

faith restore her, and so they do any member of her body. What more plain than this?" And if this be the case with repentant members of her own body, how much more with independent branches of the Church subjected for a time to her usurped authority!

If, in the good providence of God, the Church in France were to throw off the usurpation of the Pope, and remove away the corruptions which have effaced her beauty for many centuries; if she were to assert her right as an independent branch of the Christian Church, and follow the teaching and practices of the Apostles, and not the commandments and traditions of fallible men, there would not be the slightest ecclesiastical bar or difficulty to the most unrestrained communion between the Churches of England and France. English clergymen could, if permitted by the civil power, perform all the duties of their office in French Churches, and French Clergymen in English Churches, just as there is no ecclesiastical bar to this intercommunion between the Church of England and her sister Church in Scotland, America, and the British Colonies. And in like manner, if the Churches of Spain and Portugal, of Germany, and of Rome herself, were to return to their primitive simplicity and purity, - to that simplicity and purity which they possessed in the first centuries of Christianity, - to them also we could hold out the right hand of fellowship, and bid them "God speed in the name of the Lord." But until this be the case, there can be no communion with them. They will continue to look upon us as "heretics," and we must still consider them as fallen from the faith once delivered to the saints - as led by the commandments of men, rather than guided by the word of God.

The careful reader will not fail to remark that much stress has been laid, in this little treatise, on the fact, that the points of difference between us and the Church of Rome are innovations since the three first centuries of Christianity. It is acknowledged on all sides, that these were the purest ages of the Church, consequently those most free from error. Being nearer the age in which the inspired Apostles lived, the writers of those times were consequently more likely to know the minds of the Apostles. These, too, were ages of persecution, - times which tried men's minds, and refined their hearts, as it were with fire. We, therefore, could hardly suppose, that men who saw death constantly hanging over them, would willingly hold and propagate error. But when Christianity ceased to be persecuted by Princes, but came to be patronized by them; when Bishops became temporal princes, and ecclesiastics rolled in wealth, and lived in luxury and indulgence, we find that error came in as a flood, and that truth veiled her diminished head, even in the Church of God. "Whatever is first is true," says Tertullian: "whatever is more recent, is spurious."