

Original.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

*He who is not with me is against me ;— and he who gathereth not with me, scattereth.*—LUKE xi. 23.

MANY are apt to entertain a particular antipathy to the Catholic Church, on account of her supposed intolerant principle of denying salvation to all, who are not of her own communion. Yet every Protestant Sect, and particularly the Church of England, holds it necessary for salvation to be of the true Church. And as each of them, in its turn, has given itself out for the only true Church, so each in its confessions of faith has more or less explicitly maintained that out of its own communion there is no salvation. I cannot therefore well perceive why the Catholic Church should be deemed more illiberal and intolerant than the Protestant Churches, for holding a doctrine which they have all professed. I should rather think her in as much less so, as she is more universal, and extended as to time and place : for it were surely more intolerant and illiberal in only a national, or but partly a national church, or local sect, to hold forth such a doctrine ; than in one that has existed in all ages, since our Saviour's time ; that has been and still is the established religion of the far greatest part of Christendom ; and that is to be found in all the nations of the earth, and in countries where the dissenting creeds of Protestantism were never known.

But the Catholic Church is not so illiberal in this respect, as she is supposed to be by those who know her not. She admits, what reason indeed shews must be the case, that Almighty God requires impossibilities of no one. So that, if we can but suppose any in the absolute impossibility of coming to the knowledge of the truth, but who strictly observe and practice what their conscience tells them is right ; such she deems virtually her children, capable of being saved through the superabundant merits of the Redeemer, who died for all men ; and through whom alone all, that are saved, are saved. But this she maintains does not in the least supersede the absolute obligation every one is under, of enquiring after the truth, whenever there is the least cause for doubt ; and of embracing it when found.

The Church of England, Art 18, declares them "accursed, who presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law, or sect, which he professeth ; so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law."

The Church of Scotland, in her Confession of Faith, declares, "We utterly detest the blasphemies of those, who pretend that all men, by following equity and justice, whatever religion they otherwise profess, shall be saved ; for without Christ there, is neither life nor salvation." Art 27.

The Geneva Calvinistic Sect, in its catechism, teaches that "No person can obtain pardon of his sins, unless he be first incorporated in the people of God, and persevere in the communion of the body of Christ."

Q.—Thus, therefore, there would be nothing but damnation and death for him who is out of the church ?

A.—Yes, without doubt, all those who separate from the communion of the faithful to form a separate sect, must never expect salvation as long as they remain in that state of separation.—Sunday 16.

The Belgium Prot. Confession.—"We believe and confess one only Catholic Church.—Whoever forsakes this true church, manifestly revolts against the ordinance of God."

The Saxon Confession.—"It is a great consolation for us to know, that there are no inheritors of eternal life except in the assembly of the elect ; according to that : whom he has predestined them has he called."—Art 12.

The other Confessions of Faith of the Reformed churches of France, Switzerland, Bohemia, &c. are all to the same effect.

## ON REASON.

THE chief thing that distinguishes man from the brute, is his Reason ; that ray of divine wisdom, which streams upon his mind ; and, like the light of the sun, discovers the beautiful object, from which it proceeds. Thus by the light of Reason we discover God ; and all his admirable, amiable, and dreadful attributes : his eternity, and consequently his immutability in nature and purpose : his omnipotence, and consequently his unity, freedom, and independence ; as two or more such beings, willing contraries, must impede each other, so as to render the supposed omnipotence of each quite null, and themselves a mere nonentity : in fine, his infinite wisdom, goodness, beauty, justice, and sanctity ; or, in one word, his infinite perfection.

If in the next place we consider the relation which God has to his creatures the light of Reason still shews us many consequences necessarily flowing from his infinite perfection, which it has already discovered to us. As, for instance, that because God is infinitely good, just and holy in himself, he must love and reward what is good in his creatures ; and hate and punish in them whatever is bad. That, as infinitely just, he cannot punish in any way, or render unhappy in the smallest degree his creatures, unless by some fault, which they might not have committed, they deserve the chastisement. That he does however punish his creatures, as the many miseries, to which we see them all subjected from their very nativity, and even in their mother's womb, most evidently prove. That therefore we have all of us some how or other offended him. But as we could not in person have offended him before coming into the world, that we must have offended him in our progenitors, in whom we certainly did exist, and in whose crime we must certainly have partaken, as we do in their nature. That our progenitors who have offended, and in whom we have all offended, were free not to have offended ; otherwise as infinitely just, God could not punish them, as he does, for having done what they could not help having done. That still, from his forbearance with his guilty creatures, whom he

punishes but in part, without casting them off ultimately and without resource, nay on whom he heaps numberless favours in the midst of the chastisements he inflicts that, I say, he has still some views of mercy in their regard, still some design of a future and perfect reconciliation with them. All this even a heathen may discover by the mere light of reason, as in deed several, and in particular a Plato actually did ; and therefore expressed a hope, that at some future period God would send the Just One to restore us to our original state of innocence, & consequently of happiness without any mixture of misery ; which original state the pagans all acknowledged in their so much celebrated golden age.

