

2. There were Churches in *England* before the Roman Power was here owned : And therefore if it was a sin to *change*, the first *change* was the sin, when they subjected themselves to you ; and not the later, in which they returned to their ancient state.

3. And for the Germanes or English or whoever did relinquish you, they have as good reason for it, as for the relinquishing of any other sin. If they did by the unhappiness of ill education or delusion, submit to the usurped Sovereignty of the Pope they had no reason to continue in such an error. Repentance is not a Vice, when the thing Repented of is a vice. Justifie therefore your usurpation, or else it is in vain to be angry with us for not adhering to the usurper, and the many corruptions that he brought into the Church.

## CHAP. XXII.

*Detect. 13.* **A** Nother deceit that they manage with great confidence, is this; say they, *If the Church of Rome be the true Church: then yours is not the true Church, and then you are Schismatics in separating from it: But the Church of Rome is the true Church; For you will confess it was once a true Church: when Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans: and if it ceased to be a true Church, tell us when it ceased, if you can: If it ceased to be a true Church, it was either by heresie, or Schism or Apostacy: but by none of these: therefore, &c.*

A man would think that children and women should see the palpable fallacy of this Argument; and yet I hear of few that the learned Papists make more use of. But to lay open the shame of it in brief I answer 1. The deceit lieth in the ambiguity of the word [*Church.*] As to our present purpose, observe that it hath these several significations. 1. It is taken oft in Scripture for one particular Church, associated for personal communion in Gods Worship. And thus there were many Churches in a Countrey, as *Judea, Galatia, &c.* 2. It is taken by Ecclesiastical writers often for an Association of many of these Churches for Communion by their Pastors; such as were Diocesan, Provincial, National



National Churches; whereof most were then ruled by Assemblies, where a Bishop, Archbishop, Metropolitan or Patriarch (as they called them) did preside. 3. It is taken oft in Scripture for the Body of Christ, the holy Catholick or Universal Church containing all true Believers as mystical, or all Professors of true faith as visible. 4. It is taken by the P. pists oft for one particular Church which is the Mistress or Ruler of all other Churches.

And now I come to apply these in answer to the argument. 1. If the Question be of a true particular Church, we grant you that the Church of Rome was a true and noble Church, in the daies of Paul and long after; and thus Paul owneth it in his Epistle as a true Church. And to the question when it ceased to be a true Church: I answer, 1. What matter is it to us whether it be reasoned or not any more then whether Corinth, Ephesus, Coloss, Thessalonica, or Jerusalem be true Churches or ceased? In charity we regard them all: but otherwise what is it to the faith or salvation of the world, whether Rome or any one of these be yet a true Church, or be ceased? I know not well whether there be any Church at Coloss or Philippi, or some other places that had then true Churches: And doth it therefore follow that I am not a true believer? what would you say to such a fellow that should argue thus concerning other Churches, as these men do of Rome? and say, e. g. [If Philippi be a true Church, then England are no true Churches, If it be not, when did it cease to be a true Church?] Would you not answer him, [What is it to me whether Philippi be a true Church or not? May not we and they be both true Churches? How prove you that? And whether it be ceased or not ceased, doth no whit concern my faith or salvation, further then as my charity is to be exercised towards them] So say we of Rome: It was a true particular Church in the Apostles daies. And if it be still a true Church what hinders but we may be so to? But whether it be so or not, is little to me. It concerneth not my faith or Salvation to know whether there be any such place as Rome on earth, or whether it were consumed long ago. If a man were so simple as to believe a report that Rome was destroyed by Charls of Bourbon, and never inhabited, or had a Pope since, he were but such a Heretick as Pope Zachary and Bishop Boniface made of Virgilius,



lius, for holding there be Antipodes (though further from the South.)

2. And if you take the word [ *Church* ] in the second sence, for a Diocesan or Patriarchial Church, or Association of Churches; supposing such forms proved warrantable, the same answer serveith as to the first.

3. But ( to come to the true state of our Controversie ) If by [ *a true Church* ] you mean either of the two last, that is, 1. The whole Universal Church: or 2. A Mistris Church that must Rule all the rest, it was never such a true Church in Pauls dayes.

