

bylon, the fall of Antichrist, the fall of Papal Rome," which were at that period not only preached but published, by the sapient Doctors Daubeny, Wrangham, Valpy, Mosely, and twenty other pulpit quacks: seeing vanity & divining lies, saying, "Thus saith the Lord God," when the Lord hath not spoken, &c. Ezekiel xxii. 28. The voice of common sense was silenced in this hubbub strange. In vain we Catholics, relying with unshaken confidence on the infallibility of Christ's promises to preserve his church to the consummation of the world, requested those fanatics to have a little patience, and they would see another Pope: and that as there had been Popes, alias Antichrists, presiding over Christ's church, preserving the unity and purity of Christ's faith, and communicating the blessings of Christ's doctrine and salvation to infidel nations, fifteen hundred years before the various sects of Protestantism began. so it was very probable that other Popes, alias Antichrists, would continue the same Christian office long after their new sects had ceased to exist. Our calm but confident expectation that another successor of St. Peter would soon fill the vacant See of Rome, was treated by them with ridicule and contempt. These fanatics, with abundant professions of charity, pitied our popish blindness: or with effervescent zeal, execrated our obstinacy in shutting our idolatrous eyes to the evident accomplishment of the sure word of prophecy! In 1800 a new Antichrist was elected in the person of Pius VII, whose christian virtues can justify either a dungeon or a throne; and to the confusion of all the illuminated sons of Babylon, without a moment's delay or a whisper of contradiction, was acknowledged as chief pastor or by the whole catholic church thro'out the world. Thus time, that tell tale so formidable to imposture, has already refuted the system, and exposed the blunders of another school of these self-appointed prophets; and if it has not cured their mania, has at least compelled them to begin again the superstitious labour of their preposterous calculations. If the blind lead the blind, what is the natural consequence? They both fall into the ditch.

*Winter Evening Dialogue between John Hardman and John Cardwell, or THOUGHTS ON THE RULE OF FAITH, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS, &c. &c. &c.*

The Catholic Faith not changeable; but fixed. 2. Reformed Faith not fixed; but changeable. Concluded.

There are two kinds of reformation indicated in the Holy Scripture—a reformation of morals, and a reformation of the faith. The first is enjoined as an indispensable duty: the second foretold, but condemned as a serious evil. I shall not quote a multitude of texts to shew this. But I am convinced, that if your reformers had employed themselves on the first kind of reformation, they would have done work enough, without attempting the second. If they had reformed their own pride and ambition, their own sensual passions and shameful lust, they never would have laid their sacrilegious hands on the sacred Ark of the Faith. The reformation of faith is not a modern invention. It was begun by men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the faith in the Apostolic age; and the unhallowed work has been continued in all succeeding times, by men, who rejected the rule of Catholic unity, and asserted the privilege of believing what they pleased. Thus in the first age of the Christian Church, Ebion and Cerinthus were reformers, and taught their reformed disciples to believe that Jesus was the Son of Joseph and Mary. In the second century Montanus was a reformer, and taught his

reformed disciples to believe that females were capable of the sacred ministry, and that the Church had not the power to absolve from all sins. In the third age, Sabellius and Novatian were reformers, and taught their reformed disciples, the former that there was no Trinity of persons; the latter, as Montanus had done, that the Church had not unlimited power to absolve the penitent. In the fourth age Arius, Acrius, and Jovinian, were reformers, & taught their reformed disciples new improvements. Arius taught, that Christ was not consubstantial with the father; Jovinian, besides his almost Lutheran aversion to celibacy, taught that fasting and corporal austerities were useless; Acrius taught that prayers for the dead were unprofitable, and invented one of Calvin's leading principles, that bishops and priests are equal. In the fifth age Pelagius, Vigilantius, and the Predestinarians, turned reformers. Pelagius taught his reformed disciples to believe that original sin was a fable, and divine grace unnecessary; Vigilantius, that prayer to the saints was unprofitable, and a respect for their relics superstitious; the Predestinarians, that God created some to be damned. In the eighth century, the Iconoclast reformers taught that every piece of canvas or marble that represented a religious subject was superstitious. In the eleventh, Berengarius, became a reformer, and taught his reformed disciples to believe, that in the Holy Eucharist the body of Christ was not really present, but really absent. I pass over several tribes of fanatical reformers, the Manichees, who admitted two principles; the Petrobrusians, who denied the Sacrifice of the Mass prayers for the dead, and Infant Baptism; the Waldenses, who maintained that a minister of the Church could not possess any property without sin, and that all dominion was founded in grace; the Albigenses, the Wickliffites, and Hussites, who revived many ancient errors, and invented new ones. It is true, that our old-fashioned Church, which had seen the sects of these various reformers rise and fall one after another, had the ill manners to consider all these reformers as heretics, and their reformed doctrines and improvements of the faith as heresies, and condemned them as such.

