

Sadolet's Letter and Calvin's Reply

marked up by Lance George Marshall

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From the Preface by Henry Beveridge:

SADOLET'S LETTER TO THE GENEVESE, with CALVIN'S REPLY, derives great interest not only from the important points discussed in it, but also from the circumstances in which the discussion took place. Owing to the unchristian spirit which prevailed in Geneva, Calvin, with his colleagues, Corald and Farel, deemed themselves justified in resorting to the strong measure of declining to dispense the Communion. The popular resentment was roused, and bad men taking advantage of it, succeeded in obtaining a decree, by which those three Pastors were summarily banished from the city. It was hoped that the decree, the effect apparently of momentary ebullition, would be rescinded, and other Churches with this view interposed their mediation. But the decree, however rashly made, was resolutely enforced, and the Pastors were obliged to take what must have been regarded as their final leave.

The opportunity was too tempting for Rome not to avail herself of it; and, accordingly, one of her highest dignitaries an accomplished scholar, and what was rarer in those times, a man of great public and private worth, came forward with an artful address, in which, under strong expressions of attachment to his "very dear brethren" the Genevese, and anxious desires to promote their interests, both secular and spiritual, he labored to woo them back to the See of Rome.

The person best able to answer the Letter had been ignominiously exiled, and Sadolet naturally calculated, that while the resentment of the people would procure a favorable hearing to his representations, the resentment of Calvin would not allow him to expose them. From the account which Beza gives, it would seem that the former calculation was correct. Not so the latter. The whole history of Calvin's life shows that zeal for the interest of the Church was his ruling passion, and, therefore when he saw the mischief which Sadolet's Letter threatened to produce, he at once forgot his own wrongs, and labored as zealously for the best interests of the Genevese as if he had still been discharging the office of Pastor among them.

The REPLY, besides containing a triumphant vindication of the Reformed doctrine - a vindication so triumphant that Sadolet is said to have forthwith given up the affair as desperate, is written in a spirit of meekness and candor. Calvin is even more eulogistic of his opponent than any thing in Sadolet's Letter seems to justify, and in so far gives a practical refutation of the charge that he never engaged in controversy without losing his temper and insulting his opponent. The Letter and Reply bear the date of 1539.

SADOLET'S LETTER TO THE SENATE AND PEOPLE OF GENEVA

James Sadolet, Bishop Of The Holy Roman Church At Carpentras, Cardinal, Presbyter Of The Order Of St. Calixtus, To His Dearly Beloved Brethren, The Magistrates, Senate, And Citizens Of Geneva

VERY DEAR BRETHERN IN CHRIST, - Peace to you and with us, that is, with the Catholic Church, the mother of all, both us and you, love and concord from God, the Father Almighty, and from

his only Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, together with the Holy Spirit, perfect Unity in Trinity; to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

I presume, very dear brethren, it is known to some of you that I am now residing at Carpentras, having come from Nice, to which I had attended the Supreme Pontiff, on his journey from Rome, to mediate between the Kings. For I love this Church and city, which it has pleased God to make my spiritual spouse and country; this my people here I embrace with truly parental affection, and am most reluctant to be separated from them. But should the honor of the Cardinalship, which was bestowed upon me unexpectedly, and without my knowledge, oblige me to return to Rome, (as it certainly will,) that I may there serve in the vocation with which God hath called me, it will not withdraw my thoughts and my love from a people who will always remain seated in my inmost heart. Being then at Carpentras, and daily hearing many things of you which excited partly my grief, and partly, too, some hope:, leading me not to despond, that you and I, who were formerly in true religion of one mind towards God, might, by the same God looking more benignly upon us, return to the same cordial agreement, it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to me, (for so Scripture speaketh, and assuredly whatsoever things are done with an upright and pious mind toward God, are all of the Holy Spirit;) it seemed good to me, I say, to write somewhat to you, and declare to you by letter the care and solicitude of mind which I feel for you. For, dearest brethren, this my affection and good-will towards you is not new, but ever since the time when, by the will of God, I became Bishop of Carpentras, almost twenty- three years ago, and in consequence of the frequent intercourse between you and my people, had, though absent, learned much of you and your manners, even then began I to love your noble city, the order and form of your republic, the worth of its citizens, and, in particular, that quality lauded and experienced by all, your hospitality to strangers and foreigners; and since vicinity often tends in no small degree to beget love, so, in a city, contiguous houses, as well as in the world, adjacent provinces lead to regard among neighbors. Before this time, indeed, you happen not to have derived any benefit from this my affection for you, or to have had any sign and indication of it. You never needed my aid, which assuredly would have been most readily given, but hitherto no occasion presented itself to us.

