

THE PROTESTANT, OR NEGATIVE FAITH REFUTED, AND THE CATHOLIC, OR AFFIRMATIVE FAITH, DEMONSTRATED FROM SCRIPTURE.

II.—THE HOLY EUCHARIST.—Continued.

The unbelief of Protestants in a mystery so clearly revealed by him, whom they acknowledge to be God, is the more unaccountable; as they have in all nature, and even in themselves, the constant and most striking proofs of his power to work the very change in question. For do they not behold him in the vegetable as well as the animal species of every denomination, "transubstantiating" one substance into another? Do they not behold him, even in themselves, "transubstantiating" their meat and drink into their very flesh and blood? Let them tell me else from what other source does the diminutive infant derive its increasing bulk till it has grown up into the full-sized, and perfect man? And can they then deem it absurd to believe, on his formal and repeated asseveration that he can do for himself in a "supernatural" and "instantaneous" manner, what he does in a slow and natural manner for all?—The first and last of his public miracles was "transubstantiation;" the first, that of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee—John ii.;—the last a still greater one, that of bread and wine into his body and blood, at the mystical marriage feast of himself, the celestial "bridegroom, the king's son," to which all are invited Matt. xxii, 2. But this, the last and greatest of all his wonders wrought, he intended as the chief trial, test, and object of our faith.—Wherefore, resting it on the evidence of all other miracles, he denies it that of all the senses, but the hearing. "Faith," says the Apostle, "cometh by the hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."—Rom. x. 17. And can we distrust his word, so clearly, frequently and emphatically announced? Can we refuse our entire reliance on that word, to the truth of which, all nature has borne such miraculous testimony? The winds and the waves were seen subject at his call, and the inhabitants of the deep crowded instantly where he wiled them. The watery element grows firm under his steps. The vegetating productions are blasted by his frown. Diseases, defects and debilities of every kind vanish at his word. The blind see; the deaf hear; the sick are restored to perfect health; the lepers are cleansed; the devils fly at his rebuke; even death and the grave, at his summons, yield up instantly their dead: the very inmost thoughts of the human heart are known to him. In a word, the whole of nature owns him, though disguised in human form, her almighty Maker and Sovereign Lord.

If we see him not performing such miracles, we behold him daily working in the administration of this universe other wonders as astonishingly great.—For instance, to give life is a far greater act of omnipotence, than to restore it; and thus we see him do daily, by calling into existence millions of creatures, and giving them life and a being, which they never had before. Here reproduces with increase the seed in the ground to feed his needful creatures; as he re-produced the loaves and fishes in the desert to feed his fasting followers: and can he not as easily re-produce in its very distribution, by the hands of his pastors, "the bread of life," which he promised to give us? It was from this very miracle, a most stupendous one certainly, that he took occasion to challenge the belief of the multitude, who had witnessed it, in his power to furnish them with a far more wonderful and exquisite repast: not an earthly one, for the short support of the body; but a heavenly and life-giving one, for the nourishment of the soul: food, as he affirms, far exceeding even the miraculous manna of the Israelites, and infinitely surpassing the Protestant's poor drop and crumb.

It was our original distrust in the word of God, and our guilty wish for forbidden knowledge, that wrought all our woe in Paradise, by making us the willing dupes of the deceiving fiend. The reparation, therefore, of our fault is our entire reliance on the word of God, without coveting to know and understand more of his mysteries than he has been pleased for the present to reveal. As a trial, therefore, of our faith in his word, he has grounded his whole religion on mysteries inexplicable; several of which are admitted by Protestants as articles of their faith; such as the unity and trinity of the Godhead, the Incarnation of the Eternal Son, the resurrection of the dead, &c. And, while they admit these, as essential truths revealed to us by the Deity, can they reject, though more explicitly, repeatedly, and emphatically revealed and taught by the same authority, the Eucharistic mystery, on the sole plea of its incomprehensibility?

Yet in the whole of nature, which is that single object which man in his present state does fully comprehend? Are we not every where surrounded with mysteries inexplicable? Are we not in every sense, a perfect mystery even to ourselves? And shall we doubt the clear declaration of God, because to us its verification is quite incomprehensible?

The Eucharistic mystery is, if you please, the hardest to be understood. It is, if I may call it so, "the mystery of mysteries," and the one by which our trust in the divine word is put to the severest test.—But then it is, on this account, the clearest and most fully revealed of any; not only by the Saviour's solemn,

plain and positive declarations on the subject; but by the, also unmeaning, legal sacrifices, types and figures, the whole of which but pointed at this mystery, and found in it their full accomplishment.