And therefore here we turn this argument of the Papists against themselves. *If the Church of Rome were neither the whole Catholick Church, nor the Mistris of all other Churches when Paul wrote his Epistle to them, then it is not so now, nor ought to be so accounted. But the former is proved: 1. That the Church of Rome was not the whole Catholick Church then, no man thats well in his wits can doubt, that reads what a Church there was at Jerusalem, what a Church at Ephesus, and Philadelphia, Smyrna, Thyatira, Laodicea, Corinth, and abundance more. Prove that all or any of these were parts of the Church of Rome if you can. 2. Where doth Paul once name them either the Catholick Church, or the Mistris or Ruler of all Churches? or give the least hint of any such thing? or mention any Pope among them whom the whole world was to take to be their Sovereign Head? Is it not an incredible thing that Paul ( and all the Apostles ) would forget to make any mention of this priviledge, or teach them how to use it, or teach other Churches their duty in obeying the Church of Rome, if indeed they had been made the Mistris Church? Men that can believe what they list, may say what they list. But for my part I will never think so hardly of Paul and all the Apostles, as to accuse them of so great oblivion or negligence. And therefore I conclude, Rome was neither the Universal Church, nor the Mistris Church then (nor many an age after) and therefore it is not so to be accounted now. So that you see how easily this silly Argument shews its shame.*

But ( though it concern not our main question ) I shall tell them further, that the *Matter* of the Roman Church must be distinguished from its *New Political Form*. For the *Matter*,



so many of its members as are *true Christians*, are part of the *Catholick Church* of Christ, though not the *whole*: And for the form, 1. There is the form of its severall parts, and the form of the whole. The form of any parts of the Roman Church, that are *Congregations* or *particular Churches* of *true Christians*, may make those parts true Churches: that is, there may be many a true Parish Church that yet live under the Papall Yoak. But as to the *Politick* form of their *Roman Catholick Church*, as it is a *Body Headed* by one claiming an *Universal Monarchy*, so the form is false and Antichristian, and therefore the Church as *Papall*, must be denominated from this form; and can be no better.

And this is our true answer to the question, *whether the Church of Rome be a true Church?* There are I doubt not among them many a thousand *true members* of the *Catholick Church*, and there may be *true particular Churches* among them, having true Pastors and Christian people joyned for Gods worship (though I doubt there is but few of them but do fearfully pollute it: and I am confident that salvation is much more care and difficult with them, then it is with the Reformed Catholicks; yet that many among them are true Christians and saved, I am fully perswaded, especially when I have read such writings as *Gersons*, *Guil. Parisiensis*, *Ferus*, *Kempis*, &c.) And I think the better of *Bellarmino* himself for saying of *Kempis de imitatione Christi* [ *Ego certe ab adolescentia & usq; in senectam hoc opusculum sapissimè volui, & revolvi, & semper mihi novum apparuit, & nunc etiam mirifice cordi meo sapit.* *Bellarmin. de Scriptor. Eccl. pag. 298.* ]

But the Pope as a pretended *Universal Monarch* is a false Head, and consequently their *Papall Church*, as such, is a false *Antichristian Church*, and no true Church of Jesus Christ.

And ( by the way ) I conceive you are thus to understand a clause in a late oath of Abjuration drawn up by the last Parliament to be offered to the Papists, *viz.* that [ *the Church of Rome is not the true Church* ] that is, 1. *Not the whole Catholick Church*, but part of it, as they are Christians. 2. *Nor a true Church at all as Papal*, and so formally as the *Now Romish Church*. But all this is little to our main Question.



## C A H P. XXIII.

Detect. 14. **A** Nother great Endeavour of the Papists is, to make men believe that they only have a fix-  
edness, unity, consistency and settledness in Religion: but we are  
still at uncertainty and to seek, incoherent, not tyed together by  
any certain bond, but still upon divisions, and upon change:  
And they instancethus [ A while ago you were Episcopal, and  
then Presbyterian, and now you are nothing, but every one goes  
his own way: A while ago you worshipped God in one manner, in  
Baptising, Marrying, Burying, Common Prayer, the Lords Sup-  
per; and now you have all new. Where is the Church of Eng-  
land now? some of you are for one Government, and some for  
another: the Lutherans have Superintendents, the Calvinists  
are Presbyterians: And what names of reproach do the Episcopal  
give the Presbyterians? and the Presbyterians take them to be An-  
richristian. Some of you are Arminians; some Calvinists; some  
say Christ dyed for all, and some say no; some are for Justification  
only by Christs Passive Righteousness, and some also by his  
active; with other such differences even in these fundamentall  
points. ]

I repeat their words just as I have heard they make use of  
them with the people, and now I shall open the deceit of them in  
particular Answers to each part.

