

a black or a white spirit;" *Lib. de subsid. Euch.* but that it was no other than the dark spirit, we, who are convinced that such doctrine could only proceed from the Father of lies, do readily believe; and such also was the conviction of Luther, when he declares that "the devil seems to have mocked mankind, in proposing to them a heresy so contrary to scripture as that of Zuingli's." *Luth. defen. Verb. Cons.*

Should they, however, be unwilling to admit that the Calvinistic doctrine on the sacrament proceeds from the author of all heresy—satan. They will not, I hope, pretend to deny that it came from the unbelieving people of Capharnaum, who calling in question the omnipotence of him, to whom all power was given in heaven and on earth, asked the infidel question, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So universal was the belief in the real presence, among the ancient sects and heretics whether *Syrians, Greeks, or Armenians*, that I fear the apostate disciples at Capharnaum were the only persons who coincide with the Calvinists on this point; but we read in St. Ignatius' Letters that in the year of our Lord 100, there were heretics who denied the real presence. "They abstain from the Eucharist, and from the public offices, because says the venerable martyr, they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in his goodness raised again from the dead. It will therefore become you, he concludes, to abstain from such persons, and not to speak with them, neither in private, nor in public." This same advice Luther gave his followers respecting the Sacramentarians, and they continued to wage a desperate war on the subject of the real presence for 300 years, but they have lately laid down their arms, and in the true spirit of religious indifference agreed to teach the people that what they had hitherto condemned in each other as fundamental errors, are in truth, opinions of no moment, which christians may receive or reject indifferently; and they further agreed that it was lawful to receive the sacrament indifferently, from the hands of the minister who believed and taught that it is a mere figure, from which Christ is really and substantially absent, as from him who taught that it was a divine reality in which Christ was really, truly and corporally present. But what would Father Luther say of such a union of contradictory creeds! He has already cursed it by anticipation. May all agreement with the Sacramentarians be eternally cursed, because such concord tends to lacerate the bosom of the church.† But Luther's disciples no longer care for his curse or his doctrine. The articles on Free Will and the Real Presence he held to be fundamental, and that they who differed from him could not be saved. Can they who having departed from his doctrine

*Eucharistias et oblationes non admittunt, eo quod non confiteantur Eucharistiam esse carnem Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi. Epist ad Smyrn. See this Epistle in full in a late work published by Doctor Cooke, a Protestant, on the Invalidity of Presbyterian Ordination. Appendix

†Maladieta sit in eternum charitas et concordia (cum sacramentariis) Luth. Tom. fol. vii. 281.

on these points, believe that he was in error, think still that he was commissioned by God to reform the doctrines of the church! We think not.

N. O. P.

From the same
THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

The claims of the Church to authority and privileges divinely communicated seem to unbelievers unwarranted pretensions, and impious encroachments on the prerogatives of the Deity: but to the believer they afford presumption of her divine origin. Independently of the proofs which she adduces of each privilege, he, considering her claims in the abstract, deems them worthy of a divine institution.

The Church presents herself as the Herald of divine truth; and announces the revealed doctrines with all the confidence inspired by a consciousness of their certainty. The tremulous accents of human hesitancy are not heard from her lips. She tells us—*Thus has God revealed; thus you must believe at the peril of incurring his eternal indignation; thus has God commanded; you must obey under pain of his eternal vengeance.* Whatever extenuation or excuse frailty or ignorance may offer, no article of revelation can be sacrificed to human pride, no divine Law can yield to the influence of the human passions. The obstinate unbeliever and the impenitent delinquent are alike menaced with the wrath of an insulted deity. The child is imbued with the divine principles which from equally the Rule of Faith and morals for the man of mature or declining age: the unlettered slave hears the same oracles of heavenly wisdom to which the learned philosopher is commanded to yield the unhesitating assent of his understanding. All are children of the same mother, and bound to hear her with the same reverence and affection: all are disciples of her, who, because she proclaims the mysteries and behests of the Most High God, speaks to all with power and authority.

The infallibility claimed by the Church becomes a divine institution. The schools of human science may be occasionally disgraced by errors and absurdities, since the human intellect is circumscribed and subject to gross delusions. But a tribunal of instruction divinely constituted to notify to man the truths and laws of God, must exhibit a divine impress in the unerring wisdom of its decisions. To disclaim the privileges of *inerrancy* is to avow that the institution is purely human: to claim it is a necessary consequence of the assertion that its origin is divine. The pretension, of a society to infallibility may be unfounded, and must be so, if the society be of human origin: but no society can be divine in its origin and constitution, if it be altogether destitute of security as to the revealed doctrines. We do not now examine whether the claims of the Catholic church to this prerogative be well grounded: but we merely state that those claims form a presumption in her favour, because it becomes the wisdom and displays the power of God to establish and maintain an infallible tribunal.

The authority which the Church claims as dispensatrix of the mysteries of God affords a new motive for presuming that she has been divinely established. She appears not as the mere Herald of divine truth, but as the agent of a divine power in the sanctification of man. She enlightens the mind by the communication of that knowledge which is derived from the infinite wisdom of the deity: she directs the will by the laws which flow from his infinite sanctity; she purifies and sanctifies the soul by the participation of those gifts which are imparted by the mercy and bounty of God in regard to the boundless merits of the Saviour. She claims a power, which none but God could bestow: loosening the sinners' bonds, and restoring him when penitent to the friendship and grace of his offended Creator: she asserts her right to cast around the obstinate delinquent those spiritual chains which will bind him even before that God whose judgments are not dependent on human caprice of human authority. Her claims are not put forward in the ostentatious language of vanity, or with the trepidation of a doubtful pretender: but fully conscious of her divine delegation she tranquilly and confidently proceeds in the exercise of the powers divinely communicated; and only alleges her commission when questioned by the incredulous or inquisitive, by what authority she performs acts so sublime a nature. We decline for the present examining this commission, and limit ourselves to observing that the powers which she claims are such as might be expected to characterize a divine institution.

Before the investigation of the proofs of such authority the mind must perceive its accordance with the attributes of deity, and its suitableness to the infirmity of our nature. We know our liability to err, and we must be sensible of the importance and necessity of being divinely assured of those truths which are to direct us in the path to eternity. How worthy then of the wisdom and power, as of the mercy and goodness of God must it not appear to us to have established a Church wherein the doctrines of salvation are delivered with such certainty, and such perspicuity, that even the young and the illiterate can attain their knowledge. We feel our sinfulness and our spiritual miseries: and we cannot but regard the voice as divine, which invites us to approach with the assurance that we shall be free from the burden of our sins replenished with the consolations and gifts of the deity.

A society that proposes its tents with such diffidence and hesitation as to leave it optional for the hearers to reject or receive them, shews that it is void of all just claims to divine origin. Were the said society certain that its doctrines were divine it could not without absurdity and impiety consider their belief a mere matter of choice or indifference. because the veracity, wisdom, & majesty of God necessarily demand the acquiescence of created intellects in the communications of infinite intelligence. Its disclaimer of divine powers is equivalent to a renunciation of all pretensions to divine origin since it cannot be supposed that the Saviour God would institute a society void of all power and au-