Our belief in this mystery, from our total reliance on the word of God, is the ample amends made to him for our original distrust in his word: and, as we fell from him by our disbelief, we are restored to him in this mystery, and united with him in the closest manner, in reward of our perfect faith. Our bane is thus changed into our bliss; and "the tree of death," with its forbidden fruit, converted into "the tree of life;" the fruit of which we are commanded to eat as the sovereign antidote against the threatened death; for on the tree of the cross that body hung, and that blood was shed, to the eating or drinking of which is promised eternal life.—John vi. as above.

Still to those not "taught of God," but of man, how incredible and absurd must seem so deep a mystery! And hence do we see all the sectaries though they affect to cling to the letter of the Scripture, racking their brains, and risking every conjecture, rather than take the Saviour's words in their plain, unfigurative, and literal meaning. They believe his declaration only in as far as they think they understand it. Where then is the merit of their faith, if they believe nothing of the word of God but what they comprehend? Strange presumption in such short-sighted and ignorant worms, to set themselves thus to judge how far the evident disclosures of Omnipotence are admissible; rejecting of them as absurd and impossible, whatever comes not within the narrow sphere of their intellect.—"Faith," says St. Paul, "cometh by the hearing."—Rom. x. 17.—"It stands not on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God." 1 Cor. ii. 5. "We speak," continues he, "the wisdom of God in a mystery: a wisdom which is hidden; which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew. But to us God has revealed them by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man, that is in him? so, the things also that are of God, no man knoweth but the spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God; which things also we speak not in the learned words of human wisdom, but in the doctrine of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the spirit of God, for it is folly to him; and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined. But the spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged by no man: for who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."—Ibid.

"Those, therefore, 'taught of God,' and who thus 'have the mind of Christ,' can see in this Eucharistic mystery a doctrine worthy of that God, who with his word created all things out of nothing: and, in our belief in a mystery so inexplicable, an act of homage paid to his veracity proportionably great, while those 'taught of man, who perceiveth not the things that are of the spirit see nothing in it but folly, because they cannot understand."

Yet in all this prodigy of love to man, there is nothing too much for him to accomplish, who could stoop so from his sovereign height to the extreme lowliness and utter abjection of our fallen and wretched condition: could even assume our suffering and mortal humanity, and in it, "as a worm and no man, the reproach of man, and the outcast of the people"—Ps. xxi. 6.—bear the expiatory punishment of our guilt, in order to save us from destruction. It is not too much for him, who could make himself our brother, to vouchsafe so to dwell in the midst of us: disguised, indeed, to try our faith, and muffled up in the sacramental veils; but in that very same, though now glorified and impassible humanity, which he disdained not to take upon himself for our sake.—Here he stands between us and the just wrath of his Heavenly Father; pleading "our high priest according to the order of Melchizedek," a merciful respite for sinners, and preserving thus our sin-polluted world from destruction: as Moses, interposing himself between the angry Deity and the guilty Israelites, prevented their threatened extermination: and as Aaron, the High Priest, hastening forth with his censor and holy fire, stayed the havoc made in the camp by the destroying Angel.—Numb. 14. Ibid. 16. 43.

Yes, he still deigns to dwell in the midst of his followers here on earth. His love for us, which knows no bounds, will not suffer him to be absent from the darling objects of his care and concern. "My delight," says he, "is to be with the children of men"—Prov. vii. 31.—"Lo! I am with you at all times, even to the end of the world"—Matt. xxviii. 20.—and, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—Matt. xvi. 20.

No bars or doors can now exclude his presence. In the midst of his Disciples, though closeted up for fear of the Jews, he suddenly stood: and gave his wounds to be felt by his doubting Apostle: chiding him at the same time in the gentlest manner for his incredulity. "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas," said he, "thou hast believed, but blessed are they, who have not seen and yet have believed." John xx. 29.

THE URSULINE CONVENT, CHARLESTOWN, MASS.—The Boston correspondent of the N. Y. Tribune, writing Saturday, 21st inst., says:

"In the House, yesterday, a petition was presented, signed by Abbot Lawrence and two thousand others, praying the Legislature to remunerate the proprietors of the Ursuline Convent. I am inclined to believe that the prayer of this petition will be granted, as it certainly ought to be. It is a reproach to our State that this act of justice has been so long postponed. But it is not too late to retrieve our tarnished honor."

