

The Epistle Dedicatory.

de justis. c. 10. & Valent. l. de Votis c. 3. [Hoc praeceptum diligendi Deum ex tota mente, doctrinale est, non obligatorium] See here, a precept, and the greatest precept, even to Love God above all, is not *Obligatory*? A strange precept! And p. 322. he reciteth the words of *Tollet, ibid. l. 4. c. 21. & 22.* teaching *Equivocation* upon oath before a Magistrate, and so maintaining perjury. And p. 327. he citeth the same Author maintaining that Murder, and Blasphemy in a passion and not deliberate, is no mortal sin, unless in one that is used to Blaspheme. And p. 329. how *Bellarmin. Costerus, Valentia* maintain that Fornication in a Priest is better, or a smaller sin then to marry. The like he shews of their doctrine of Theft, False witness, &c. p. 332, 333, &c. This from him.

3. But above all their other mischiefs, the *Propagating of Infidelity* by them is the greatest: Which they do in two ways. 1. Under the *Vizard of Infidels and Seekers* they plead against Scripture and Christianity, in design to loosen men from all Religion, and persuade them that they must needs be Infidels or Papists: *Veron* and his followers have given them full Directions to manage this design. And while, with debauched Consciences) they thus persuade men to be Infidels in jest, they have made abundance such in good sadness: so that upon my knowledge there are many such swarm among us, that sometime seemed pious persons, that plead against Christianity it self. 2. And no wonder, when some of the leading Papists do seem to be Christians in jest, and Infidels in good sadness themselves. I shall instance now but in their Champion, *Tho. White*, who in his *Euclid. Metaphys. Stoeck. K. pr. 16.* maintaineth that in a manner, or almost all incorporated souls shall be saved by the world as the Instrument, or else the world were

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substantially evil; and the souls that fail of Blessedness, non sint sufficientes ad pariem considerabilem totius multitudinis constituendam. He that believeth this, cannot believe Christ, nor well perswade men to believe in Christ. This happy news to the Pagans and Mahometans, might somewhat affright the Christians being the fewest, lest they should be that *inconsiderable number*, but that he that talks of the damnation of so few, its like by his Arguments believeth it of none. The same he asserts in his *Treatise of the middle state of souls*, Rat. 5. p. 41. And Rat. 10. he disputeth against *Vindictive Justice as a thing not becoming God*: and p. 88. denyeth that sinners injure God, forsooth because he suffereth it willingly. Pag. 95 (*Translat.*) he saith that souls are exempt from all such pains as may be caused by any outward agent: And pag. 111. That God Governeth not the world as a Monarch, but as an Engineer; And pag. 134. he saith [the punishment of sin whether external or internal, is nothing else but the increase and exaggeration of sins in those who are perverse, and the decrease and diminution of them in those who amend] And pag. 90. that [the defect of Gods honour occasioned by Peter, was not supplied and repaired by any other] and so not by Christ. And pag. 146. [that Gods aim is alwayes the utmost good of every creature] And he oft enough tels us that God attaineth all his will. And is this man a Papist? or are Papists in good sadness, that tell the world that none but the subjects of the Pope can be saved: and yet now the number that perish will be inconsiderable; and God aimeth at the utmost Good of every creature. Sure he thinks that all the Toads must be made men: and all men made Angels; and every star must be made a Sun! I shall pass by the Books that are written against the *Creation*, and against

Scripture,

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Scripture, and against *Hell*, &c. which swarm among us; only advising your Highness to take heed that you venture not upon any worldly motives, to stand guilty before the living God of allowing or tolerating such Books to be published, and such doctrines as these to be preached to your People, to the everlasting undoing of their precious souls.