Now, however, of a truth, not only has an opportunity occurred, but necessity is laid upon me to demonstrate in what way I feel affected towards you, if I would maintain my fidelity towards Almighty God, and Christian charity towards my neighbor. For, after it was brought to my ears that certain crafty men, enemies of Christian unity and peace, had in like manner, as they had previously done in some towns and villages of the brave Helvetii, cast among you, and in your city, the wicked seeds of discord, had turned the faithful people of Christ aside from the way of their fathers and ancestors, and from the perpetual sentiments of the Catholic Church, and filled all places with strife and sedition, (such is always the appropriate course of those who seek new power and new honors for themselves, by assailing the authority of the Church,) I declare before Almighty God, who is always present beholding my inmost thoughts, that I was exceedingly grieved and affected with a kind of double pity, when, on the one hand, me thought I heard the groans of the Church our mother, weeping and lamenting at being deprived at once of so many and so dear children; and, on the other, dearest brethren, I was concerned at your losses and dangers. For well knew I, that such innovators on things ancient and well established, such disturbances, such dissension's, were not only pestiferous to the souls of men, (which, however, is the greatest of all evils,) but pernicious also to private and public affairs. This you have had the means of learning for yourselves, being instructed by the event. What then? Since my love towards you, and my piety to God, compel me, as a brother to brethren, and friend to friends, freely to lay before you the inmost feelings of my mind, I would earnestly entreat you, that that goodness which you are always wont to evince, you would show to me, on the present occasion, by receiving and reading my letter not grudgingly. For I hope, that if you will only be pleased to attend impartially to what I write, you will in no small measure approve, if not of my advice, at least of an intention, certainly pure and simple, and above all things, desirous of your salvation, and perceive, that I am seeking not my own, but your good and advantage.

I will not, however, begin with subtle and puzzling disputations, which St. Paul styles philosophy, warning believers in Christ to guard against being deceived by it, and by which those men have misled you, when, among the unwary, they boasted of certain hidden interpretations of Scripture, dignifying

their fraud and malice with the noble, indeed, but false and inappropriate, name of learning and wisdom. I will set forth things which are bright and clear, and which have in them no hiding-place of error, no winding of fraud and fallacy; such, indeed, truth always is. For it both shines in darkness, and is perspicuous to every man, and is most easily perceived alike by learned and unlearned, and especially in matters of Christian doctrines, rests not on syllogisms, or quibbles on words, but on humility, reverence, and obedience toward God. For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the joining of soul and spirit, to the inmost parts of the joints and marrow, not ensnaring souls by perplexing argument; but by the interposition of a certain heavenly affection of the heart, making itself plain and patent to our minds, so that to understand it, it is not so much human reason, as God, who calls us to Himself, and worketh in us. To Him, the Father of all true intelligence, I humbly pray that He would, of His goodness give such assistance to me in speaking, and to you in perceiving, as may again unite us to Himself in one heart and one mind.