And 1. For the matter of unity, I have spoken of it before,  
and dare leave it to all the world that are judicious, whether  
the Papists or we are more unanimous, or more divided. Only  
to the Instances of division, I shall speak further now. 1. For  
the matter of Church Government, we are all agreed in the  
substance of it (except a very few straglers;) As concerning the  
duty of Penitence, Confession, Restitution, Contrition, and  
of the excommunicating the obstinate, and Absolving the pe-  
nitent, &c. All this we agree is the duty of the Presbyters; and we  
agree that these Presbyters may have a President; only some think  
that the President is *eiusdem ordinis*, of the same order, differing  
but in degree, and hath no power *jure divinis*, but what the Pres-  
byters have, but only the exercise is restrained as to the Presby-  
ters,



ters, by *men*; but others think that the President is a Bishop eminently of another order, having not only the exercise, but the power above the Presbyters. And is this difference so great a business? And do not these cheaters know, that if for this they would reproach us, they must do so by themselves? Know they not that among their own Schoolmen there is the same difference, or in most points the same? And know they not that if differences in Ceremonies or Modes should unchurch us, or disgrace us, it would fall as foul on the whole Catholick Church, and that in the very primitive times? Did they never read of the difference between the Asian and the Roman Churches, about the celebration of *Easter* day, and how *Polycrates* and the rest did plead Tradition against the Church of *Rome's* Tradition; and how *Irenaeus* did reprehend the Bishop of *Rome* for his uncharitable censure of the Churches for so small a difference? And how *Polycarp* and *Anicetus* Bishop of *Rome* could not agree, as building upon contrary Traditions: but yet maintained Christian peace; as *Eusebius* out of *Irenaeus* his Epistle to *Victor* tells us, *lib. 5. Hist. Eccl. cap. 26.* And the English and Irish Churches long after that adhered to the Asian way; even after the Council of *Nice* had ended the controversie on the Roman side. And who knows not how many more controversies greater then these of ours have been among the Churches of Christ, without their unchurching or disparagement to Religion.

And for the Doctrinal Controversies mentioned, most of them lie more in words then in sense, and all of them are far from the foundation, though they be about Christ, who is the Foundation. If one of your picture-drawers mistake the complexion of Christ, or if one should say he was not buried in a sheet, these are errours about Christ that is the foundation, and yet far from the foundation. Those of us that say *Christ dyed for all*, and those that say *he dyed not for all*, do agree as your School-men do, that *he dyed for all*, as to the sufficiency of his death and price: but *he dyed not for all* as to the actual efficiency of pardon and salvation: Is not this your doctrine? and is not this ours? and are not you as much disagreed about it as we? what else meant the late decision against the *Jansenists*? and what meaneth the present persecution of them in *France*? And yet have you the faces to make this a reproach of us? And for the



the righteousness of Christ, we are commonly agreed that it is both his Obedience and Passion that we are justified and saved by: though we are not all of a mind about the reason of their several interests; which difference is so far from unchristening us, that it makes no considerable odds among our selves, who are censorious enough in cases of difference.

And for different forms of worship, sure these men do wilfully forget what a number of Offices and Mass books have been among themselves and other Churches? and what a number of Litanies or Liturgies of several ages and Churches they have given us in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*: but more of this anon.

2. And as for the changes and unfixedness which they charge us with, we are contented that 1. Our principles. 2. And our practices be compared with the Papists, and then let even modest and judicious enemies be judges which of us are more fixed, or more mutable.

1. For our Principles: we take only Christ to be the chief Foundation of our Faith, and his inspired Prophets and Apostles to be the secondary foundation: whereas the Papists build upon many a most ungodly ignorant man, because he is the Pope of Rome. And which of these is the firmer foundation?

2. We take nothing for our Rule but the sure word of God contained in the holy Scriptures: but the Papists take the Decrees of all Popes and Councils for their Rule: Our Rule they confess to be Divine and infallible: Their Rule we affirm to be humane and fallible. Which then is like to be more firm?

Our Rule (the sacred Scriptures in the Originall languages, as to the words, and the matter of them, as to the sense) the Papists themselves confess unchangeable; but whether they will say as much of their own, I will try by two or three Instances.

1. What an alteration Pope Sixtus, and Pope Clement made in the Vulgar Latine Bible, which is one part of their Rule, I told you before, and Dr. James his *Bellum Papale* will tell you the particulars. 2. The other part is their Decrees, of which Pope Leo the tenth in *Bulla contr. Luth. in Binnius*, page 655. saith [the holy Popes our predecessors never erred in their Canons and Constitutions] And yet hear what Pope Julius the second saith in his General Council at the Lateran



rane with their approbation, *Cant. pragmat. sanct. monitor. Binius, vol. 4. pag. 560.* [ *Though the Institutions of sacred Canons, holy Fathers, and Popes of Rome — and their Decrees be judged immutable, as made by Divine Inspiration; yet the Pope of Rome, who, though of unequal merits, holdeth the place of the Eternal King, and the Maker of all things, and all Laws on earth, may abrogate these Decrees when they are abused.* ]

You see here from the mouth of Infallibility it self (if the Roman faith have any) of what continuance we may judge their Immutable Decrees to be of, which are made as by Divine inspiration: they are *Immutable* till the Pope abrogate them, who being in Gods place, though of unequal merits (O humble confession!) is of power to do it.

