

Papists are notoriously sacrilegious, in robbing Christ of the greater part of his flock, and in dismembering the greater part of his body, that they may be taken to be the whole. Hath it cost Christ so dear to purchase a peculiar people to himself? (Tit. ii. 14.) Hath he purchased his Church with his own blood? (Acts xx. 28.) And now saith the sons of men presume to rob him of the greatest part! Is his flock so little, and will these presumptuous sectaries make it less? The Papists would unchurch all the Churches of Christ on the face of the earth, in order that they might make themselves the sole predominant Church. But blessed be God, who judgeth not as they do!

Reason 3. Herein also are they guilty of the most inhumane and unreasonable cruelty in presuming to damn the whole of the Church of Christ which is not of their party. If we are so strictly charged as to a particular man,—"Judge not, that ye be not judged," (Matt. vii. 1, 2;) and sharply taken up,—"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth," (Rom. xiv. 4;) what then are they likely to hear that judge to damnation the best of the Church of God! for this is essential to what they call the Roman Catholic Faith:—*To believe that the Catholic Church consists of those only that are subject to the Pope as the Vicar of Christ, and governor of the whole; and that out of this church, thus headed by the Pope, there is no salvation.* This is the soul of Popery.

Reason 4. And what a proud and arrogant way is this for a defiled piece of the Catholic Church to say, We are the whole! as they who say, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou," (Isa. lvi. 5;) so say the Papists: *You are all damned heretics, and we only are the Church.* Such horrible pride doth not animate the Church and cause of Christ.

Reason 5. And all this is done by them against the very tenor of the Gospel and the covenant of Christ; for it is the scope of the Gospel, "That whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life," (John iii. 15, 16, 18.) A hundred texts might easily be cited, where God doth make the most solemn promises, that all who believe in Christ, and love him, and hope in him, shall be saved. And yet as if it were in defiance of the Gospel, the Papists make it an article of their faith, that *no man shall be saved that becomes not a subject of the Pope of Rome.* Let a man believe in Christ, love him, obey in him, hope in him, ever so much; let him believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet can he not be saved if he believe not in the Pope. Wonderful! that it should be possible for Christians, for men to be thus bristled! Why has not Christ once mentioned to us this Article of faith,—*He that obeyeth not the Pope and Roman Church shall be damned?* Why is it not in the Holy Scriptures! Why was it never in the Creed of the Church,—*I believe in the Pope and Church of Rome, as well as, I believe in the holy Catholic Church?*

Reason 6. Moreover, the cause of the Papists is plainly carnal, being all resolved into a carnal interest, and is maintained by it. The main questions between us are, *Whether the Pope must govern all the Christian world?* and, *Whether all persons must obey him upon pain of damnation?* And what is this but to exalt a worm, and to lay the kingdom of Christ upon his shoulders! If the question were, whether we should be holy or profane, obey Christ or disobey him! we would be ashamed to be behind them. But when all this stir is set up on one city to be the mistress of the world, and one man to be the Church, and this too, without Christ, and against him. What can we think, but that ambition makes Lucifer mad.

Reason 7. Moreover, the way of Popery is against Christianity, and shaketh the very foundation of it, and tempteth the world to infidelity

by building their faith on an uncertain ground, yea, on a ground which is certainly false. For, according to the Papists, we cannot know the doctrine of Christ to be true, nor Scripture to be the Word of God, but on the authority of the Pope or his church. Now it is as clear as the light, that no man can know that the Pope or the Roman Church hath any such authority, until he knows whether the doctrine by which they claim it be really the true doctrine of Christ. Who can tell that the Pope or the Church of Rome is to be credited, more than any other Church or person, till he find some such thing in the Word of God! And if he finds it there he cannot believe it, because he receives it not on the authority of the Church, and yet the authority of the Roman Church cannot be known but by the doctrine of faith, as some say; or else as others say, we must wait till it is proved by miracles, as the Apostles did.

