

of greater talents and more extensive learning than themselves, these writers combat a phantom of Popery, which exists only in their own misconception. I assert, and can prove my assertion by an appeal to their own words, that they are ignorant of the doctrine which they pretend to refute, and in reality prove that they are strangers to it. It is the glory of the Catholic doctrine, that it cannot be refuted, till it has been first misstated & misrepresented. It might appear harsh to accuse your friends of wilful misrepresentation; because it is possible they know no better: but it is a suspicious circumstance when a man begins with a lie in his mouth. At all events, their pretending to be Catholics is a stale device of controversial imposture.

Here I signified my dissent, and told Mr. Cardwell that I looked upon your book as a fair statement both of the Popish and Protestant doctrine: and insinuated that he was in danger of misrepresenting the character of your work. My friend continued. I repeat my assertion. You have quite mistaken the character of your favourite pamphlet. Its real character is, that one-half of it consists of misrepresentations of our doctrine and practice; and the other half of misinterpretation and misapplication of the Holy Scriptures. Look first at their statement of our doctrine and practice. They tell us: "We have it is true been taught what we should believe and what we should practice: but the evidence of the former, and the wisdom and propriety of the latter, have never been presented to our view: we are consequently unable to shew any reason why we believe this or practice that." p. 1. They tell us again, that "an acquaintance with the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles makes no part of our religious education." p. 6. that "with the New Testament, which contains all the will of Jesus Christ, we have no acquaintance, and that the generality of us are as ignorant of the words of Christ, as we are of the Alcoran." p. 46. They further assert, that "The faith our church is directly opposed to that of the Apostles; and that instead of making the word of Christ the only rule of faith and practice, in our church the authority of man is the standard of both." p. 46. From such wretched premises, they draw this equally wretched inference: that "we are taught that our church has authoritative power to teach whatever doctrines she pleases in matters of faith," p. 8. Consistently with such notions respecting the principles of our faith, your friends proceed to delineate our moral conduct, and favour us with such precious discoveries as these. All we naughty Papists, say they, "are under the dominion of the lusts of the flesh; they have not found one individual among us who is not manifestly serving one or more of the lusts of the flesh; women and wine and strong drink are the prevailing objects of our pursuit." p. 45, 6. These slanders are frequently repeated, and sometimes in terms which modesty forbids us to cite. But enough of this. The passages which I have quoted, while they are such as a Catholic child can refute, are to me, and I hope to you also, sufficient evidence both of the ignorance and vulgarity of the authors. These erroneous principles and contracted notions are the groundwork of your friends' boasted pamphlet: Thus beginning their controversial journey in the dark, they hurry their bewildered course o'er hill and dale, o'er hedge and

ditch, till they fairly flounder in the bog of scriptural misinterpretation.

3. But how came you Mr. Hardman, a churchman, to follow them in their wild career? You ought to know better. The drift of their reasoning from the letter of the Bible is more hostile to your religion than it is to mine, and calls for a refutation from your divines, rather than from ours. The blow is ostensibly directed to us, but it is really aimed at you. How then shall I account for your thoughtless commendation of such a work? I can easily account for it; but not without disclosing a secret, which reflects little honour on Protestantism. Modern Protestantism, like ancient Paganism, is not one religion, but an heterogeneous compound of many different systems of religion, differing from each other as much as they differ from us, in their creeds, in their modes of worship, and their forms of church government. Though said to be one, as God, the author of true faith is one, yet unity of faith never was found, and never will be found, among the discordant sects of Protestantism. The only unity discernable amongst you is of a base and spurious kind; sufficiently indicative of error, but no mark of religious truth: for it consists in an united hatred of that Ancient Church, from which all your various sects have revolted. For this reason the perverted education of the generality of Protestants teaching them to believe, that our religion is a wicked combination of every thing that is false in doctrine and corrupt in practice, teaches them also to hate it accordingly. Consistently with this hatred, which is the fruit of ignorance, they most loudly censure what they least understand. Trained in these habits, they not only consider any thing that is No Popery to be good Protestantism; but resemble the Jews, who, in former times, slandered St. Stephen, for having, as they were pleased to assert, "spoken blasphemous things against Moses and against God;" and who justified their hatred and persecution of "that pestilent fellow," St. Paul, by "crying out, men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law and this place, and who brought the Greeks into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place." Acts vi. 11.—xxi. 29. The consequences of this evil spirit are lamentable both to us and to yourselves. To us, by rendering us apparently a just object of bitter hatred and religious execration, and teaching men to adopt in practice the bright thought of an original genius and profound Protestant casuist, that it is unlawful to tell a lie against any body but a Papist. Hounds, harriers, and curs, forget their several animosities, and join both in the cry and the chase to hunt down Popish game. To yourselves, by degrading faith from the dignity of a theological virtue, into a mere matter of human opinion. As the bond of unity amongst your various sects consists chiefly in a denial of Catholic tenets, for the very name of *Protestant* imparts this; so your faith is rather of the negative, than of the positive kind. It consists more of a strenuous denial of the fancied errors of Popery, than of a firm belief in those

truths which God has actually revealed. And what is the consequence of this negative faith? Mark well the answer. That as faith by this new fashion is made to consist in *protesting* or *disbelieving* rather than in believing, he that disbelieves the most of Catholic truths is the most consistent Protestant. The Calvinist, accordingly, is a more consistent Protestant than the Church of England man; the Anabaptist a more consistent Protestant than the Calvinist; the Unitarian more consistent than the Anabaptist; and perhaps the Freethinker, or Infidel, the most consistent Protestant of them all; because he protests against the greatest number of Catholic truths. This negative rule of faith, by which you all form your religion to your taste, just as a man chooses the colour and shape of his clothes, to please his fancy, and authorises and justifies every error and heresy which the wild imaginations of men can invent; and deprives you of the means of refuting any. Certainly it destroys every real principle of unity among you, except that which subsisted among the ancient heretics, a unity in protesting against and hating that original and perpetual church, by which they were all condemned. You indeed talk much about religion and the rule of faith; but you reason little on these important subjects. You quote texts of scripture often misapplied, often obscure, and sometimes incomprehensible. Provided you fancy that they are adverse to Popery, you rest perfectly satisfied, that they are both well applied, and clearly intelligible; whereas you shut your eyes to innumerable texts, that give the clearest testimony to the evidence of Catholic truth. I know that in your protesting or disbelieving system, you all pretend to follow the Holy Scriptures. But this is an illusion. The word of God misinterpreted is no longer the word of God. It is degraded from its rank and dignity, and resolved into the word of man. Your arbitrary interpretations of the sacred text, neutralizes its authority, by perverting its sense. Scripture is such, only in its true sense and meaning.

4. But, Mr. Hardman, you not only commend this Calvinistic pamphlet, but you tell me, that it contains new, convincing and unanswerable arguments against us. My idea of it is pretty much the reverse. All the arguments of these new foes to Popery, which have any weight, have been a thousand times objected by your divines, and a thousand times refuted by ours. I could easily shew you the refutation of them all. It is an ungracious as well as an unprofitable task, to prove that your authors are entitled to honourable distinction in the Duaciad. But it would be easy to shew, that their powers of argumentation are just commensurate with their powers of description; and that they are as little qualified to argue against our principles conclusively, as they are to state them correctly. Their knowledge and ingenuity are contracted within a very limited circle. They favour us with a specimen of their political knowledge, when they condescend to inform us that "that power which abrogates laws is greater than the power which first enacted them, supposing the latter to be in exist-