

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—JEREMIAH VI. 16.

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Poetry.

THE TRINITY. BY BISHOP MANT.

O Holy, Holy, King supreme,
Lord of the armies of the earth and sky,
Before whose presence brightest seraphim,
Vail with overshadowing wings the dazzled eye;
Thy praise the saints in heaven, a countless throng,
Chant through thy temple with alternate cry;
Thy praise the assembled saints on earth prolong,
Foretaste of bliss to come, and join that heavenly song.

O Holy, Holy, Holy! First to Thee,
Father of all, the choral strains ascend;
Thou art, thou wast, and thou for ever shalt be;
Thou ne'er begonest, and thou ne'er shalt end;
Great source of being! Thou abroad didst send
Thy mandate on creation's natal day;
Life, light, and order thy behest attend;
Chaos has heard, and darkness hastes away,
And earth and heaven stand forth in all their fair array.

O Holy, Holy, Holy! Next in state,
The eternal Father's co-eternal Son,
We praise Thee, Son, sole-begotten, uncreate;
For thine the glory of the Father's throne,
By birth inherited, by virtue won,
Thou didst not scorn the lowly virgin's womb,
For us thy race of humbleness to run;
Thou didst not spare, triumphant o'er the tomb,
For us at God's right hand thy sceptre to resume.

O Holy, Holy, Holy! Homage meet
Thee too we pay, by thee, blest Spirit, led,
Guide to all truth, all-knowing Paraclete!
"I was thine at first with mighty wings outspread
To brood above the waters dark and deep;
O'er the baptismal waters still 'tis thine
Spirit of life, thy quickening power to shed:
Where'er thou wast, the chariot of Eden shine,
Peace, freedom, joy, and love, and sanctity divine.

O Holy, Holy, Holy! One in Three,
In person three, in essence still the same!
Though darkly now, as in a glass, we see,
And see celestial things with partial aim;
Taught by thy word, baptized into thy name,
'Tis ours in lowliness of soul to own
Of each, of all, the high mysterious claim;
Till purged from mist by sin around us thrown,
We see thee face to face, and know as we are known.

O Holy, Holy, Holy! King supreme,
Lord of the armies of the earth and sky;
As thou my first, be thou my latest theme,
To thee with praise, on thee for grace I cry:
Thou all in all, a thing of nought am I!
Led by the light of thy unerring lore
To thee I turn with faith's illumined eye,
No further seek thy secrets to explore,
But bow me to the dust, and wonder, and adore!

WILLIAM BURKITT, M.A., VICAR AND LECTURER OF DEDHAM, ESSEX.*

The father of the subject of the present memoir was the Rev. Miles Burkitt, M.A., who was ejected by the act of uniformity from Neatishead, in Norfolk, A.D. 1662. William was born at Hitcham in Suffolk, July 25, 1650, though it has been erroneously stated that he was born at Hitcham in Northamptonshire. In early youth, he testified that he was possessed of a most retentive memory, which afterwards proved a great blessing to him. He was sent, first, to Bilston to school, thence to Stow Market, and ultimately removed to school at Cambridge, where he was seized with small-pox. This illness, under God's blessing, proved of the greatest benefit to his soul. The following passage from his Diary proves how grateful he felt that he was laid upon a bed of sickness and how God is sometimes graciously pleased to make that bed an instrument of incalculable spiritual benefit:—"While I continued," says he, "at school in Cambridge, it pleased God to visit me with the small-pox; but very favourably, and, as I hope, in great mercy, laying the foundation of my spiritual health in that sickness; working, as I hope, a prevailing, thorough change in the very frame and disposition of my soul. May my soul, and all that is within me, bless thy name! O Lord, that this should, by the blessing of thine Holy Spirit, open my blind eyes, which hath closed the eyes of so many in darkness and death! O happy sickness that ends in the recovery of the soul to God!" It is, indeed, a very merciful dispensation when the prostration of the body is the means employed for bringing the soul into a more intimate communion with the Father of spirits, and when the patient is enabled to submit himself unreservedly to the Divine will.

