

tion and counsel, prudence bids you follow the best: and to do you justice, Mr. Hardman, in ordinary matters you are sufficiently acute and sensible. Tell me why, in your late alarming illness, you entrusted your life to the skill of the regular physician, rather than to the confident ignorance of the quack; and I will tell you why, in a concern of greater importance than bodily health, I repose greater confidence in the Church of God, than in any inferior authority. A word is sufficient to the wise. I do not shut out the light of day, to study by the light of a candle.

But still you persist that the Bible is the only rule of Protestants, Presbyterians, Calvinists; Methodists, Unitarians and the rest: and, that as such, they all subscribe to the Bible Society. Strange indeed:—birds of a feather flock together. How then does it happen, that while you all profess to follow the same track, some of you wing your devious flight to the North, others to the South; some to the East or West, and others to every point of the heretical compass? If you all follow the same rule of faith, why do you disagree? Why have so many meeting houses of different mushroom sects lately sprung up round our parish church; which your Catholic ancestors, as well as mine, contributed to build above a hundred years before there was a Protestant in the world? With fair play, you could not draw such different conclusions from the same premises. Does the Bible say one thing at Kirkbam, another at Treals, and quite the reverse at Rossiere and Wardless? In this diversity of pretended Bible religions, is it the Bible that leads you, or you lead the Bible? All sects spring up from delusion and enthusiasm, appealing not so much to the Bible, as to their own construction of the Bible. By this process they form a new system to their taste. If this system has the fortune to subsist and prosper for a while, the enthusiasm evaporates, and the ferment subsides. This is quite natural. You may observe a close analogy in uncorking a bottle of small beer. Pardon the comparison; it is homely, but apposite. It fumes and foams, and sparkles at first, but soon subsides and grows vapid. As the sect loses its fervour, it loses its attraction, and begins to feel the attacks of some newly-excited enthusiasm. The newest meeting-house absorbs the enthusiasm of the parish; and leaves the more ancient ones nearly empty. Without having an awkward and surreptitious recourse to the arsenal of Catholicity, it has, in this state, no spiritual armour for self-defence, but such as the new-fashioned sect has an equal right to employ in hostility against it. Supported by its own sense of the Scripture, one enthusiastic sect thus makes reprisals on another, and supplants it, to be supplanted in its turn. This is the abridged history of all the sects that have pretended to spring from, and be guided by, the Bible alone. Alone, the Bible never did, and never could support any sect long. Every Bible sect in its turn, though it execrated with all the acrimony of sectarian devotion, the Catholic principle of a living definitive authority, which keeps us in union

harmony, and peace, has soon found the necessity of resorting either openly, or what is the same thing to my argument, secretly, to other authority than the Bible. What they blamed, and like your Calvinistic elder, still blame us for doing; with an inconsistency, not at all incompatible with Bible-mania, they have soon been obliged to do themselves. During all this ridiculous and disgraceful farce, they inveigh against the authority of the Catholic Church; and still affect to follow nothing but the Bible. Is this glaring inconsistency to be ascribed to fanaticism or hypocrisy? Certain it is, that it has opened the eyes of many Protestants, and has led them to peace and happiness in the bosom of the Catholic Church. If you be sincere you cannot deem submission to testimonial and definitive authority, a crime in us, which you esteem a virtue of necessity among yourselves. Either forbear to imitate; or withhold your censure.

Our Church has stood the test of eighteen centuries. She has had the benefit of long experience in observing the origin, the progress, and extinction of a great variety of sects. Independently of the divine institution, she has, during this long lapse of ages, had ample means of seeing the necessity of a living and speaking authority, to interpret the silent and dead letter of the Bible, in the numerous abortive attempts of fanaticism to follow Scripture alone. She is true to her doctrine, and consistent with herself. Compared with her apostolic antiquity, your reformation is yet young. But the damsel does begin to have a little experience. Though she began her diminutive career by coquetting with the Bible, she was soon admonished, and is now convinced of the dangers of such profane familiarity. We consider her as the fairest of her family, and the least deformed, because reformed the least: yet many others, with the Bible in their hands, have always thought that she was too much *clad in scarlet*. To us who are impartial, but not indifferent observers of her struggles with her younger sisters, it is curious if not amusing, to see how easily she can accommodate her looks and language to the occasion. When she speaks to us, her language is: No Church authority; no traditions. O no, nothing but the Bible. When she is engaged with them, she finds that the Bible alone will not serve her turn. It is natural that the afflicted parent should rebuke her daughter, for first leading them astray by her bad example; and that the sisters should with insults ask her, how she can expect them to submit to her, when her own disobedience has taught them to despise their mother.