But these were timid and bungling reformers.—Most of them were only retail dealers in new doctrines, and never acquired any extensive or permanent credit. One thing is manifest: that although these reformers all quoted scripture to establish their several errors, they all followed that rule of faith, which you and your Presbyterian friend so unreasonably impute to us, the liberty of believing or disbelieving what they pleased. This is the hinge on which all the reformation of these heresiarchs turned.

In the sixteenth century Luther a German friar, began to rival, and soon eclipsed the seats of these reforming worthies. I need not say that this wholesale innovator, while he lived in his monastery, was humble meek, devout, and chaste; but that as soon as he turned reformer, he exchanged these virtues for their opposite vices, and became a man of violent temper, extreme vanity and pride, and

ungovernable lust. All this he himself admits.—His style of eloquence was peculiar to himself but like his moral character, as far remote as possible from that of an Apostle or envoy of God.—His language, larded with devils and bedaubed with filth, is such a sink of coarse declamation and rancorous invective, as never astonished the world either before or since. I could refer you to his works for evidence of this. Briefly, in his learned work, the Protestant's Apology for the Roman Church; Bossuet, in his History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches; and Bishop Milner, in his letters to Dr. Sturges, have given a great variety of quotations from the printed works of this reformer, which the friend of modesty and decency cannot read without horror and disgust. Thus qualified, he began and became the chief agent in that revolution which you call the reformation. I have looked for the holiness of this revolution in religion, in its author, in its origin, in its motive, in the means of its establishment, in its effects; but I have looked in vain. The holiness of Luther's reformation I cannot find.

The Catholic faith is a regular and well connected fabric, formed by the hand of a Divine Architect. Every part of it is connected with and dependent on the whole. Luther hastily and passionately abandoned this, without having yet framed any preconceived system of belief. Accident and resentment guided his choice, both in his abandonment of the ancient faith, & his contrivance of a new one. From inveighing against some local and temporary abuses in the dispensation of Indulgences, he proceeded to deny their efficacy. This led him to the consideration of the sacrament of penance, the other sacraments, the remission of sins, justifying grace, &c. and every step led him further into error. Having once begun to roll down the hill of reformation, he knew not how to stop the headlong impetuosity of his course.—He proceeded to demolish one revealed dogma after another, with fatal, but not remorseless activity. To supply the immense void which he had created, he revived the defunct heresies of Montanus, Novatian, Acrius, Vigilantius, Berengarius, and the Iconoclasts, and made a selection from the doctrines of the Antinomians, Predestinarians, Waldenses, and other enthusiasts, as chance, or accident, or fancy suggested. To these exploded errors, he added equally extravagant inventions of his own; such as a new system of faith and justification, a new system of sacramental doctrine, a new and commodious system of church government, of divine worship, and moral duty.—In all these changes, what rule did he follow?—The rule of all preceding reformers, which was the liberty of believing what he pleased in matters of faith. This turbulent and sensual innovator adopted or rejected, believed or disbelieved what he pleased till the violence of his remorseless passions, or his fanaticism, disordered his understanding.—Thus a private individual, not remarkably recommended by any extraordinary virtues, but confessedly disgraced by some notorious vices, in defiance