If you ask *who it is that presumeth thus to be your Monitor*? It is one that serveth so great a Master that he thinks it no unwarrantable presumption, in such a case to be faithfully plain with the greatest Prince. It is one that stands so neer Eternity, where *Lazarus* shall wear the Crown, that unfaithfull man-pleasing would be to him a double crime: it is one that rejoyceth in the present happiness of *England*, and earnestly wisheth that it were but as well with the rest of the world; and that honour-eth all the providences of God by which we have been brought to what we are; but dare not own all the actions of men that have been the Instruments, as he hath thought meet to manifest in this writing, and leave upon record. And he is one that concurring in the Common Hopes of greater Blessings yet to these Nations under your Government, and observing your Acceptance of the frequent Addresses that from all parts of the Land are made unto you, was encouraged to do what you dayly allow your Preachers to do, and to concur with the rest, in the tenders (and some performance) of his service; and particularly the *County of Wilts* who have *Petitioned* you for the *Summ* of what I have here exprest; and whose Petitions I desire may be written

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written upon your heart. That the Lord will make you a *healer* and *preserver* of his Churches here at home, and a *successfull helper* to his Churches abroad, is the earnest prayer of

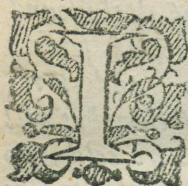
Your Highnesses
faithfull Subject

Rich. Baxter.

Reader,



Reader,



*I*f thou come hither with a practical esteem of Truth, desiring to know it that thou maist obey it, & with an humble mind dost study and pray to the Father of Lights, and art impartially willing to receive the Truth in the Love of it that thou maist be saved, and with diligence and meekness to read and weigh the Evidences that I bring thee, thou art then the person to whom I recommend these Papers with confident expectation of success. The Controversies here handled are those that have made, and still are making, the greatest combustions in the Christian world. And yet to almost all men of learning on both sides they seem exceeding easie. I seldom meet with a Learned Protestant but taketh Popery for such transparent fallacies, that he is little or no whit troubled with any doubtings in the business: And I seldom meet with a Learned Papist but is as confident on the other side, as if besides them, all the Christian world were blind and mad. Interest and prejudice must needs do much then on one side at least. And which side hath the greatest worldly interest to byas their understanding, is soon discerned by one that knows the Papal power, their Cardinals, Prelates, and the Riches, Honours and priviledges of their Clergy. and that knows our state. And if thou wilt hear the Reasons of the confidence of both sides, I will tell it thee here as briefly and plainly as I can.

We are confident of our own Religion, because we believe the Gospel: and we have no other Rule and Test of our Religion:

gion : And we are confident that Popery is a deceit, because we both believe the Gospel and the judgement of the ancient and present Churches, and because we believe our sense it self : As sure as we know Bread from Flesh, and Wine from Blood, by seeing, tasting, &c. so sure know we that Popery is false. And if a Controversie is not at an End when it is brought to the judgement of all the senses of all the sound men in the world (it being about the object of sense) then we are past hope of ending controversies : And therefore as we will not waste our time with every fellow that will dispute with us that Snow is black, or the Fire cold, no more will we trouble our selves with these men that tell us that Bread is not bread, and Wine is not wine.

And if you would know the Reasons of the confidence of the Papists, I know no more of them but what their Writings and speeches do express, and those I have hereafter given you. Two things they are still harping on: the first is, that in our way we have no assurance that the Christian Religion is true, or that Scripture is the word of God. Save me the labour of repetitions, and read but what I have witten in the Preface to the second Part of the Saints Rest (Edit. 2. &c.) where I give you the Resolution of our faith, and in my Safe Religion, Disp. 3. and then believe them if thou canst.

Their second is, that thred-bare Question [Where was your Church before Luther? Where hath it been successively in each age?] And here meer Sophistry carryeth it through the Papal world, to the deluding of the simple that will be catcht with chaffe, and are not able to see things for Names. I have dealt with some of them that harped on this string, and never met with any thing from them that should seem considerable to a discerning man, save only the two unanswerable arguments of Confidence (that I say not Impudence) and Loquacity. Though I have more fully

fully shamed this Question in this Book, I will here also give you at the entrance, a short view of the case.