And that we may begin with what we deem most seasonable, I presume, dearest brethren, that both you and I, and all else besides who have, put their faith and hope in Christ, do, and have done so, for this one reason, viz., that they may obtain salvation for themselves and their souls - not a salvation which is mortal, and will quickly perish, but one which is ever during and immortal, which is truly attainable only in heaven, and by no means on earth. Our task, accordingly, is thus divided - having first laid the foundation of faith, we must thereafter labor here in order that we may rest yonder; we must cast seed into the earth, that we may afterwards be able to reap in heaven; and in whatever works, or whatever studies we have exercised ourselves here, may ultimately obtain similar and fit fruits of our works and labors in another life. And since the way of Christ is arduous, and the method of leading a life conformable to His laws and precepts very difficult, (because we are enjoined to withdraw our minds from the contamination of earthly pleasures, and fix them on this one object - to despise the present good which we have in our hands, and aspire to the future, which we see not,) still of such value to each one of us is the salvation of himself and of his soul, that we must bring our minds to decline nothing, however harsh, and endure everything, however laborious, that, setting before ourselves the one hope of our salvation, we may at length, through many toils and anxieties, (the clemency and mercy of God always taking precedence of our doings,) attain to that stable and ever- during salvation.

For this hope, Christ, the herald of the true God, was once received by the world with such universal consent and eagerness; for this reason he is adored and worshipped by us, and truly acknowledged to be God, and the Son of the true God; because, when the minds of men were dead to Almighty God, in whom alone is life, and after living for a little time to the deceitful and fading pleasures of the world, were forthwith doomed utterly, and in every part of their nature, to destruction, He alone ever since the world began, awoke them from the dead, that is, from this most fatal kind of death, and first himself, choosing to be himself our salvation and deliverance and truth, by submitting to death in the flesh, and shortly after resuming a life no longer mortal, taught and instructed us, by his own example, how, by a way very different from that to which we had been previously accustomed, we should die to this world and the flesh, and live thereafter to God, placing in him our hopes of living well and happily for ever. This is our proper resurrection from the dead, - a resurrection truly worthy of the glory and majesty of God Almighty, and by which not one man or two, but the whole human race, are brought back from a dismal and fatal death of the soul to the same soul's true and heavenly life. Paul, setting this kind of resurrection before himself, and beholding in it the greatest sign and proof of the divinity of Christ, says, "I was separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised by the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his Son, begotten, indeed, of the seed of David according to the flesh, but determined and declared to be the Son of God in power by the Spirit of holiness;" that is, by spiritual power, which is the proper power of God, because God does his miracles not by body, but by spirit. For his commanding the winds, and by a word restoring sight to the blind, and raising the dead, were done by a power not corporeal but spiritual, which is also divine. Therefore, Christ was declared the Son of God by this spiritual power, which alone is divine, and also, as Paul subjoins, by the resurrection from the dead - not so much that resurrection by which he raised Lazarus, or the widow's son, or the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, (although these, too, were works of God,) as that by which he delivered Mary Magdalene from seven devils, called Matthew from the receipt of custom, and raised many from an earthly and perishing life; in short, raised the whole human race from sin, and the death

of sin, and the power of the darkness of this world, to aspire to, and hope for, light and a celestial relationship - raised up the minds of men when immersed in the mire of earth, and elevated them to heaven. And this greatest benefit of Jesus Christ towards us, and principal proof therein of his divinity, was both instituted by God in the mission of the Son, and undertaken by the Son himself, and by him given in its own time, and bestowed upon us, that we, being aided in Christ alone, with all divine and human counsels, helps, and virtues, might present our souls to God in safety. So high is the excellence, so remarkable the price, so great the worth of this thing, viz., the soul of man, that, in order to its not being lost, but gained both to God himself and to us, the laws of universal nature having been utterly disturbed, and the order of things changed, God descended to the earth, that he might become man, and man was raised to heaven, that he might be a God.

We all, therefore, (as I said,) believe in Christ in order that we may find salvation for our souls, i.e., life for ourselves: than this there can be nothing more earnestly to be desired, no blessing more internal, more close and familiar to us. For, in proportion to the love which each man bears to himself, is his salvation dear to him; if it be neglected and cast away, what prize, pray, of equal value can possibly be acquired? What will a man give in exchange for his soul? saith the Lord; or what will it profit a man should he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? This possession, therefore, so large, so dear, so precious to every man as is his soul, we must use every effort to retain; since all the other blessings which we desire are external, and alien to us, this one good of a preserved soul is not only ours, but truly we ourselves are that very good. He who has neglected and lost it will not be able to have any other good which he can enjoy, the very being who ought to enjoy it having already lost himself.