3. We have a Rule that was perfected by Christ and his Apostles, to which nothing can be added, and therefore we are at a Certainty for our Religion: for we have a sure and perfect Rule from Heaven. Nothing may be added to it, or taken from it. But the Papists do profess that the Determinations of the Pope or Council may make a point (and so five thousand points, for there is no certain number) to be *de fide* articles of faith, and necessary to salvation, though not *in se*, yet *quoad nos*, as to us. (And what it is for a Law to be obligatory *in se*, and not *quoad nos*, is hard to understand.) So that the Papists never know when their faith is perfect and grown to its full stature. For ought they know a thousand more Articles yet may be added. And yet these men of uncertain growing faith, have the face to perswade men that we are mutable, and they are fixed. You see our several Principles: now to our Practices.

For our part, 1. We never changed our Head, our Lord, our Faith, or one Article of our Faith: if malice it self be able to charge us with changing the smallest Article of our Faith, let them say their worst: we change not our Rule, the holy Scriptures, nor one clause or sentence of it, but endeavour the preservation of the same, which at the first we received. In our contests with the Papists, our great offence is at their mutation from the antient Rule and way; we contend but for the faith once delivered to the Saints: *the old way* with us is the *good way*: we abhor a Religion that is new sprung up, or is less then one thousand five hundred and fifty years standing at least. If we change



change in any thing, it is but by repenting of our former changeableness while our Nation was Popish, having then changed from the Apostolick simplicity, we change from that sinful change, and return to the antient way again. And if we have made any further changes since our first change at the Reformation, it is but a perfecting the change to Antiquity, and Apostolick simplicity which we then begun. *Rome* was not built in a day, and is not pulled down in a day. The work of Reformation is but one change, though it be not done all at one time. If we find some spots of Romish dirt upon us, that escaped us at our first washing, it is no dangerous mutability yet to wash it off. If a man converted by saving grace be not perfectly rid of all his former sin the first day of his Conversion, should he be reproached as mutable for striving against it all his life after, and casting it off by degrees as he is able? If a man did but recover by degrees from the relicks of his disease, they will not therefore reproach him as mutable? If he sweep the dust or dirt out of his house every day, they will not say, He is mutable and knows not where to rest. These men might as well reproach us as mutable, because we rise in the morning and do not still lie in bed; or because we go to bed at night, and do not stay up still.

But what is it that we are changeable in? we have changed none of the substance of worship: did we baptize before, and do we not so still? Did we pray or administer the Lords Supper before, and do we not so still? what is the change? why, 1. *We before used the common Prayer book, and now we do not.* 2. *Before we used prayers at the buriall of the dead, which now are omitted.* 3. *Before we used the Cross and Surplice, and kneeled at the Sacrament, which are now omitted.* And what then? therefore we have changed our Religion. Even as a man changeth his cloaths by brushing them, or his house by sweeping it, or his face by washing it. Do these men think us so sottish as to place our Religion in these Circumstances? God hath bid us *Pray continually*: but he hath not told us whether we shall use a Prayer book or not, but left that to mens necessities or conveniences to determine of. And doth a man change his Religion or Worship of God, if he either begin or cease to use a Book? If any man had so little wit or Religion, as to place their Religion in a Prayer book, its no great loss to them if they have lost their Religion, when the

Prayer



Prayer book is taken from them. We doubt not but Prayer books are profitable to some, and hinderances to others: some should use them, and some should not: but whether we use them, or not use them, is no part of our Religion at all, but a meer Accident, or common help and appurtenance. God hath not told preachers whether they shall use any Notes for their memory in Preaching: to one it is an hinderance; to another an help. Doth a man change his Religion when he changeth a custome of using Notes? God hath not told us what Chapter we shall read, or what *Psalm* we shall sing, or what Text we shall Preach on this day or that day. What if one age think it best that some Pastors give Laws to all the rest, that they shall read no Chapter; preach on no Text, and sing no *Psalm* but by their direction: and the next age think it meeter to leave it to each Minister, as thinking it unfit to Ordain such Ministers that have not wit enough to choose their Text, or Chapter, or *Psalm* according to occasions. Will you say that here is a change of Religion? These outside Hypocrites tell the world what a thing they take Religion to be, and in what they place it. What if one man use an hour-glass in preaching, and another use none? What if one read a Chapter with spectacles, and another without? or if one preach in a Pulpit, and another below: or if one preach in a white garment, or another in a black: or if one stand at the Sacrament, and another sit, and another kneel: Are we therefore of several Religions? or is this any part of the worship it self? Do we not all now either stand, sit, or kneel at the hearing of a Sermon, as we please? Do we not kneel or stand at Prayer as we please? Yea do not men commonly in singing *Psalms* of Prayer or Praise to God, sit or stand as they please? And what if we do so at the Sacrament? Is it not all one? Or doth standing, kneeling or sitting make another Religion, or any part of it? And for Marrying, Burying, Baptizing, and the rest, we have altered no part at all of the worship of God; but order them in that manner as seemeth most convenient. What ignorant souls are these, that think that the using a Prayer book, or praying without book, or the using this gesture, or that, these words, or those words that are to the same sence, doth make different Religions or Ordinances of worship? These are tricks that none but the foolishly ignorant will be deluded with, that know not what Religion



Religion or worship is. They may as well say, If I change my Lecture-day from Thursday to Friday, that I change my Religion or the worship of God. These are our great changes.