The men that ask us, where our Church and Religion was, either know not (through ignorance) or will not let others know (through wickedness) what our Church and Religion is. [Shew us (say they) a Church in all ages that held the thirty nine Articles, or that held all that the Protestants hold, or else they were not Protestants?] Forsooth, we must receive from them a Definition of a Protestant, and then we must prove the succession of such. Know therefore before you dispute about the succession, what is the thing whose succession is questioned. [A Protestant is a Christian that holdeth to the holy Scriptures as the sufficient Rule of faith and holy living, and protesteth against Popery.] The Protestant Churches are Societies professing the Protestants Religion. [The Protestant Religion] is an improper speech, but [the Protestants Religion] is a phrase that we shall own. For [Protestantism] is not our Religion it self, but the Rejection of Popish corruptions of Religions or defiling Additions. If my Rejections of other mens Additions be themselves Additions, then is it in the power of any Heretick in the world to force me to Add to my Religion at his Pleasure. A thousand new Articles & Forms of Worship he may devise, and then must I add to my Religion by rejecting them all: even as I add to my Apple by wiping the dirt of it, or to my Cloaths, by brushing them. The Protestants Religion is only the Christian Religion the naked Christian Religion alone: The Papists the Christian Religion corrupted with abundance of additions. The Protestants ever disavowed any Confessions of men as pretended to be the Rule or Law of their Religion. The Protestants Religion is the Holy Scriptures alone [The Papists Religion is all that is decreed by the Pope and Councils. Our Religion containd in the Scripture hath its Es-

sentials and Integrals. All the Essentials and as much of the Integrals as (in the use of means) we are able to understand, we believe particularly and explicitly: the rest we believe generally and implicitly to be all true. So that as the Papists will not give us leave to take the writings of Greſer, Bellarmine or any of their Doctors; yea the Articles of their Divines at Thoren, Ratisbone, &c. to be therefore Articles of their faith, but only those that are contained in General Councils approved by the Pope; so we require the same justice of them that they call Nothing the Articles of our Faith, but what is contained in the Holy Scripture, which is the only Rule of our Religion. Do they know our Religion better then we do? This is our Religion, and this we stand to.

Well! Consider now whether any thing be easier then for a Protestant to shew you a visible Church that hath successively been of his Religion.

1. The Christian Religion hath been in all ages since Christ in visible Societies: The Religion of Protestants is the Christian Religion: therefore the Religion of Protestants hath been in all ages since Christ in visible Societies.

2. That Religion which is contained in the Holy Scripture as its Rule or sufficient Revelation, hath been professed in all ages in visible Churches. But the Religion of Protestants is contained in the Holy Scriptures as its Rule or sufficient Revelation: therefore the Religion of Protestants hath been professed in all ages in visible Churches.

We name the Societies from the places of their residence: Our Church (as Augustine tells the Donatists) begun at Hierusalem, and thence was dispersed into Asia, Africa and Europe; it hath continued in Syria, Æthiopia, Ægypt, India, Greece, &c. If I could name but one Nation that had been of my Religion, I should suspect it were not the true Religion. It is the Christian world that is instead of a Catalogue to us.

O but, say the *Fuglers*, This is a General answer, to say you are Christians: there are more sorts of Christians then One. 1 Reply; It is the General or Catholick that we are speaking of; and therefore if it were not such a General answer, it were not pertinent to the Question: There are no more sorts of Christians but One; that is, there is no Essential difference among them; but there is a gradual, integral and modal difference. But may not Christians of several Degrees of Knowledge be in the same Catholick Church? Our question is not, [Where any Sect, or any particular Church hath had its succession:] but [where that Catholick Church hath been, of which we are members.] And surely Christ hath but One Catholick Church.

O but, say they, would you make men believe that *Ethiopians, Armenians, Greeks, &c.* are Protestants? you may be ashamed of so gross a fiction.

I answer, Is it the Name of Protestants, or their Religion, that you would have us prove a succession of? These deceivers cheat abundance of poor souls by this one device, even supposing that the word [Protestant] doth denominate our Church from its Essential parts, and so call for a Catalogue of Protestants. But I would ask them, whether we or they do better know our Religion? and consequently what a Protestant is? If they know it at all, it is from our writings or expressions; For sure they will not pretend without signs to know our hearts, and that better then our selves. You must take it from us, if you will know what our Religion is, as we must take it from you, if we will know yours. And therefore delude not silly souls by perswading them that you know what our Religion is better then we. If you will believe our Books that tell you, believe our sayings also, and believe me that here tell you my own Religion. [A Protestant is a Christian that