Moreover, we obtain this blessing of complete and perpetual salvation by faith alone in God and in Jesus Christ. When I say by faith alone, I do not mean, as those inventors of novelties do, a mere credulity and confidence in God, by which, to the seclusion of charity and the other duties of a Christian mind, I am persuaded that in the cross and blood of Christ all my faults are unknown; this, indeed, is necessary, and forms the first access which we have to God, but it is not enough. For we must also bring a mind full of piety towards Almighty God, and desirous of performing whatever is agreeable to him; in this, especially, the power of the Holy Spirit resides. This mind, though sometimes it proceeds not to external acts, is, however, inwardly prepared of itself for well-doing, and shows a prompt desire to obey God in all things, and this in us is the true habit of divine justice. For what else does this name of justice signify, or what other meaning and idea does it present to us, if regard is not had in it to good works? For Scripture says, that "God sent his Son to prepare a people acceptable to himself, zealous of good works;" and in another place it says, that we may be built up in Christ unto good works. If, then, Christ was sent that we, by well-doing, may, through him, be accepted of God, and that we may be built up in him unto good works; surely the faith which we have in God through Jesus Christ not only enjoins and commands us to confide in Christ, but to confide, working or resolved to work well in him. For faith is a term of full and ample signification, and not only includes in it credulity and confidence, but also the hope and desire of obeying God, together with love, the head and mistress of all the virtues, as has been most clearly manifested to us in Christ, in which love the Holy Spirit properly and peculiarly resides, or rather himself is love, since God is love. Wherefore, as without the Holy Spirit, so also without love, naught of ours is pleasing and acceptable to God. When we say, then, that we can be saved by faith alone in God and Jesus Christ, we hold that in this very faith love is essentially comprehended as the chief and primary cause of our salvation.

But to leave off disputation, and return to where we left; we have shown you, dearest brethren, or, rather, attempted to show, (for our discourse is not equal to the magnitude of the subject,) how important it is, how deeply it concerns us to secure our soul and its salvation, because our soul is our whole selves, is properly our good and only good, while all other goods are foreign to us, and disjoined from us, and cannot in any degree be enjoyed, if we fail of obtaining this, which is first and truly ours. In order to defend and preserve the interest of their souls, so many most glorious martyrs of Christ in former times have cheerfully laid down this mortal life; so many most holy doctors have made it their business to toil and watch, day and night, that they might lead us into the right way, and establish us in it; the whole Church once endured so many and so grievous injuries and calamities from impious tyrants and governors. All these things, accordingly, were permitted by Almighty God, and were

undertaken, endured, and warred by those brave men, true worshippers of Christ, that the Church being, by means of every kind of experiment and trial, beaten, as it were, with numbers of hammers, purified with much fire, heated, melted, consolidated, and worked into shape by so many toils and labors of saints, might for her fidelity obtain the highest favor with God, and the greatest authority among men. This Church hath regenerated us to God in Christ, hath nourished and confirmed us, instructed us what to think, what to believe, wherein to place our hope, and also taught us by what way we must tend towards heaven. We walk in this common faith of the Church, we retain her laws and precepts. And if, at any time, overcome by frailty and inconstancy, we lapse into sin, (would that this happened to us rarely at least, and not too often,) we, however, rise again in the same faith of the Church; and by whatever expiation's, penance's, and satisfactions, she tells us that our sin is washed away, and we (always by the grace and mercy of God) restored to our former integrity, these methods of expiation and satisfaction we have recourse to and employ - trusting, when we do so, to find a place of mercy and pardon with God. For we do not arrogate to ourselves anything beyond the opinion and authority of the Church; we do not persuade ourselves that we are wise above what we ought to be; we do not show our pride in contemning the decrees of the Church; we do not make a display among the people of towering intellect or ingenuity, or some new wisdom; but (I speak of true and honest Christians) we proceed in humility and in obedience, and the things delivered to us, and fixed by the authority of our ancestors, (men of the greatest wisdom and holiness,) we receive with all faith, as truly dictated and enjoined by the Holy Spirit.

