

bility, as it is employed in the Catholic Church, stamps an entirely new character on the Christian religion, substitutes a new object of faith and dependence, deifies what is human, hides and cancels what is divine, and transfers our allegiance from God to mortals.

But to return to the argument. On all systems, the preference of one religion to another must either be founded on caprice, custom, or some other principle equally unworthy of determining the choice of a reasonable being, or upon examination. If the Catholics wish to convert us to their persuasion, they must assign their reasons for affirming that there is in existence an infallible community, styling itself the church; that that community is their church, in preference to the Greek Church, the Armenian, or the Nestorian. Here they must admit the exercise of private judgment in examining these reasons; unless they have the effrontery to assert that their bare affirmation supersedes the necessity of any further proof: and, admitting the Scriptures to be the word of God, which is the easiest task for ordinary Christians—to learn from them what is necessary for salvation, or to judge of the claims of the church to supremacy and infallibility? For the former, if you believe the Scriptures themselves, nothing more is requisite than a candid and honest mind: for the latter, a deep acquaintance with history and antiquity, and, particularly, a clear comprehension of the meaning of a portion of Scripture by no means the most plain and perspicuous. Involved as those passages are which are urged from the New Testament in support of the papal claims, in language highly figurative and metaphorical, is it easier for a plain unlettered Christian to judge of the precise meaning of the term “keys,” and “the kingdom of heaven opening and shutting,” than to learn the import of that declaration,

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved?” There is so much room for variation in the interpretation of the passages on which the papists lay such great stress, that it would not be easy to find two commentators, in any community, whose expositions perfectly coincide; with respect to the latter, he that runs may read. St. John distinctly informs us with what purpose he wrote his gospel, in the following words: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.” Is there sufficient evidence in what St. John wrote to convince us that Jesus is the Christ; and is it within the power of ordinary men to judge of this evidence? If this question be answered in the affirmative, then what occasion is there for the interposition of an infallible interpreter, since he who is convinced by this record that Jesus is the Christ is already in a state of salvation? If it be replied in the negative, that the writing of St. John is not sufficient to prove to an impartial reader that Jesus is the Christ, it must be confessed, however reluctantly, that the beloved apostle was a most impertinent and fallacious writer, in representing his performance as a fit instrument for the accomplishment of an object to which it is not adequate. * * *

To the Editor.

ON THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

SIR,—The first rebellion we read of is that of the Dragon in Heaven. Rev. chap. xii. 7—9. What could have tempted Satan to rebel? We are not told exactly; but that he did so, and seduced other angels also, is certain. From the constitution of all created, intelligent natures, they are liable to be tempted—they are pec-