On his restoration to health, William became a member of Pembroke Hall; and while there, A.D. 1666, a grievous plague visited Cambridge. The great majority of the members of the University left. Mr. Burkitt, with a few others, continued shut up in college, from the windows of which they beheld the constant funerals, which bore testimony to the ravages of the fell disease. "The sight," he tells us, "had a most solemn effect upon his mind. Is there not something which powerfully argues the inconsistency, to say the least of it, of human nature, that the daily proofs presenting themselves of man's frailty should so little affect the heart?" In due time, being ordained by Bishop Reynolds, he was settled, first as chaplain at Bilston Hall, and then at Mildon in Suffolk, the cure of which he served faithfully, first as curate, and then as rector, for twenty-one years, until his removal to Dedham in 1692. His Diary during this period shows an anxious desire after truth; a zealous devotedness to the great work to which he was called; and a heart overflowing with gratitude to God. Thus it is noted Sept. 3d, 1682: "My neighbouring brother in the ministry, Mr. Thompson of Royden, after having preached on the Lord's day, was surprised by an apoplexy, and died in a short time. Lord, who am I, that I should yet survive amidst the funerals of them who were younger, stronger, better, and more useful than myself? O let me double my diligence in working out my own, and helping forward the salvation of others, while the day of patience lasts; for thou, Lord, comest in an hour of which we are not aware."

Upon undertaking the charge of Dedham, he thus expresses himself: "Resolved, by the Divine assistance, upon the following course for the benefit of my people, namely, to pour out my soul to God every day in prayer for them; to preach constantly thrice in the week; to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper once in two months; to catechise the youth at church, and others at my house; and to go from house to house through the town warning and directing." Can a better summary of clerical duty be presented than this—warning in public, exhorting in private, regular in supplication for the Divine blessing upon the members of his flock? Had this been adopted more generally, the Established Church would not have witnessed so many departing from within her pale. How thankful should

we be that the same spirit at the present day seems to animate so many of the ministers of our Church!

Mr. Burkitt, however, though zealously devoted to the promotion of his people's best interests, was not without many enemies. What faithful minister can expect to be so? Devotedness, anxiety, energy, faithfulness, are not unfrequently regarded, even now, as in his case, with a jealous eye. The world still continues to love its own, and recoils from the expostulation of the faithful minister. The taunting sneer, the uncalculated insinuation, the laugh of scorn, Mr. Burkitt was compelled to bear. "Some persons," says he, "had never had a particular share in my prayers, but for the injuries they have done me. God honoured me sometimes in suffering his own enemies to declare themselves mine; however, he often convinced, and always restrained them, that they could not considerably hurt me. Blessed be my defence, and the God of my mercy!" "Some treated him unkindly," we are informed; "but he forbore speaking either bitterly or contemptuously of his enemies; and if they needed his service, he was ready to afford them it, heaping coals of fire upon their heads. Knowing the mischiefs of animosities, he used his persuasions, his interest, his friends, to reduce his jarring neighbours to peace, and left nothing in his power undone to effect a reconciliation. In reference to young persons, besides his public catechising of them, which he conducted in a very agreeable manner, he was very frequent, solemn, and importunate, in his petitions to God for them. They were much upon his thoughts; and his desire for them, was that they might remember their Creator in the days of their youth." There are few characters in which the Christian minister more beautifully acts up to his profession than when he becomes a peacemaker; when he is enabled to remove the impediments which too often present themselves to harmony and mutual good-will. In this point of view, Mr. Burkitt's conduct was peculiarly praiseworthy. Much useless litigation might be prevented were wholesome advice given, and men reminded of their duty, to act towards each other as members of the Church of Christ. His family, as may be supposed, was regulated on strictly Christian principles. It was a household eminently serving God. His reverence for the Lord's day was very great. It was spent, as it ought to be, in intimate communion with his heavenly Father, not only in the public worship of the sanctuary, but in that of the domestic circle, and the retirement of the closet. The spiritual influence of due Sabbath observation in the parsonage-house extends itself throughout the whole parish. If there it is not hallowed, too many will be led to entertain low notions of the sanctity of this holy day. On Sunday, Oct. 17, 1703, he was seized in church during divine service with illness, from which he never recovered. "In the place," says Mr. Parkhurst, "where he had pleaded the cause of God against Rome, the cause of Christ against deism, the cause of the Holy Ghost against the deriders of his name and office, the cause of faith against justification by imperfect works, and the cause of special grace against the pretended powers of nature to save, he was struck with that sickness which put an end to his days. His disorder was such as made him leave his beloved place, the house of God; and it proved the last time of his appearance there. Upon returning to his house, his distemper increased, but with intermissions, allowing some happy moments for thinking and speaking. In the short time of his illness, and in the view of approaching death, he very seriously entertained his friends who came to visit him, and prayed much himself with great ardour. In the midst of his bodily afflictions, devout aspirations, and blessed hopes, he remembered his beloved Dedham; and in the near approach of death, signed a letter to his diocesan, recommending a successor to him, who he hoped would be faithful and diligent in the spiritual care of the flock he was now leaving. In his sickness God made his face to shine upon him. The Spirit of God witnessed with his spirit his adoption; and he went with a full sail to heaven, as one of his much-valued friends, a witness of it, expressed it, to whom, speaking of the high pleasures of the Lord's supper, in which they had often joined, and calling the wine in the sacraments the wine of the kingdom, he broke forth into these words, 'But what will it be to drink the wine of the kingdom in the kingdom!'"