The light of reason likewise shewed the heathen philosophers the necessity of religious worship. For by it they clearly perceived, that all our good must be from God, and all our evil from ourselves. That therefore God for the good he bestows deserves our most grateful homage of thanks : for the good he may vouchsafe to bestow, our earnest supplications, as a testimony of entire dependence upon him ; and for the guilt we may have contracted our utmost endeavors to appease his wrath and regain his favor ; all which effectually constitute the essentials of religious worship : the absolute necessity of which reason alone demonstrates.

Had man been a solitary creature, or a purely spiritual being, like an angel, no external mode of religious worship might have been necessary.—Only the internal worship of the mind might have been required. But in his compound state, as a being consisting of a body and a soul, Reason shews that he is bound to worship God with his whole being ; with his body as well as with his soul : which he could not do, without external acts, without gesture and voice : nor indeed is it natural for him to feel strongly in any way, without appearing outwardly affected.—Besides, as a member of his own society, he is bound to shew good example, and edify all around him ; which can be done only by external expression : hence Reason also shews the necessity of external modes of religious worship.

The modes of worship adopted at first by mankind, must have been proper and rational ; as his notions of the Deity were just and true ; but misled by his passions, and blinded by ignorance, we all know what absurd opinions concerning the Deity ; and consequently what ridiculous, and even execrable forms of worship he at length adopted. Who then but he who made him at first so good and perfect, could raise him up from his fallen and degraded state ? Could remove his night of error, and shew him once more in all its original beauty and splendour the light of truth ? Who, but the Deity, could inform him of the wonderful and inconceivable means he had resolved upon to reconcile his justice calling aloud for punishment, with his mercy imploring pardon in our behalf ? Who, but he in person could have taught us in so simple and plain a manner, that infants may fully comprehend it, a doctrine so perfect and sublime,

that the greatest philosophers, the most learned of the ancients, could never come near it in their highest flights ; and which he sums up to us in this simple command : *thou shalt love the Lord thy God above all things ; and thy neighbour (thy fellow creature, friend or enemy) as thyself ?*—

Reason, therefore, in fine, shows us clearly the necessity of Revelation, which alone could make known to us the merciful designs of God in regard to man, whom he punished, yet spared ; and on whom therefore Reason perceived his mercy would some day break forth. So far was Reason of itself capable of conducting us in our search after the eternal truth, that could direct us towards our last end ; but no further, till guided itself by Revelation.

## ENGLAND.

CATHOLIC BREVARIARIES IN OXFORD.—Puseyism is emphatically described as Popery without a Pope ; a better illustration of which could not be given than the great demand for Roman Catholic breviaries in London, and which are sent down to Oxford in large quantities.—Caledonian Mercury.

The recent Ecclesiastical intelligence from Europe and especially from England is full of deep interest for the Catholic reader. In the Oxford movement great and unexpected as it was, we cannot yet form any opinion of the great results to which it is leading. It has agitated society, broken down the fiercest opposition, dissipated prejudices which Catholic writers could never have allayed, and justly awakened in the minds of many the brightest hopes for the conversion of England. The efforts which our Church has made have been wonderful when we consider the obstacles to its advancement, and particularly the animosity which the nation had learned from childhood to entertain for its doctrines and observances. From the Catholic Directory for the present year we learn that there are in England and Wales, four hundred and eighty-seven churches. These places of worship are most numerous in Durham, Hampshire, Kent, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Northumberland and Yorkshire. There are sixty-nine churches in Scotland and twenty-four stations where divine service is performed, making the total of churches in Great Britain five hundred and fifty-six. Twenty Colleges are flourishing under the direction of the Catholics and the number of Priests amounts to seven hundred and eleven !

The leading topics in the English papers are almost all devoted to the condition of the Church of England. It appears to be generally conceded that the present crisis in her history is of such magnitude and so diversified in details, that she cannot possibly survive much longer, as at present constituted. Petitions have been presented to the Arch Bishop of Canterbury as if he could avert the storm : whilst others speak most confidently of a union with Rome and that very little difficulty would exist in prevailing on the Queen to