Reason 8. Moreover, this cause and this Church is a novelty, and a late invention,—a thing unknown to the Primitive Church; and therefore it cannot be of God. Notwithstanding this, they are so shameless as to call their opinions the *Old Religion*, and to persuade the simple that we are an upstart generation, and that our Church is but of two hundred or three hundred years' standing; because we have forsaken the Roman novelties, and are turned back to primitive antiquity. For our part we say, and say again, Let him be scorn of the Churches that believeth any Catholic Church that is less than sixteen hundred years of continuance [in the year 1688]. And what can he expect but to be accused of God that believeth any Gospel of less than sixteen hundred years' continuance!—(Gal. i. 8, 9.) Let us go to the Gospel, the records of antiquity, and see there whether *our religion* or *their opinions* be the older; and let the older carry it without contradiction. Where find you that the Church of Jerusalem, or Corinth, or of Galatia, or of Philippi, or, in fact, the Church of any part of the world was then commanded to obey the Church of Rome, or that the Church of Rome was ever called the Mistress of all Churches, or the Universal Church? Then Rome was but a particular Church like the rest.—Where read you that the Apostles did direct men to receive the Christian faith upon the credit of the Church of Rome! Or When did Paul and Barnabas, or any preacher, tell the people, "You must believe in Peter, or in the Church of Rome, before you can believe in Christ;" or, "You must believe the Christian doctrine on the credit of the Church of Rome;" or, "That the Church of Rome is made the judge of all controversies?" The Romish dominion was then unknown.

Reason 9. Moreover, their profession is made up of many contradictions, and the subjects of the Pope (at least those in orders) are sworn to these contradictions. By the Trent Confession they are to swear, "that will never take and interpret Scripture but according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." And yet they swear in the same oath to many particulars which the Fathers were against, and many to which they never unanimously consented. They either know not what the Fathers hold, or else they know that the Fathers do not interpret with unanimous consent; and there is not one of a hundred, or of a thousand of them, that knows what the Fathers do unanimously consent in, and what they do not. In abundance of texts the Fathers differ among themselves, and here the swearers do bind themselves never to interpret those Scriptures at all, till a messenger from heaven shall tell them what the Fathers are agreed on since their death. They have sworn also to embrace the sense of our Church; whereas the Fathers and their Church do frequently disagree. They are sworn to all things delivered, defined, and declared by the Canons and Œcumenical Councils, and this without doubting. O strong faith! When even men's faith in Christ himself is oft

mixed with such doubts that we must pray, "Lord, increase our faith;" "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Yea, there is not one of a multitude of them that knows what all these Canons and Councils do contain,—yea, where these Canons and Councils do often contradict each other; still they are sworn to believe them all. The Council of Constance decreed, that a general Council is above the Pope, and the Council of Basil did second it; but the Lateran Council, under Julius II. and Leo X. decreed, that the Pope is above a general Council. The Council of Trent doth add to the canon of Scripture contrary to the Council of Laodicea, and the third Council of Carthage. And the Papists at this time go contrary to the current judgment of the Church in adding Apocryphal Books to the Canon. Abundance more of these contradictions may be shewn.

Reason 10. Moreover, Popery is an uncertain profession, both for the *foundation* and the *matter* of it. No man can fully tell what it is, or when he hath it, and when he hath it not. For the *foundation* of it; their council's and nations are yet disagreed, whether the Pope or a general Council be the chief, and which must be followed when they disagree, and which is the infallible judge of controversies. And, for the *matter*, how few in the world can tell what is in their Canons, Councils, and Fathers, and what is their sense, with many such uncertainties! And for the Articles of Faith, they are still to them uncertain, whether they have yet all or not, because the Pope may make those to be points of faith to the people that were not so before, and so he may increase them as much as he sees best. Every time the Pope determines a controversy he makes a new article of faith, as he did not long since against the Jansenists.

Reason 11. Further, Popery is a human, and not a divine faith. It leads us to man, and bottometh us on man, and therefore leaveth us short of God. They must first believe the Christian doctrine and truth of Scripture on the authority of the Pope or the Roman Church, and then they must take the meaning of every word of Scripture upon the credit of the Roman Church and the Fathers. So that the very upshot of all their religion is,—they believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and Christ to be the Son of God, because the Church of Rome doth tell them so. And how know they that this Church is infallible? Because they say so themselves, or because the Scripture saith they are infallible? But where can be found any passage of Scripture which supports such a notion! But, again, which is the infallible Church of Rome? The Pope, saith a third. And how knows the world that these are the acts of the Pope, and he confirmed the Council! Because such a cardinal, or a priest, or a Jesuit saith so. And here it is where the people are left.

Reason 12. Popery sets up a head for the Universal Church that cannot possibly govern it, and a centre for the Church in which it cannot possibly unite. And thus it is only a titular head, a name, and a shadow, good for nothing, except to divide and to vex Christians; but the uniting and the ruling of them, which is so much pretended to, is a flat impossibility. It is not morally possible to bring all the Christian world to be of the Popish opinion herein; it being a point that is so void of cogent evidence from Scripture and reason that they are both against it.—*Bulcark.*

#### MEDITATION ON THE SABBATH.

EXTRACTED FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE LATE JAMES HALLEY, A. B. STUDENT OF THEOLOGY.

"This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep; for the joy of the Lord is your strength."—Neh. viii. 9, 10.