After suffering with great patience from malignant fever for seven days, he was taken to his heavenly rest—the Sunday following that on which he had been compelled to stop the service. On his death-bed he had the satisfaction to be visited by not a few, who declared that he had been the instrument of their conversion. His last days bore testimony to the vividness of his faith. His last words were, "Come, Lord Jesus, make a short work of it."

Whilst Mr. Burkitt was eminently zealous in the discharge of his own parochial duties, he did not confine his usefulness to the flock over which he was especially set. He preached for some time at a country village, at a considerable distance; and at length, to his great satisfaction, obtained regular ministrations therein. An excellent minister, by his exertions, was settled in Carolina; and a part of his income was expended in supporting some needy students at Cambridge. He was exceedingly zealous in behalf of French Protestant ministers exiled from their country; and in 1687, and for some successive years, was enabled to raise a considerable sum in their behalf. "About midsummer," says he, "I received a petition from Ipswich, on behalf of the French Protestant ministers, and communicated the matter to several, whose hearts the Lord so graciously moved, that I collected for them above an hundred pounds. The Lord make me thankful, who gave me an heart to compassionate and help them." And amongst his other charities, he bequeathed his house, with the lands belonging to it, to the lecturer of Dedham.

Mr. Burkitt was the author of a volume entitled "The Poor Man's Help and Rich Man's Guide;" but he is chiefly known as an author by his "Commentary on the New Testament." Though by no means prepared to agree in all points with the rev. commentator, the compiler of this brief memoir gladly avails himself of the opinion of Mr. Hartwell Horne: "The first edition of this deservedly popular work was printed early in the last century, and its practical utility has caused it to be several times reprinted in folio, besides the (above noticed) edition in 4to. It does not profess to discuss critical questions, but is very useful for the inferences it deduces from the sacred text. Mr. Burkitt blessed God on his dying-bed that he had been enabled to bring it to a close; declaring that he had published it with much anxiety and very many prayers that it would be made useful, more especially to his own people."

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE TRADITIONS OF MEN.*

The Holy Scriptures are the bright sun of God, which bring light into our ways, and comfort to all parts of our life, and salvation to our souls. In which is made known to us our estate, and the mercy of God in Christ our Saviour witnessed.

The Scriptures are the word of God.—What title can there be of greater value? What may be said of them to make them of greater authority, than to say, THE LORD hath spoken them? That they came not by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? At the word or proclamation of an earthly prince we stand up, and veil our bonnets, and give good ear to it; we are bound so to do; it is our duty; such honour belongeth to the powers that are placed to rule over us: for they are ordained of God; and whosoever resisteth them, resisteth the ordinance of God. If we should have a revelation, and hear an angel speak to us, how careful would we be to mark, and remember, and be able to declare the words of the angel? Yet is an angel but a glorious creature, and not God. And what is a king? great and mighty; yet mortal and subject to death. His breath departeth, and his name shall perish. Both he and his word, his power and his puissance shall have an end. But the word of the Gospel is not the word of an earthly prince. It is of more majesty than the word of an angel. The apostle saith: "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward: how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be preached by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?" God saith by the prophet Esaias: "My word shall accomplish that which I will, and I shall prosper in that whereunto I sent it." And he saith also: "The word of God shall stand for ever." And, "It is more easy that heaven and earth pass away, than that one tittle of the law should fail," saith our Saviour. For it is the word of the living and Almighty God, of the God of hosts, which hath done whatsoever pleased him, both in heaven and in earth.