4. This is not an imaginary representation. It might be tedious at present to illustrate the subject by Catholic evidence. What our divines therefore have written with a clearness and energy of reasoning worthy of the truth which they defend, to shew the farcical duplicity of your language and mode of proceeding; to shew that you *protest* against, or what you will remember is the same thing, *disbelieve* your own principles as well as ours; and to shew that you are compelled to press some

other rule into your service, as an indispensable auxiliary to the Bible, I shall pass over at this late hour of the evening; and according to promise will limit my quotations to the text of the Acts of your own Apostles. They speak from the tripod; as Sir Richard does from observation. The first of these apostles is Henry VIII. How far he resembled our first apostles Peter and Paul, in his character, his ministry, and the motives of his zeal, is pretty well understood. He gave the Bible to his converts; told them that it was the only avenue to the truth; and assured them from his own comfortable experience, that it was as easy to understand, as that fourpence made a groat. But in a few years, viz. 1541, this Supreme Head of the Church tells the Parliament, that many tares grew up in his field among the corn: and two years afterwards prefixed this preamble to an Act for the advancement of true religion, and abolishment of the contrary: "Whereas many seditious and ignorant people have abused the liberty granted them for reading the Bible, and great diversity of opinions, animosities, tumults and schisms have been occasioned by perverting the sense of the Scripture; to retrieve the mischiefs arising from thence, it is enacted, that a certain form of orthodox doctrine, consonant to the inspired writings, and the doctrine of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, shall be set forth as a standard of belief; that Tindal's false translation of the Old and New Testament, and all other books touching religion in the English tongue, contrary to the (six) Articles of Faith, or that Summary of doctrine published by the King, in 1540, or any time after, shall be suppressed, and forbidden to be read in the King's Dominions . . . and that the reading the Bible is likewise prohibited, to all under the degrees of Gentlemen and Gentlewomen!" *Statutes at Large*, 34 Hen. VIII. Chapter 1. *

The next of your apostles whose testimony I shall cite is Queen Elizabeth. She had been Supreme Head of your Church eight and twenty

* On the 4th of November, 1547, in his last dying speech to Parliament, after complaining of a great lack of charity, that the clergy taught one contrary to another, that almost all men were in variety and discord, and that there was little or no preaching truly and sincerely the word of God, his Majesty proceeds: "You of the Clergy . . . amend these crimes, I exhort you, and set out God's words, both by true preaching and good example giving: or else I, whom God hath appointed his Vicar, and High Minister here, will see these divisions extinct, and these enormities corrected, according to my very duty. Although I say the spiritual men be in some fault, that charity is not kept among you, yet you of the temporality be not clear and unspotted of malice and envy; for you rail at Bishops, speak scandalously of Priests, and rebuke and taunt preachers, both contrary to good order and Christian fraternity. If you know surely, that a Bishop or Preacher erreth or teacheth perverse doctrine, come and declare it to some of our Council, or to us, to whom is committed by God the High Authority, to reform and order such causes and behaviours; and be not judges yourselves, of your fantastic opinions, and vain expositions: for in such High causes, you may lightly err. And although you be permitted to read Holy Scripture, and to have the word of God in your Mother-Tongue, you must understand, it is licensed you so to do, only to inform your own consciences, and instruct your children and family; and not to dispute and make Scripture a railing and taunting stock, against Priests and Preachers, as many light persons do. I am very sorry to know and hear, how unreverently that most precious jewel the Word of God is disputed, rhimed, sung and jangled, in every alehouse and tavern, contrary to the true meaning and doctrine of the same: and yet I am even as much sorry that the readers of the same follow it, in doing it, so faintly and