We believe that the Catholics of Massachusetts have abstained from signing this petition, or concerning themselves with it in any way.—They have so often applied for justice to the Legislature of the State without obtaining it, that they have abandoned the prosecution of their just claim, and determined to remain inactive observers of the course of events. Their Protestant fellow citizens have, however, taken the matter in hand, and have united without distinction of party in memorializing the Legislature (which, as our readers are aware, is, this year, "Democratic" by a small majority) for restitution.—Abbot Lawrence, whose name heads the petition, is a man of great influence and high standing in Massachusetts. He was very generally & favorably thought of as a candidate for Senator from that State in the room of Mr. Webster. We will see whether or not the Legislature will disregard this memorial also.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

THE CHURCH OF THE POOR.

In a late number of the *British Critic* we find the following remarks which we lay before our readers, not only as intrinsically good, but as useful in indicating the course of religious feeling among the High Church party in Great Britain, of which the *British Critic* is the organ.

THE CHURCH OF THE POOR.—Let us see. The poor man having laid out of his earnings towards the expences of public worship, and the maintenance of a costly fabric, diffidently approaches its portals. Within he finds a great deal of apparatus and ornament just of that decent and comfortable sort which seems rather addressed to the tastes of private life and genteel society, than to the severer and more reverential instincts of religion; which, therefore, though not so calculated to provoke the hatred of the fanatic, are possibly the more likely to awaken the bitter envy of the poor.—The whole plan seems designated for gentlemen and ladies, or at least for such as the world has smiled upon. There is mahogany panelling and brass rods, and crimson curtains, a silken clergyman, and perhaps a tasselled clerk, new gilding and painting, and varnish, matting and carpeting, most roomy and comfortable pews, fitted up with as much variety of colour and device as the parlours and drawing rooms of the owners; two or three large stoves, partitions of wood and glass, and baises, and scattered about the pews, with plenty of room to dis-

pose their limbs and the more flowing portions of their apparel, a number of very contented looking gentlemen and ladies, with here and there a family of children, neither half clad nor half starved, as possibly the case with the supposed observer's own. Wherever he turns, wealth, and ease and finery stare him in the face.—Whatever is bright, obvious, and symmetrical in the arrangement and equipments of the building,—whatever basks in the broad light of the church,—belongs to the aristocracy, or would be aristocracy of the parish.

But the poor—where are they? Nowhere. Stay; here is a Sunday school in the middle aisle; and in a remote corner are two or three dozen "free sittings," as also in the middle aisle, where they look as homeless, and as comfortless, and windblown, as so many apple-trees lining the pavement of the High-street; and on these are half a-dozen old men and women. Here and there in holes & corners, may at length be discovered a few more. The church seems a mere epitome of the town, in which the great thoroughfares and openings, the stately mansions and terraces, are occupied by those on the summit or ascendant of wealth and power; while the ten thousand poor are buried out of sight in lanes and alleys, in cellars and garrets, in lonely cells or crowded lodging-houses. Is it possible that this is the church of the poor? the poor man does not fail to ask. Is it reason, or justice, or anything but mere tyranny—the dead weight of an inveterate wrong—that this wealthy, luxurious, exclusive congregation should levy tribute from us poor people, whom it spurns and virtually drives away? In this way, and on these grounds, the poor actually do argue against the claims to supremacy and national support advanced by the church; and in this way they will argue till the apparent grounds are altered, and the church shall be, and seem to be as well as pretend to be, the church of the poor.

PRIMACY.—"It is indeed observable," says Isaac Barrow, speaking of St. Peter, "that upon all occasions our Lord signified a particular respect to him, before the rest of his colleagues; for to him more frequently than to any of them He directed his discourse; unto him, by a kind of anticipation, He granted or promised those gifts and privileges, which He meant to confer on them all; him He did assume as spectator and witness of his glorious transfiguration; him He picked out as companion and attendant on Him in His grievous agony; his feet first He washed; to him He did first discover himself after His resurrection (as Saint Paul implieth;) and with him then He did enter in most discourse; in especial manner recommending to him the pastoral care of His Church; by which manner of proceeding our Lord may seem to have constituted Saint Peter the first in order among the Apostles, or sufficiently to have hinted His mind for their direction, admonishing them by His example to render unto him a special deference."—*A Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy*, p. 34, London edition, 1683.