This word the angels and blessed spirits used when they came down from heaven, to speak unto the people: when they came to the blessed Virgin, and to Joseph, and to others; they spoke as it was written in the prophets, and in the Scriptures of God: they thought not their own authority sufficient, but they took credit to their saying, and authority to their message, out of the Word of God. This word the prophets vouch and alleged to the people. Albeit they were sanctified in their mother's womb: albeit God had endued them with his heavenly Spirit; although a seraphim came unto one of them and touched his mouth with a hot coal: albeit he saw the Lord sitting upon a high throne; yet they would not speak as of themselves, but only in the name of the Lord; for thus they say: "THE LORD hath spoken:" "Hear what THE LORD saith." St. Paul, (beit he was taken up into the third heaven, and heard words that are not lawful for man to utter, yet he wrote not his own words, but the churches of Rome, of Corinth, and Thessalonica, and other places, but delivered them which he had received, and taught them according to the Scriptures.

This word is the true Manna: it is the bread which came down from heaven: it is the key of the kingdom of heaven: it is the saviour of life unto life: it is the power of God unto salvation. In it God sheweth unto us his might, his wisdom, and his glory. By it he will be known of us. By it will be honoured his creatures. Whosoever speaketh truth is brought unto us contrary to the Word of God, it is not truth, but falsehood and error: whosoever honour, done unto God, disagree, from that honour required by his word, it is not honour unto God, but blasphemy. As Christ saith: "In vain they worship me, teaching doctrines men's precepts." By Esaias, God saith: "Who required this at your hands?" The words of the Lord are the store-house of wisdom, and of the knowledge of God. In respect whereof, all the wisdom of this world is but vain and foolish. The people of Israel were oppressed by tyrants, were spoiled and chased out of their country. First by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon after that by Antiochus into Syria: and lastly, were as vagabonds driven from country to country. Their city, Jerusalem, was sacked, their houses overthrown, their temple razed, and not a stone left upon a stone: their library destroyed: their books burnt: their tabernacle lost: the covenant broken: no vision, no revelation, no comfort for the people left: nor prophet, nor priest, nor any to speak in the name of the Lord. In all those times of deays, of sackings, of darkness, and of misery, what was done with the word of God? It was wickedly burnt by Joachin, king of Judah: and Antiochus burnt the books of the law, and cut them in pieces. No man durst be known to have them, and avouch the having. So thought they utterly to deface the glory of God, and abolish all remembrance of His laws.

Then came the Pharisees; they drowned the word of God with their traditions: they took away the key of knowledge, and entered not in themselves, but forbade that came in. After them came heretics; they denied some one part, and some another part of Scriptures. They razed, blotted, corrupted, and altered the word of God: of the word of God, they made it their own word, or which is worse, they made it the word of the Devil. By the space of so many thousand years, the Word of God passed by so many dangers of tyrants, of Pharisees, of heretics, of fire, and of sword, and yet continueth until this day, without altering or changing. This was a wonderful work of God, that having so many, so great enemies, and passing through so many, so great dangers, it yet continueth still without adding or altering. No creature was able to do this; it was God's work. He preserved it that no tyrant should consume it, no tradition cloak it up, no heretic maliciously should corrupt it. For His name's sake and for the elect's sake, He would not suffer it to perish. For in it God hath ordained a blessing for his people, and by it He maketh covenant with them for life everlasting. Tyrants and Pharisees, and heretics, and the enemies of the cross of Christ, have an end, but the Word of God hath no end. No force shall be able to decay it. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Cities shall fall: kingdoms shall come to nothing: empires shall fade away as the smoke: but the Truth of the Lord shall continue for ever. Burn it, it will rise again: cut it down by the root, it will spring again: there is no wisdom, neither understanding, nor counsel against the Lord.

Let us behold the nations and kingdoms which sometimes possessed Christ, and are now heathenish: Illyricum, Epirus, Peloponnesus, Macedonia, and others. Again, let us behold such kingdoms and countries, which were in times past heathenish and knew not God: as England, Ireland, Rome, Scotland, and divers others. They were all without the Gospel, without Christ, without God, and without the hope of life. They worshipped idols, even the work of their own hands. To them they appointed priests for their service, days and places for the people to resort together to worship them.