protesteth against Popery] Christianity is our Religion: Protesting against Popery is our Negation or Rejection of your Corruptions of Religion. Men that never heard of the name of Papist or Protestants, may be of the same Religion with us. If many Nations of the world never received Popery, and we reject it; if they never knew it, and we know it and disown it, are we not both of one Religion, even in the Integrals? One man never heard of the Leprosie: another catcheth it and is cured of it; and a third flyeth from it and preventeth it; And I think all these are truly men; yea and (in tantum) sound men. When you call to us for a proof of our succession, either you mean it, of the Essentials of our Religion and Church, or of the Negation of your Corruptions: Either you mean it of the points that we are Agreed in, or of those we differ in: Christianity is it that we are Agreed in; and that is our Religion, and nothing but that: Protestancy as such, is but our wiping off the dirt, or curing the scab that you have brought upon our Religion, Is he not a man as well as you that will not tumble with you in the dirt, or come into your Pesthouse? If we know not our own Religion, then we cannot tell it you; and then you cannot know it: And if we do know it, believe us when we profess our own Belief: We still profess before men and Angels, that we own no Religion but the Christian Religion, nor any Church but the Christian Church, nor dream of any Catholick Church but one, containing all the true Christians in the world, united in Jesus Christ the Head. We protest before men and Angels that it is the Holy Scriptures that are the Law and Rule and Test of our Religion; And why are we not to be Believed in this our own Profession, as well as you are in yours, when you make the Decrees of Popes and Councils to be your Law and Rule and Tests?

We perform therefore more then you demand. You ask us Where was our Church before Luther? And we answer, Where our Religion was. You ask us, Where was that? and we tell you Where ever the Christian Religion was, and the Holy Scriptures were received. This were enough for us in answer to your Question: But we do more: We tell you not only where our Church and Religion was, but where there were men that owned not your grand Corruptions, no more then we: What can you demand more of us, when you call for a succession of Protestants, then that we tell you of a succession of Christians (which are of our Religion) and which were no Papists, yea against Popery, (which therefore were of our integrity) And who knoweth not that the foresaid Abassines, Armenians, Egyptians, Greeks, &c. are against your Papal Sovereignty, Infallibility, and all that is by us renounced as Essential to Popery?

O but, say the Fuglers, these are not Protestants; they differ from you in many particulars.] I answer, Call them by what name you please; they are not only Christians, but also Anti-papists, or free from Popery, and then they are of our Religion and Church. But indeed, must the world be made believe that all that we Believe is essential to our Religion, and that no man that differeth from us can be of our Religion, be the difference never so small?

But say they, tell us of a Church that professes your 39 Articles. Silly deceivers! Do not those very Articles profess that [The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation.] Art. 6. We never took these
Articles

Articles instead of the Scripture, but the Articles and all Protestants profess the Scripture to be the only Rule and Test of their Faith and Religion. The substance of the 39 Articles may easily be proved to have been successively held by the Church from the beginning; but it is not incumbent on us to prove that every word in the writings of every Divine, or Church, hath been so continued; no more then you will own the writings of any Divines or Provincial Synods of your own, as being the Rule of your Faith. As you profess that the Decrees of Popes and general Councils approved by him, besides the Scriptures, are the Rule and Test of your Religion; so do we profess that the Scriptures alone (with the Law of Nature) is the Rule of ours.

But, what (say they) will you be of the same Church with Nestorians, Eutichians, and other Hereticks? *I*
Answ. 1. We will not take all for Nestorians, or Eutichians, that a railer can call such, that never knew them, nor can prove it. 2. Hereticks indeed that deny any essential part of Christianity, are no Christians, and therefore none of the Church that we are of: but if you will call those Hereticks that have all the essentials of Christianity, because they err in lesser points, we know that there are such in the Catholick Church: We will be none of them our selves, if we can escape it (yet indeed have no hope of escaping all error till we are perfect in knowledge :) But we will not run out of the family of God, because there are children and sick persons in it: Nor will we forsake the Catholick Church because there are erring persons in it.

