribunal of private judgment, by one sect or other. The Trinity, by Arians and Semiarians; the Incarnation, by Nestorians and Eutychians; the Resurrection, by Hymenæus and Philetus, &c. 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.

POINT V.

Protestants maintain, that we cannot safely rely upon the judgment of the Church and of general councils in controversies of faith or morals, because the pastors of the Church are but men, and may err, and may consequently lead us astray, if we pay entire obedience to their decisions. Therefore they conclude it to be much safer to adhere only to the *written word of God*. As though every private man and woman among Protestants, who are to be the interpreters of this