They built gorgeous churches and chapels; set up images of silver and gold to them, praised, lifted up their hands, did sacrifice, and offered up their children to them. They said: "Great is Jupiter: great is Apollo: and great is Diana of the Ephesians.—These are the gods of our fathers, our fathers trusted in them, they made us, and have defended us, and have given us the victory against our enemies." Whosoever denied them were thought worthy to die.

Thus were the kings and the princes, and the people persuaded.

And so continued they by the space of some thousand years, without controulment or contradiction. They had great props of Antiquity, Universality, and Consent. Antiquity of all times, Universality of all places, Consent of all the people. So strongly and so mightily were they founded. Who would think such a religion, so ancient, and so universal, and so defended with common consent, should ever possibly be removed?

But when the fulness of time came, God sent forth his word, and all was changed. Error fell down, and Truth stood up: men forsake their idols and went to God. The kings, and priests, and people were changed: men's eyes and hearts were changed. They forsake their gods, their kings, their priests; they forsake their antiquity, customs, consent, their fathers, and themselves. What power was able to work these things? What strength could ever shake down so mighty idols from their seat? What hand of man could subdue and conquer the whole world, and make such mighty nations confess they had done amiss? This did the Lord bring to pass by the power of His word, and the breath of His mouth. This was it that led captivity captive, and threw down every high thing that lifted up itself against the Lord; and brought all powers under subjection unto the Lord. It is the image, the power, the arm, the sword, and the glory of God. It is mighty, of great force and virtue, of authority and majesty, because it is THE WORD OF GOD: therefore the glory thereof is great.

The Holy Scriptures are the mercy-seat; the registry of the mysteries of God; our charter for the life to come; the holy place in which God sheweth himself to the people; the Mount Sion, where God hath appointed to dwell for ever. The more comfort in them, so much the more steadfast will we desire them: the more heavenly and glorious they are, with so much the more reverence let us come unto them.

All that is written in the Word of God, is not written for angels, or archangels, or heavenly spirits, but for the sons of men, for us, and for our instruction: that by them we may receive strength, and comfort, in all our adversities, and have hope of the life to come. It is the word of God; God openeth his mouth and speaketh to us, to guide us into all truth, to make us full and ready in all good works, that we may be perfect men in Christ Jesus: so rooted and grounded in Him, that we be not tossed to and fro with every tempest.

And as the word of God is the light to direct us, and to bear away errors, so it is also the STANDARD and beam to try the weights of Truth and falsehood.

He, therefore, (saith Chrysostom) that will know which is the true Church of Christ, how may he know it but by the Scriptures? Therefore our Lord, knowing that there should be such confusion of things in the latter days, commandeth, that Christians that live in the profession of Christian faith, and are desirous to settle themselves upon a sure ground of faith, should go to no other thing, but to the Scriptures. Otherwise, if they had regard to other things, they should be offended and perish, and not understand which is the true church.

This is the rule of our faith: without this, our faith is but a fantasy, and no faith: for "faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Therefore Christ saith, "Search the Scriptures, they are they which testify of Me." Therefore the prophet David teaches us to PRETEND UNTO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WORD. "Shew me thy ways, O Lord, and teach me thy paths. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me, and incline my heart unto thy testimonies: give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments: open mine eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy law. And lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death:" that I may discern between safety and danger; that I may know truth to be the truth, and error to be error.

A wise man is one and steadfast as the sun. He buildeth his house upon a rock, and that Rock is JESUS CHRIST, the SON OF GOD. Therefore his house is never shaken down. Be the storm or tempest never so rough, yet it shall stand fast like Mount Sion, because his trust is in the name of the Lord. He knoweth that his name is written in the book of Life. He knoweth that he belongeth to the Lord's sheepfold, and that no man can take him away out of the Lord's hand. In his boldness, David saith, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me." And again: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"

Thus they that are taught the word of God, to put their trust in THE LORD, and are thereby rooted and settled in Him, cannot be removed by any practice of Satan, but stand fast and continue for ever.

Blessed is the man whose hope is in the name of the Lord.—[Mat. i. 21.] He shall build upon a sure place: he layeth his foundation upon the corner-stone. He needeth no army to make him strong: he needeth no friends to comfort him in adversity. His strength is within, the gates of hell shall not prevail against him. His comfort is inwardly within his heart. He speaketh to God, and God unto him. His eyes behold the kingdom, and power, and glory of God.