Well ! will you now hear whether the Papists or we be the greatest *Changlings*? 1. Some *just changes* they have made themselves, that they know well enough are as great as ours. It was so common in the antient Church to *Pray only standing on every Lords day, and not to kneel at all in any part of the worship of that day*, that it was taken for an universal Tradition, and to kneel was taken for a great sin, and condemned by General Councils many hundred years after Christ ; and yet the Church of *Rome*, and other Churches as well as we, have cast off this pretended Tradition, violated this Decree of General Councils, and forsaken this universal Custom of the Church. And the Papists receive the Eucharist *kneeling*, for all this Law and Custome.

In the primitive Church, and in *Tertullians* dayes, a Common Feast of the Church was used with the Lords Supper, and the Sacrament taken then. But now this Custom is also changed. It was then the Custom to sing *ex tempore in the Congregation* to Gods praise. But now *Rome* it self hath no such Custom. It was once the Custom to give *Infants the Lords Supper* : but now *Rome* it self hath cast off that Custom. Once it was a Canon that *Bishops must not read the books of Gentiles*, (*Concil. Carthag. 4.*) which yet *Paul* made use of, and the Papists now do too much value. Abundance such changes might be mentioned, greater then ours, in which we are justified by the Papists themselves.

2. But they have yet other kind of changes then these. They have changed the very *Essence of the Catholick Church* (in their esteem ; ) they have changed the Officers, the Doctrine, the Discipline, the Worship, and what not, as though they had been born for change, to turn all upside down.

In the Primitive times, the Church had *no universal Monarch but Christ* : but they have set up a new universal Monarch at *Rome*.

In the primitive times the *Catholick Church was the Universality of Christians* : and they have changed it to be *only the subjects of the Pope*.

In the Primitive times *Rome was but a particular Church*, as



*Jerusalem* and other Churches were : but they have changed it, to be the *Mistress* of all Churches.

For many hundred years after Christ, the *Scripture* was taken to be a *sufficient Rule of faith* ; but they have changed it to be but part of the Rule.

In the ancient Church all sorts were earnestly exhorted to read, or hear, and study the *Scripture* in a known tongue : but they have changed this into a desperate restraint, proclaiming it the cause of all Heresies.

In the ancient Church the Bread and Wine was the *Body and Blood of Christ Representative and Relative* : but they have changed it into the *real Body and Blood*.

Heretofore there was Bread and Wine remaining after the words of Consecration : but they have changed so, that there remaineth neither Bread nor Wine, but the qualities and quantity, without the substance, and this must be believed, because they say it, against *Scripture* and Antiquity, and in despite of sense it self.

In the ancient Church the *Lords Supper* was administered in both kinds, bread and wine to all : but they have lately changed this into one kind only to the people, denying them one half of the Sacrament.

Of old the *Lords Supper* was but the Commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, and a Sacrament of our Communion with him and his members : but now they have changed it into a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the quick and dead : and in it they adore a piece of Bread as very God, with Divine worship.

Of old, men were taught to make daily confession of sin, and beg pardon, and when they had done all, to confess themselves unfit servants : but now they are so changed, that they pretend not only to be perfect without sin, and to Merit by the Congnity of their works with God, but to supererogate and be more perfect than innocency could make them, by doing more than their duty.

Of old those things were accounted sins deserving Hell, and needing the blood of Christ for pardon, which now are changed into venial sins, which properly are no sins, and deserve no more than temporal punishment.



Of old the Saints had no *proper merits* to plead for themselves ; and now men have some to spare for the buying of souls out of Purgatory.

Of old the Pastors of the Churches were subject to the Rulers of the Commonwealth ; even *every soul, not only, for wrath, but for Conscience sake* was obliged to be subject : but now all the Clergy are exempted from secular Judgement, and yet the secular power is subject to them : for the Pope hath power to depose Princes, and dispossess them of their Dominions, and put others in their rooms, and dissolve the bonds of Oaths and Covenants, in which the subjects were obliged to them, and to allow men to murder them by stabbing, poysoning, &c. If you do not believe me, stay but till I come to it, and I shall give you yet some further proof.

