

**THE NOVELTY OF POPERY, AND
ANTIQUITY OF THE RELIGION
OF PROTESTANTS, PROVED BY
SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY. NO. 37**

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The Novelty of Popery, and Antiquity of the Religion of Protestants, Proved by Scripture and History. No. 37 by Various

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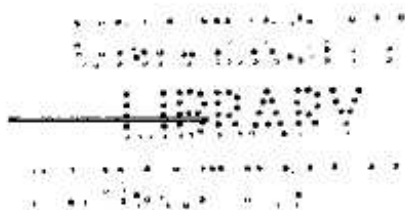
THE ANTIQUITY

OF THE

RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS,

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INTRODUCTION.

"**WHEREAS** was the Protestant religion before Luther?" is a question that has often been asked with an air of confidence and triumph, by the advocates of a church which claims to be the only infallible expounder of the word of God. The object of the following essay is to answer this question, and to retort the charge of novelty in religion, on those who make such arrogant claims for the antiquity of their church.

The *importance* of the question will be evident to every one who considers, that it relates not merely to some unessential doctrines, or external observances, but to the very foundation of a sinner's hope. If the Popish system be true, Protestants are left to the "*uncovenanted mercies of God*;" without a ministry, without sacraments, without hope! If it is false, how awful is the delusion, and how imminent the danger of those who rest all their hopes of salvation upon it!

That the discussion is *seasonable*, must be apparent to all who are awake to the signs of the times. Zealous emissaries, backed by foreign influence, and aided by foreign gold, are coming in like a flood, to poison the fountains of education, and to bring the civil and reli-

gious liberties of this happy land into subjection to a foreign ecclesiastical despotism.

The original work, from which the following treatise is extracted, consists of a series of discourses, on the principal errors of Popery, styled the "Cripplegate Lectures," which were delivered by eminent English divines, in and near London, about the end of the seventeenth century. The discourses bear ample testimony to the learning, judgment and piety of their authors.

In preparing the work for the press, some liberty has been taken in retrenching irrelevant matter, and in somewhat modernizing the style. Should it be objected that the quotations made from catholic authors are of ancient date, and that the Popish religion of the nineteenth century is very different from that of the sixteenth and seventeenth, it would not be difficult to produce from catholic works, printed *by authority*, in this city, within a year or two, sentiments as unscriptural as any quoted in this work. Besides, the objection would come with a very ill grace from those who boast that their church is always and every where the same—" *Nulla vestigia retrorsum.*"

THE

NOVELTY OF POPERY.

CHAPTER I.

For the better understanding of the matter in hand, I shall premise the seven following propositions:

FIRST PROPOSITION.

That the ordinary way in which lost sinners, since the fall of Adam, have been recovered and restored to life and salvation, as to the essentials of the covenant of grace, has, in all ages, been one and the same. For though God has, "at sundry times and in divers manners," revealed his will to his church, yet the covenant of grace, under various external dispensations, has been the same;* under the law, administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, and circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types

* *Ea quippe fides justos servavit antiquos, que et nos. i. e. Mediatoris Dei et hominis Jesu Christi. Aug. de Natur. et Grat: cap. 44. Heb. i. 1: *ωλομορξ και ποικιλοτρόπος.**

and ordinances, delivered to the people of the Jews,* all pointing at Christ to come; under the Gospel, by the preaching of the word, and administration of the sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, which is observed in commemoration of the death of Christ, already past. The way to heaven through Christ, has been the same, successively from Adam to our days, and will be the same to the end of the world; which we might learn from the perfect agreement between the doctrine of Moses and the prophets, and Christ and his apostles; for these, declaring the whole counsel of God, Acts xviii. 27, yet preached no new doctrine concerning Christ and salvation by him, but what Moses and the prophets said, and that also in reference to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, Acts xxvi. 22, 23. To believe in Christ, to love God above all, to repent, and mortify sin, to be sanctified and renewed after the image of God, to be obedient to the will of God, has been "the good way" from of old. The change in outward administrations made by Christ and the apostles, did not make a new way to heaven, though the old dispensations then ceased, and gave place to those appointed by Christ, which, with the doctrines of the apostles, are retained in the reformed church, but are depraved, corrupted, and departed

* *Christi veri sacrificii multiplicia variaque signa erant sacrificia prisca sanctorum, cum hoc usum per multa figuraretur, tanquam verbis multis res una diceretur, ut sine fastidio multum commendatur. . Aug. de Civit: Dei, lib. 10: cap. 20.*

from by the church of Rome, as will appear by the parallel of doctrines.

SECOND PROPOSITION.

Antiquity is not a mark of a true church. A church of long standing and continuance, successively from age to age, might be a false church. The church of Rome, contrary to all reason, makes antiquity a mark,* whereby a true church may be known; and, contrary to all history, brags of her own antiquity. But that which is a mark to distinguish one thing from another, must be found in one kind, in all of that kind, only in that kind, and yet always in it; as a man has two feet, but thereby cannot be distinguished from some other creatures, because this is common to birds as well as men. So to be skilful in music, is proper only to man, but is not found in every man, and therefore is no mark to know a man by; for one that is no musician, is a true and real man, as well as he that is.

Antiquity, alone considered, will fall short of a

* *Secunda nota ecclesie est antiquitas; nostra autem ecclesia, quam adversarii papisticam vocant, est illa ipsa quam Christus instituit, et proinde vetustior omnibus sectis hereticorum.* Bell. de Concil. et Eccles. l. 4. c. 5.

† *Proprium convenit soli alicui speciei, omnibusque illius individuis et semper. Tres notarum conditiones ponit, Bellarm. 1. Debeat esse propria, non communes. 2. Debeat esse notiores eâ re cujus sunt notæ, alioqui non sunt notæ, sed ignotæ. 3. Sunt inseparabiles à verâ ecclesiâ.* De Concil. et Eccles. Lib. 4. cap. 2.

demonstration or evidence, that the church of Rome is the only true church, upon these two grounds or reasons.

1. Because antiquity is separable from a true church; as the church of God in Adam's days, was a true church, and yet it was not then an ancient church. And the Christian church, in the apostles' days, was a true Christian church, and yet it was not then an ancient Christian church, any more than an infant newly born, may be said to be an old man; and yet it is a true man, though not old.

2. Because antiquity is not only separable from a true church, but is also common to other things now, as well as to a true church. It might even be spoken of the synagogue of Satan; for Satan has had his followers in the world for many thousand years; and there have been many wicked and ungodly societies of men, far more ancient than the church of Rome, or any pope at the head of it. So that the antiquity which the church of Rome boasts of, but does not possess, cannot prove it to be the true church of Christ, any more than the synagogue of Satan.

THIRD PROPOSITION.

Antiquity is not a mark of true doctrine; for although all truth is more ancient than error (which is a corruption of truth), yet every doctrine that is old,* or of many hundred years' standing is not

* Quodcumque adversus veritatem sapit, hoc erit heresis, etiam vetus consuetudo. Tertul. de Virg. Veland.