But what say we of the Fathers: Augustine, Ambrose, Hierome, Cyprian, &c.? What shall we think of them, or what account may we make of them? They be interpreters of the Word of God. They were learned men, and learned fathers: the instruments of the mercy of God, and vessels full of grace. We despise them not: we read them, we reverence them, and give thanks unto God for them. They were witnesses unto the truth; they were worthy pillars and ornaments in the church of God. Yet may they not be compared with the Word of God. We may not build upon them: we may not make them the foundation and warrant of our conscience: we may not put our trust in them. Our trust is in the name of the Lord.

And thus are we taught to esteem of the learned fathers of the church, by their own judgment: by that which they have written, either for the credit of their own doings, or of the authority which they have thought due to the writings of others. St. Augustine said of the doctors and fathers in his time: "Neither weigh we the writings of all men, be they never so worthy and catholic, as we weigh the canonical Scriptures: but that, saving the reverence that is due unto them, we may mislike and refuse somewhat in their writings, if we find that they have thought otherwise than the truth may bear. Such am I in the writings of others, and such would I wish others to be in mine." Some things I believe, and some things which they write I cannot believe. I weigh them not as the holy and canonical Scriptures. Cyprian was a doctor of the holy church, yet he was deceived: Augustine was a doctor of the church, yet he wrote a book of retractions, he acknowledged he was deceived. God did therefore give to His church many doctors and many learned men, which all should search the truth, and one reform another, wherein they thought him deceived. St. Augustine saith: "Take away from amongst us our own books: let the Book of God come amongst us: hear what CHRIST saith: hearken what the TRUTH speaketh." He is the wisdom of his Father, He cannot deceive us. Again he saith: "Hear this, the Lord saith: hear not this, Donatus saith, or Rogatus, or Vincencius, or Hilarius, or Ambrose, or Augustine saith." All these were learned, most of them were holy: yet, saith Augustine, we may not yield to that which is said by learned men: but we must yield our full consent and full belief TO THE WORD OF GOD. Origen saith, "We must needs call to witness the Holy Scriptures; for our judgments and expositions, without those witnesses carry no

credit." Mark well: our words, and expositions, UNLESS THEY BE WARRANTED BY THE SCRIPTURES, are not enough, THEY CARRY NOT CREDIT. Augustine saith, "We offer no wrong to St. Cyprian, when we sever any of his letters or writings from the canonical authority of the Holy Scriptures." Thus speaketh Augustine, a doctor of the church, of Cyprian, another doctor also of the church. Cyprian was a bishop, a learned father, a holy man, and a martyr of CHRIST: yet, saith Augustine, his word is not the Gospel: his word is not THE WORD OF GOD; there is no wrong done to him, though his writings carry not the credit as THE HOLY SCRIPTURE. I could shew many like speeches of the ancient fathers, wherein they reverence the Holy Scriptures, as to which only they give consent without gainsaying: which can neither deceive nor be deceived. In this sort did Origen, and Augustine, and other doctors of the church speak of themselves and of theirs, and of the writings of others, that we should so read them, and credit them, as THEY AGREED WITH THE WORD OF GOD. This kind of writings is to be read, not with a necessity of believing them, but with a liberty to judge of them. St. Paul saith: "Though that we, or an angel from heaven preach unto you otherwise than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Out of which place, St. Augustine speaketh thus: "Whether it be of Christ, or of his Church, or of any thing else whatsoever, pertaining either to our life, or to our faith; I will not say, if I myself, but if an angel from heaven, shall teach us otherwise than we have received in the BOOKS OF THE LAW, AND IN THE GOSPELS, hold him accursed."

Now to conclude this matter, the same father saith, "The judges or doctors of the Church, as men, are often deceived." They are learned; they have pre-eminence in the Church: they are judges: they have the gifts of wisdom and understanding: yet they are often deceived. They are our fathers, but not fathers unto God: they are stars, fair and beautiful, and bright, yet they are not true Suns: they bear witness of the light, they are not the light. CHRIST is the Sun of Righteousness. CHRIST is the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into this world. His Word is the Word of truth. He is the Day-spring which hath visited us from on high: He came down from the bosom of His Father: He shall guide our feet into the way of peace. Of Him God the Father saith: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him." He is the Lamb without spot: out of his mouth goeth a two-edged sword. This is He in whom all the ends of the earth shall be blessed; hear Him; give heed to His saying, embrace His Gospel, BELIEVE HIS WORD.