Would you have any more of the Popish Changes ? Why I might fill a volume with them. Should I but recite all the changes they have made in Doctrines, and all that they have made in Church Orders, and Discipline, and Religious Orders and their Discipline, and in Worship, and Ceremonies, I should be over tedious : their very Liturgy or Mass-book hath been changed, and made by changes, such abundance of additions it hath had since the beginning of it. What changes *Sixtus* the fift, and *Clement* the eighth made in their Bibles, I told you before : as also what changes they have had in the election of their Popes.

And now I am content that any impartial man be judge whether Papists or the Reformed Churches are the more mutable and unsettled in their Religion ? and which of them is at the greater certainty, firmness, and immutability ?

#### CHAP. XXIV.

*Detect. 15.* **A** Nother fraud of the Papists, which they place not the least of their confidence in, is this : They perswade the people that our Church and Religion is but new, of the other dayes invention : and that theirs is the only old Religion. And therefore they call upon us to give them a Catalogue of the professors of our Religion in all ages ; which they pretend we cannot do : and ask us where our Church was before Luther ?



To this we shall give them once more a brief, but satisfactory answer. 1. We are so fully assured that the oldest Religion is the best, (since the date of the Gospel) that we are contented that our whole cause do stand or fall by this tryall. Let him be esteemed of the true Religion, that is of the oldest Religion. This is the main difference between us and the Papists: We are for no Religion that is not as old as the dayes of the Apostles: but they are for the Novelties and Additions of Popes and Councils. Their own *Polidore Virgil de Inven. Rerum*, p. 410. lib. 8. c. 4. calling us a Sect, doth give you a just description of us [*Ita licentia pacta loquendi*, &c. i.e. Having once got leave to speak, that sect did marvailously increase in a short time; which is called Evangelicall, because they affirm that no Law is to be received which belongeth to salvation, but what is given by Christ or the Apostles.] Mark what they confess themselves of our Religion: And yet these very men have the face to charge us with Novelty; as if Christ and his Apostles were not of sufficient Antiquity for them. Our main quarrel with them is, for adding new inventions in Religion, and their principal business against us is to defend it, and yet they call theirs the old Religion, and ours the new.

Our Argument lieth thus. *That which is most conform to the Doctrine and Practice of Christ and his Apostles, is the truly Ancient Religion and Church. But our Religion and Church is most conform to the doctrine and practice of the Apostles: therefore it is the truly ancient Religion and Church.* The Major they will yield: For no older Religion is desirable, further then as the Law of Nature and Moral Determinations of God are still in force. I suppose they will not plead for Judaism. For the Minor, we lay our cause upon it, and are ready to produce our evidence for the Conformity of our Religion and Churches to the doctrine and practice of the Apostles.

That Religion which is most conform to the Holy Scripture is most conform to the doctrine and practice of Christ and his Apostles: But our Religion (and Churches) is most conform to the holy Scriptures: therefore, &c. They can say nothing against the Major, but that the Scripture is Insufficient without Tradition: But for that, 1. We have no Rule of faith but what is by themselves confessed to be true:



true : They acknowledge Scripture to be the true word of God ; So that the Truth of our Rule is Justified by themselves. 2. Let them shew us as good Evidence that their Additional Articles of faith or Laws of life came from the Apostles , as we do that the Scriptures came from them , and then we shall confess that we come short of them : Let them take the Controversies between us point by point , and bring their proof , and we will bring ours , and let that Religion carry it that is Apostolicall : But we are sure that by this means they will be proved Novelists. For 1. Their Traditions in matter of faith superadded to the Scripture , are meer Hereticall or Erroneous forgeries , and they can give us no proof that ever they were Apostolicall. 2. The Scripture affirmeth its own sufficiency ; and therefore excludeth their Traditions. 3. I shewed you how in their own General Council at *Basil* , the Scripture sufficiency was defended. 4. I have shewed you in my Book called the *Safe Religion* , that the ancient Fathers were for the sufficiency of Scripture. 5. Their Traditions are the opinions of a dividing sect , contrary to the Traditions or doctrine of the present Catholick Church : the far greater part of Christians being against them. 6. We are able to shew that the time was for some hundred years after Christ , when most of their pretended Traditions were unknown or abhorred by the Christian Church , and no such things were in being among them. 7. And we can prove that the chief points of Controversie maintained against us , are not only without Scripture , but against it , and from thence we have full particular evidence to disprove them. If the Scriptures be true , as they confess them to be , then no Tradition can be Apostolicall or true that is contrary to them : For example : the Papists Tradition is , that the Clergy is exempt from the Magistrates judgement : But the holy Scripture saith [ *Let every soul be subject to the higher power , Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* The Papists Tradition is for serving God publicly in an unknown tongue . But the holy Scripture is fully against it. Their Tradition is against *Lay mens reading the Scripture in a known tongue* , without special License from their ordinary : But Scripture and all antiquity is against them. The like we may say of many other Controversies.