O but, saith the Papist, We acknowledge not your distinction of points Essential and not Essential; all points of Faith are Essential with us, and of necessity to Salvation.] *Answ.* Reader, thou shalt see here such
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impudent and faithless juggling, as may make thee blush to think that Christianity hath such professors. 1. The Outside of their assertion damneith no less then all the world (that live to the use of Reason) 2. The Inside of their deceitful meaning is almost clean contrary, and leaveth Heathens and Infidels in the Church, or in a state of salvation as well as Christians. 3. It leaveth no one Article of faith essential to a Christian, or to one that shall be saved; and leaveth the Church an Invisible thing, clean contrary to their own assertions of its Visibility. 4. And when they have thus wrangled themselves into a wood of contradictions and Unchristian absurdities, the wisest of them say as we say, in the main point. All this I will now manifest to thee.

1. The Out-side of their assertion is that Every point that we are bound to believe by a Divine faith, is fundamental, or essential to Christian faith, or of necessity to salvation. And if so, then no man breathing can be saved: For no man knoweth all that he is bound to know. And no man believeth that which he understandeth not: It is impossible to believe that such a Proposition is a truth distinctly and actually, when I understand not what the Proposition is. And that we all know but in part, even what we are obliged to know, no man will deny, but he that is mad by pride or faction: All that God hath revealed in his word, is the matter of our faith: There is no man can say, I have no culpable ignorance of any one Truth of God that I should believe. Had we been more perfect in our diligent studies, and prayers, and use of all means; and had we never sinfully grieved the spirit that should illuminate us, (to say nothing of our Original sinfull darkness) there is not one of us but might have known more then we do. If sin of the will and life be consistent with true faith, then some sin in the understanding is consistent with faith. But the former is true: therefore, &c. But

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according

according to the out-side of their doctrine, no man that hath any sinfull ignorance (and consequently unbelief) in his understanding can be saved ; that is, no man in the world. If he that thinks he knoweth any thing, knoweth nothing as he ought to know, 1 Cor. 8. 2. what shall be said of these men, that think they and all the Church do know all things that they ought to know, and that their understandings have no sin ? And must we needs be of that faith that damnethe all men, and of that Church where none are saved ?

2. As the Out-side of their Assertions is made for a bug-bear to frighten fools, so that the In-side (as expounded by many of them) is that Heathens and Infidels may be of their Church or saved, and that nothing of the Christian faith at all is necessary to salvation, is plain : For they tell us that they mean, that all points are of necessity, where they are sufficiently proposed, and mens ignorance is not invincible ; but where there is no sufficient proposal, but mens ignorance is invincible, or such as comes not from a wilfull neglect of means, there no ignorance of the articles of faith is damnable, and so no article absolutely necessary : so that the question indeed is not Whether men believe or not ? but Whether they are Unbelievers or Heathens or ignorant persons, by a wilfull neglect of sufficiently proposed Truth, or not ? So that all that part of the Heathen or Infidell world (O how great) that have no such proposals of the Gospel, may not only be saved, but be better and safer then most Christians (if not all) who certainly are sinfully ignorant of some truth which they ought to know.

Obj. But (say they) it will not stand with faith to deny belief to God in any thing, sufficiently revealed : for he that believeth him in one thing, believeth him in all.]

Ans.

Ans. Very true, if they know it to be the Word of God. And if this be all, the Protestants are ready to averre upon their most solemn Oaths, that they believe every thing without exception which they know to be a Divine Revelation: and no wonder; for so doth every man that believes that there is a God and that he is no lyar. If this will serve your turn, you have no more to say against us; your mouths are stopt. But may it not stand with faith to be ignorant, and that through sinfull neglect, of some revealed truth of God, or of the meaning of his word? If you are so proud as to think that all the justified are perfect and have no sin, yet at least consider whether a man that liveth in Heathenism till fourscore years of age, and then turns Christian, is not afterward ignorant through his former sinfull negligence? But dare you say that you have no sinfull ignorance to bewail? Will you confess none, nor beg pardon, nor be beholden to Christ to pardon it?

That they make no point of faith necessary, while they seem to make all necessary, see but what I have after cited from Frans. à S. Clara probl. 15, 16, 17. and abundance more that are mentioned there by him.