THE REFORMATION VINDICATED FROM POPISSH CAVILS.

From Fuller's Church History.

Now seeing the complaints of the conscientious in all ages, against the errors in the Romish Church, met with no other entertainment than frowns and fets, and afterwards fire and fagot, it came seasonably into the minds of those who steered the English Nation, to make use of that power which God had bestowed upon them. And seeing they were a National Church under the civil command of one king, he, by the advice and consent of his Clergy in Convocation and great council in Parliament, resolved to reform the Church under his inspection from gross abuses crept into it, leaving it free to other Churches either to follow his example, or continue in their former condition: and on these terms was the English Reformation first advanced.

But the Romanists object that England being first converted to Christianity by the zeal and care of the Church of Rome, (when Pope Gregory the great, sent Augustine over to preach here) cannot, not only without great ingratitude, but flat unthankfulness, depart from the Church which first taught it true Religion.

It is answered, First, this argument reacheth not west of Severn into Wales, where the ancient Britons, by general confession, were converted before the time of Augustine.

Secondly, this first favour received from Rome puts not on England so strict and servile an obligation of perpetual continuance, that she may and must not serve God without asking her leave. It ties England only to a fair and grateful respect which she always tendered, till the insolvency of the Church of Rome made us unwilling to pay, and her unworthy to receive it.

Thirdly, some strength may be allowed to this objection, if Rome could be proved the same in doctrine and discipline, when, under the reign of King Henry VIII, England divided itself from it, with Rome, when, in the time of Gregory the great, it was converted by God's blessings on his endeavours. But since that time the Church of Rome hath been much corrupted in opinions and practice, easy to prove, but that it is not the set work of our History.

But again the Papists object, that the most judicious Protestants do most ingeniously confess, that the Church of Rome maintaineth all the fundamentals of religion. England therefore cannot be excused from Schism, for dividing from that Church which, by their own confession, still retaineth the true foundation of Christianity.

It is answered: if some Protestants be so civil in their censures on Papists, it appears thereby, though they have left Rome, they have not lost their courtesy, nor their charity. But grant (which is indisputable) the errors of the Church of Rome not fundamental, they are circumstantial, grating on the very foundation. Besides, we are bound to avoid not only what is deadly, but what is hurtful, not only what may destroy the life, but what may prejudice the health of our souls.

But our adversaries persist to object, that our Reformation took its rise from King Henry's pride to pluck down a power which crossed his designs, from his covetousness to compass the revenues of Abbeys, and from his wantonness to exchange his old embraces for new ones. Well therefore may the English blush at the babe, when they behold its parents, and be ashamed of their Reformation considering the vicious extraction thereof.

Answer. Malice may load the memory of King Henry about his demerit: yet grant the charge true, that bad inclinations first moved him to the Reformation, yet he acted therein nothing but conformable to the Law divine and human. It is usual with God's wisdom and goodness to suffer vice to sound the first alarm to that light, wherein virtue is to have the victory. Besides, King Henry's Reformation hath since been reformed by successive Princes of England, who cannot justly be taxed with any vicious reflection therein.

It remaineth that we take notice of the moderation of the Reformers, who being acted not with an opposition to all which the Papists practised, but with an affection to truth, disclaimed only the ulcers and sores, not what was sound of the Romish Church, retaining still what was consonant to antiquity in the four first General Councils.

Matters thus ordered, had the Romanists been pleased to join with us, there had been no complaining of schism either in their streets, or ours. But such their pride and peevishness, to persist obstinate, to this day incense many people, (who listen more to the loudness, than weigh the justness of complaints) accusing us of wilful Separation. But, the premises well considered, England may say to Rome, Pharez, the breach be upon thee, (Gen. xxviii. 29.) who (with Athaliah, crying Treason, Treason, being herself the prime traitor, 2 Kings, 11, 14.) taxeth us with schism, when she is the only Schismatic.

* From the Church of England Magazine.

* From Bishop Jewel's "Treatise on the Holy Scriptures."

for our judgments and expositions, without those witnesses carry no