So that these seven wayes we know their Traditions to be



deceitfull ; because they are 1. Unproved. 2. Against the sufficiency of Scripture. 3. Against their own former confessions. 4. Against the consent of the Fathers. 5. Contrary to the judgement of most of the Catholick Church. 6. We can prove that once the Church was without them. 7. And they are many of them contrary to express Scripture.

And if Scripture will but shew which of us is neereſt the doctrine and practice of the Apostles, then the controversie is ended, or in a fair way to it : For we provoke them to try the cause by Scripture, and they deny it : we profess it is the Rule and test of our Religion ; but they appeal to another Rule and test. And thus you may see which is the *old Religion* : which will be somewhat fullyer cleared in that which followeth.

II. And that our Church and Religion hath been continued from the dayes of Christ till now, we prove thus. 1. From the promise of Christ, which cannot be broken. Christ hath promised in his word, that that Church and Religion which is most conform to the Scripture, shall continue to the end : But our Church and Religion is most conform to the Scripture : therefore Christ hath promised that it shall continue to the end.

2. From the event. The Christian Religion and Catholick Church hath continued from the dayes of Christ till now. But ours is the Christian Religion, and Catholick Church : therefore ours hath continued from the dayes of Christ till now. The Major they will grant : the Minor is proved by parts, thus. 1. That Religion which hath all the Essentials of Christianity, and doth not deny or destroy any Essential part of it, is the Christian Religion : but such is ours : therefore, &c. 2. That Religion, which the Apostles were of, is the Christian Religion : But ours is the same that the Apostles were of : therefore, &c. 3. That Religion, which is neerer the Scripture then the Romish Religion, is certainly the Christian Religion : But so is ours : therefore, &c. 4. They that believe not only all that in particular that is contained in the Ancient Creeds of the Church, but also in generall all that is besides in the holy Scripture, are of the Christian Religion : But thus do the Reformed Churches believe, &c.

2. And for our Church ; 1. They that are of that one holy Catholick Church, whereof Christ is the head, and all true  
Chri-



Christians are members, are of the true Church : ( For there is but one Catholick Church : ) But so are we : therefore, &c.

2. They that are Sanctified, Justified, have the love of God in them, are members of the true Catholick Church : But such are all that are sincere Professors of our Religion : therefore, &c.

But all this will not serve them without a Catalogue, and telling them where our Church was before *Luther* : To this we further answer, we have no peculiar Catholick Church of our own ; for there is but *one*, and *that is* our Church : Wherever the Christian Church was, there was *our Church*. And wherever any *Christians were* congregate for Gods worship, there were Churches of the same sort, as our particular Churches. And wherever Christianity was, there our Religion was : For we know no Religion but Christianity. And would you have us give you a Catalogue of all the Christians in the world, since Christ ? Or would you have us as vain as *H. T.* in his Manual, that names you some Popes, and about twenty professors of their faith in each age, as if twenty or thirty men were the Catholick Church : Or as if those men were proved to be Papists by his naming them ? This is easie, but silly disputing.

In a word, Our Religion is Christianity. 1. Christianity hath certain Essentials, without which no man can be a Christian; and it hath moreover many precious truths, and duties necessary *necessitate precepti*, and also *necessitate medii*, to the *better being of a Christian*. Our being as *Christians* is in the former; and our *strength and increase and better being* is much in the latter. From the former, Religion and the Church is denominated. Moreover, 2. Our implicate and actuall explicite Belief (as the Papists call them) must be distinguished; or, our General and our particular Belief. 3. And also the Positives of our Belief must be distinguished from the implied Negatives; and the express Articles themselves, from their implied Confectaries.

And now premising these three distinctions, I shall tell you where our Church hath been in all Ages since the birth of Christ.

1. In the dayes of Christ and his Apostles our Church was where they and all Christians were : And our Religion was with



with them in all its parts, both *Essential* and *perfective*. That is, we now Believe 1. All to be true that was delivered by the Apostles as from God, with a *General faith*, 2. We believe all the *Essentials* and as much more as we can understand, with a *Particular faith*. 3. But we cannot say that with such a *particular faith* we believe all that the Apostles believed or delivered; for then we must say that we have the same degree of understanding as they; and that we understand every word of the Scriptures.

2. In the dayes of the Apostles themselves, the *Consecrations*, and implied Verities, and Rejections of all Heresies were not particularly and expressly delivered either in Scripture or Tradition (as the Papists will confess.)

3. In the next ages after the Apostles, *our Church was the one Catholick Church, containing all true Christians, Headed by Jesus Christ*: and every such Christian (too many to number) was a member of it. And for our Religion, the *Essential* parts of it were contained both in the Holy Scriptures, and in the Publick Professions, Ordinances, and Practices of the Church in those ages, (which you call Traditions:) and the rest of it, even all the doctrines of faith and universal Laws of God, which are its *perfective* parts, they were fully contained in the holy Scriptures. And some of our Rejections and Consecrations, were then gathered and owned by the Church, as Heresies occasioned the expressing of them: and the rest were all implied in the Apostolical Scripture doctrine which they preserved.