3. And that by this Protean juggling, they make the Church invisible, is apparent. For what man breathing knoweth the secrets of the souls of others; whether they have resisted or not resisted the light? and whether they are ignorant of the articles of faith upon sinfull contempt, or for want of some due means of faith, or internal capacity, or opportunity? We are as sure that all men are ignorant of some thing that God hath revealed to be known (in nature and Scripture) as that they are men: But now whether any one of these men be free from those aggravations of his ignorance (and that in every point) upon which the Papists make him an unbeliever, is unknown to others:

When the Faith or Infidelity of men, and so their being in the Church or out of it, must not be known by the Matter of Faith which they profess, but by the secret passages of their hearts, their willingness or unwillingness, resistance or not resistance, and such like, the Church then is invisible; no man can say which is it, nor who is of it: He that professeth not the Faith, may be a Catholick; and he that professeth it, for ought they know, may be an Infidel, as being sinfully yet ignorant of some one truth that is not in his express confession: thus by confusion the builders of Babel marre their work.

4. *And that the wisest of them, say in the main as we say, see here in some proofs. Bellarm. de Verbo Dei, lib. 4. cap. 11. [In the Christian Doctrine both of Faith and Manners, some things are simply necessary to salvation to all; as the Knowledge of the Articles of the Apostles Creed, of the ten Commandements, and of some Sacraments: The rest are not so necessary, that a man cannot be saved without the explicate Knowledge, belief and profession of them — These things that are simply necessary and are profitable to all, the Apostles preached to all — All things are Written by the Apostles which are Necessary to all, and which they openly preach to all] see the place.*

Costerus Echird. c. 1. p. 49. Non inficiamur præcipua illa fidei capita quæ omnibus Christianis cognita sunt ad salutem Necessaria, perspicuè satis esse Apostolicis scriptis comprehensa] That is; We deny not that those Chief Heads of the Faith which are to all Christians necessary to be known to salvation, are perspicuously enough comprehended in the Writings of the Apostles.] Judge by these two (to spare the trouble of citing more) whether they be not forced after all their Cavils, to say as we, in distinguishing of Articles of Faith. And they cannot be ignorant, that the Church

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hath still had *Forms of Profession*, which were called her Symbols, as being the Badge of her Members; and did not suspend all upon uncertain conjectures about the frame and temper of the Professors minds.

But if indeed it be not the want of Necessary Articles of Faith that they accuse us of, but the want of willingness or diligence to know the truth, let them prove their accusations, and let those persons that they prove guilty bear the blame. Do they think we would not as willingly know the truth as they? and that we do not pray as earnestly for Divine illumination? Do we not read their Books? (I verily think incomparably more then they do ours,) and are we not willing to confer with the wisest of them that can inform us? I have often privately and publickly desired you that if any of them can say more then all these Schoolmen, Fryars and Jesuites say, which I have read, they would let me hear it, that I may want no means they can afford me for my fuller information.

But yet they have not done with us. When we prove a succession of our Religion, by proving a succession of such as adhered to the Scriptures, which are the Doctrine of our Religion (an Argument that no Papist under heaven can confute,) they vainly tell us, that All Hereticks pretend to Scripture, and therefore that will not prove the point.

But 1. Doth it follow that Scripture is not a sufficient Rule of our Religion, because Hereticks may pretend to it? You take the 39 Articles for our Religion, and yet may Hereticks that are far from our minds, pretend to them. It's the liker to be the Rule because all Hereticks pretend it, and would borrow credit from it to their Heresies. The Law of the Land is the Rule of our Justice; and yet Lawyers and their Clients that are contrary to each other, do plead it for their contrary Causes. The Creed it self is pretended by Arrians for their Heresie. What must we

have no Rule or Test or discovery of our Religion which a Heretick can pretend for his impiety. What words of God or man are not capable of being misinterpreted? If we should give you every day a confession of Faith, some Hereticks might pretend to hold the same: No wonder then if they do so by the Scriptures.

2. And can any Learned Papists be so ignorant, as not to know that the Arrians pretended the Authority of General Councils? and so do many other Hereticks; and that the Authority of Pope and Councils are frequently pretended for contrary opinions among them, and may be pretended by many an Heretick? And will they therefore grant that the Decrees of Popes and Councils are no sufficient discovery of their Faith? If Hereticks pretending to your Test of Faith, disprove not that to be your Faith, then Hereticks pretending to our Rule and Test of Faith (which is the Holy Scripture) is no proof that it is not our Rule of Faith.