For we know and are assured how great power, how great importance, how great weight, humility has with God - humility, a virtue peculiarly Christian, which Christ our Lord always brought particularly forward in his admonitions and precepts, and acts and miracles, declaring, that for little ones only, that is, the humble, the kingdom of heaven is prepared. For it makes no difference whether we be small or great in stature, but it makes the greatest difference whether we be of a humble or of a haughty mind. The same pride which cast down the angels from heaven impedes men in their journey towards heaven. To that place, whence the angel, a heavenly creature, was expelled because of pride, man, a creature of the earth, is exalted, because of humility, making it plainly appear that humility constitutes both the chief help to our eternal salvation, and the chief support of that sweet and blessed hope with which we tend heavenwards.

Since these things are so, dearest brethren, since our salvation, since true life, since eternal felicity, since ourselves, in short, ought to be, in the first place, and above all things, dear to us, since, if we lose ourselves, we shall never more find anything that is truly ours, that is, to delight or belong to us, since no heavier loss, no more fatal evil, no more dreadful calamity, can befall us, than the loss and perdition of our souls, with how great zeal, I ask, with what care and anxiety of mind, ought we to guard against exposing our life and salvation to this great danger? You will surely grant and concede to me that nothing more pernicious and fearful can happen to any one than the loss of his soul. I presume you will therefore grant also that there is no event, against the occurrence of which we ought to guard with greater zeal and diligence. For, when an evil, if it befalls us, is the worst of all evils, the danger of that evil ought to be dreaded by us as the most fearful of all dangers. The greater the extent of the evil, the greater must be our fear when exposed to it. And as those who fear and shudder at being precipitated into the sea, do not even venture to approach any steep rock hanging over the sea, so those who tremble at the dreadful condemnatory sentence of God, flee above all things from the danger which comes nearest and closest to that eternal misery. Nor do I here at this time maintain that all do not sin, and that as long as we are in this life, we are not all of us in danger, (plainly we are so; we all go astray, and stumble, and fall, sometimes oftener, sometimes more seldom, as each possesses in himself, and from God, the virtue of self-restraint;) nevertheless, other sins, those especially which are done and committed not of fixed purpose, but through frailty, have an easy return to the mercy of Almighty God; but that horrid and dreadful sin, by which depraved worship is offered to God, who ought to be most purely worshipped, and by which false things are thought of Him, the Supreme and only Truth, this, this, I say, is a sin which not only places us in the most immediate peril of eternal death, but also leaves us almost without hope and endeavor to turn aside and shun the peril. For, in our other sins, which are like the billows of life, the anchor of our ship is still safe to keep us from rocks and shipwreck, because we turn our thoughts from time to time towards God, and, stung with compunction for sin, we, with

silent groans, and with confession of our iniquity, implore his mercy. And He, as He is full of goodness and clemency, is instantly inclined to pardon, and, after the manner of an affectionate parent, listens appeased to the prayer of his children. But, in this deep and dreadful sin of preposterous and false religion, we no longer leave to ourselves either God or anchor. Wherefore, dearest brethren, if we would be safe, this danger, in particular, we must most carefully and studiously shun.

It may here be said, that since, in regard to what constitutes corrupt or genuine religion, judgments vary; and the opinions of men, especially at this time, are different, one interpreting in this way, and another in that, it would seem to be enough if any one, with sincere mind, adopts the belief which is first presented to him, and submits his own judgment to the judgment of those better skilled and learned than himself. I admit, dearest brethren, that these are the words of simple men, and of men who are by nature of duller intellect; (those who twist and turn them aside from the right path have the greater sin;) for this language is not suited to the wise and wary. But let me now, for the time, admit that these things are uncertain to all, both learned and unlearned, (though it is far otherwise, for the Catholic Church has a certain rule by which to discriminate between truth and falsehood;) however, let us grant that they are doubtful; since the point in question is jeopardy to our salvation; since we set the highest value upon our souls, i.e., ourselves; and since it is not our fortune or our health, or even our body and this mortal life, which are at stake, (the loss of all which, brave men have often suffered with constancy for Christ and their soul,) but the point to be decided is, whether we are to live eternally most miserable, or most blessed - it behoves us to look round, consider and diligently weigh how we may establish ourselves, (I speak of the thing as doubtful, though, however, it, is not;) how, I say, we may stand, where the least fear and danger, and the greatest hope and security appear.