4. By degrees many errors crept into the Church: yet so, that 1. Neither the Catholick Church, nor one true Christian (*in sensu composito* at least) did reject any essential part of Christianity. 2. And all parts of the Church were not alike corrupted with error, but some more, and some less. 3. And still the whole Church held the holy Scripture it self, and so had a perfect General or Implicite belief; even while by evil consequences they oppugned many parts of their own profession.

5. When in process of time by claiming the universall Sovereignty, *Rome* had introduced a new pretended Catholick Church; (so



(so far as their opinion took) by superadding a New Head and form, there was then a *twofold Church in the West*; the *Christian* as *Christian* headed by Christ; and the *Papal* as *Papal* Headed by the Pope; yet so as they called it but *one Church*; and by this usurped Monarchy as under Christ endeavoured to make but *one* of them, by making *both the Heads Essential*, when before *one only* was tolerable. And if the *Matter* in any part may be the same, and the same Man be a *Christian* and a *Papist*, and so the same Assemblies: yet still the *forms* are various: and as *Christians* and part of the *Catholick Church*, they are one thing: and as *Papists*, and members of the *separating sect*, they are another thing. Till this time there is no doubt of our Churches *Visibility*.

6. In this time of the Romish Usurpation, our Church was visible in three degrees, in three severall sorts of persons.  
1. It was visible in the *lowest degree* among the *Papists* themselves, not as *Papists*, but as *Christians*. For they never did to this day deny the *Scriptures*, nor the *Ancient Creeds*, nor *Baptism*, the *Lords Supper*, nor any of the substance of our *Positive Articles* of Religion. They added a *New Religion* and Church of their own, but still professed to hold all the old in consistency with it.

Wherever the *truth of holy Scriptures and the ancient Creeds of the Church* were professed, there was our Religion before *Luther*: But even among the *Papists* the holy *Scriptures* and the said *Creeds* were (visibly) professed: therefore among them was our Religion.

And note here that *Popery* it self was not ripe for a corruption of the *Christian faith* professed, till *Luthers* opposition heightened them. For the *Scripture* was frequently before, by *Papists* held to be a most sufficient *Rule of faith*, (as I shewed before from the *Council of Basil*;) and consequently, *Tradition* was only pleaded as conservatory and expository of the *Scripture*; but now the *Council of Trent* hath in a sort equalled them. And this they were lately driven to, when they found that out of *Scripture* they were unable to confute or suppress the truth.

2. At the same time of the Churches oppression by the *Papacy*, our Religion was visible (and so our Church:) in a more illustrious sort, among the *Christians of the most of the world*,



Greeks, Ethiopians, and the rest, that never were subject to the usurpation of Rome, but only (many of them) took him for the *Patriarch prime sedis*, but not *Episcopus Ecclesia Catholica*, or the Governour of the Universall Church. So that here was a visibility of our Church doubly more eminent then among the Romanists: 1. In that it was *the far greatest part* of the Catholick Church that thus held our Religion, to whom the Papists were then but few. 2. In that they did not only hold the *same Positive Articles of faith* with us, but also among their *Rejections*, did Reject the chief of the *Papish errors* as we do. Besides many particular points named in my *Safe Religion*, they Rejected with us, the *Popes Catholick Monarchy*, the pretended *Infallibility* of the Pope or his *Councils*: the *new form* of the *Papall Catholick Church*, as *Headed by him*, with other such points; which are the very fundamentall controversies between us and the Papists. So that (besides that the Papists themselves profess our Religion) *the major part of the Catholick Church did profess it, with the Rejection of the Papacy and Papall Church*; and so you may as easily see where our Religion was before *Luther*, as where the Catholick Church, or most of Christians were before *Luther*.

3. And beside both these, our Religion was professed with a yet greater *Rejection* of Romish corruptions, by thousands, and many thousands that lived in the Western Church it self, and under the Popes nose, and opposed him in many of his ill endeavours against the Church and truth, together with them that gave him the hearing, and were glad to be quiet, and gave way to his tyranny, but never consented to it.

Concerning these we have abundant evidence, though abundance more we might have had, if the power and subtilty of the Papall faction had not had the handling of them. 1. We have abundance of Histories that tell us of the bloody wars and contentions that the Emperours both of East and West have had with the Pope to hinder his tyranny; and that they were forced by his power to submit to him, contrary to their former free professions. 2. And we have abundance of Treatises then written against him, both for the Emperours and Princes, and against his doctrine and tyranny: some store of them *Goldast* hath gathered: And intimations of more you have