I do therefore conclude, that the Proof of a Succession of such Churches as have received the Holy Scriptures, is a valid proof of a succession of Churches of our Religion, seeing we have no Religion (doctrinally) but the Holy Scriptures. And this as far as modesty will permit, I challenge all the Jesuites on Earth to confute with any solid Reasons: yet adding that we do ex superabundanti prove a succession also of Churches that never owned Popery, even the greatest part of the Christian world. But let these men themselves but prove to us a succession of their Church, even such as they require of us; Let them prove that from the Apostles days the Catholick Church (or any one Congregation of twenty men) did hold all that now their Councils and Popes have Decreed, and are esteemed Articles of their Faith, and I am contented to be their bond-slave for ever, or to bear a fagot, or be used by them as
cruelly

cruelly as their malice can invent, or flames or their strappado's execute. Let my Head be at their Mercy if they can but prove that Succession of Popery, as they require us to do of Protestancy, or as I have produced of our Churches and Religion. In the 15th and 16th Detection I have more largely spoken to them of this point, to which I refer the Reader.

In the very principal point of their Papal Sovereignty, they have nothing but this gross deceit to cheat the world with: The Roman Emperors divers ages after Christ, did give the Bishop of Rome a Primacy in their Empire, and hence these men would perswade us, that even from Christ they have had a Sovereignty over all the Christian world. Wink but at these small mistakes, and they have won the Cause: 1. Suppose but Christs Institution to stand in stead of the Emperors. 2. Suppose divers hundred years after Christ, to have been in the Apostles days. 3. Suppose Primacy to be Sovereignty or Universal Government. 4. But especially grant them, that the Roman Empire was all the Christian world; and then they have made good that part of their Cause.

That there were many Nations without the reach of the Roman Empire, that had received the Christian Faith, is past doubt. Socrates lib. 1. c. 15. saith that Thomas chose Parthia, Bartholomew chose India, Matthew Ethiopia, to plant the Gospel in; but the middle India was not converted till Constantines days, by Frumentius and Ede-sius; and Iberia by a Maid.] So Euseb. l. 3. c. 3. tells us of Thomas his Preaching to the Parthians, and Andrew to the Scythians.] Et in vit. Const. l. 4. c. 8. that there were many Churches in Persia, & cap. 91. how Constantine wrote for them to the King.] Godignus and others of them maintain that the Abassines did receive the Gospel from the beginning. Besides Scotland
and

and many other Countries that were not under the Roman Power. And none of these were Governed by the Pope.

These three Arguments against the Papal Cause, I shall here premise to more that follow.

1. If all that part of the Christian world that was out of the reach of the Roman Empire, did never submit to the Sovereignty of the Pope, then hath he not been successively (or at any time) the actual Head of the Universal Church: But the Antecedent is most certain: therefore so is the Consequent.

How an old woman, the Emperors Mother of Habassia, did baffle their Jesuites, by asking them [How it came to pass, if obedience to the Pope be necessary to salvation, that they never had heard from him till now?] I have told you after from themselves.

If Primacy were Sovereignty, and Emperors and Councils were Gods, yet the Indians, Abassines, Persians, and many more in the East, and the Scots, and Irish, and Danes, and Sweeds, and Poles, and Muscovites, and most of Germany in the West and North, should be no subjects of the Pope.

2. If the Rule and Test of the Faith of Papists never had a Real Being, or no succession from the Apostles, then their Faith and Church hath either no Real Being, or no such Succession: But the Antecedent is true: as I prove.

It is either General Councils, or Popes, or the Church Essential (as they use to call it, that is, the Whole Body) that is the Rule of their Faith. If it be General Councils, 1. They had no being from the Apostles till the Council of Nice; therefore the Rule of the Papists Faith was then unborn.

2. Tea they never had a being in the world: There was never anything like a General Council since the days of the Apostles to this day. The first at Nice had none, (save one John of Persia, who its like was some persecuted Bishop