No man, I believe, will deny me this much, that in a matter dubious and uncertain, (one, especially, where the whole of life and salvation is concerned,) we ought rather to adopt and follow the counsel which reason gives, than that which fortuitous rashness casts in our way. Let us see then in which party, and in which sect, there is the greatest danger of removing farther from God, and moving nearer to endless destruction. This point I will treat and expound, as if I saw you still deliberating and not yet certain, whose wishes you ought in preference to follow, or in whose counsels confide.

The point in dispute is, Whether is it more expedient for your salvation, and whether you think you will do what is more pleasing to God, by believing and following what the Catholic Church throughout the whole world, now for more than fifteen hundred years, or (if we require clear and certain recorded notice of the facts) for more than thirteen hundred years, approves with general consent; or innovations introduced within these twenty-five years, by crafty, or, as they think themselves, acute men; but men certainly who are not themselves the Catholic Church? For, to define it briefly, the Catholic Church is that which in all parts, as well as at the present time, in every region of the world, united and consenting in Christ, has been always and everywhere directed by the one Spirit of Christ; in which Church no dissension can exist; for all its parts are connected with each other, and breathe together: But should any dissension and strife arise, the great body of the Church indeed remains the same, but an abscess is formed, by which some corrupted flesh being torn off, is separated from the spirit which animates the body, and no longer belongs in substance to the body of, Ecclesiastic. I will not here descend to the discussion of single points, or load your ears with a multitude of words and arguments. I will say nothing of the Eucharist, in which we worship the most true body of Christ. Those men, little aware how, in each kind of learning, it is necessary to employ reasons and arguments, endeavor, by means of reasons, which are inapplicable, and drawn from dialectics and vain philosophy, to enclose the very Lord of the universe, and his divine and spiritual power therein, (which is altogether free and infinite,) within the corners of a corporeal nature, circumscribed by its own boundaries. Nor will I speak of confession of sins to a priest, in which confession, that which forms the strongest foundation of our safety, viz., true Christian humility, has both been demonstrated by Scripture, and established and enjoined by the Church; this humility these men have studied calumniously to evade, and presumptuously to cast away. Nor will I say anything either of the prayers of the saints to God for us, or of ours for the dead, though I would fain know what these same men would be at when they despise and deride them. Can they possibly imagine that the soul perishes along with its body? This they certainly seem to insinuate, and they do it still more openly when they strive to procure for themselves a liberty

of conduct set loose from all ecclesiastical laws, and a license for their lusts. For, if the soul is mortal, Let us eat and drink, says the Apostle, for tomorrow we die; but if it is immortal, as it certainly is, how, I ask, has the death of the body made so great and so sudden a disruption, that the souls of the dead have no congruity, in any respect, no communion with those of the living, and have forgotten all their relationship to us and common human society? and this, especially, while charity, which is the principal gift of the Holy Spirit to a Christian soul, which is ever kind, ever fruitful, and which, in him who has it, never exists to no purpose, must always remain safe and operative in both lives.

But to leave off controversies, and reserve them for their own time, let us discuss what was first proposed - let us inquire and see which of the two is more conducive to our advantage, which is better in itself, and better fitted to obtain the favor of Almighty God, whether to accord with the whole Church, and faithfully observe her decrees, and laws, and sacraments, or to assent to men seeking dissension and novelty. This is the place, dearest brethren, this the highway where the road breaks off in two directions; the one of which leads us to life, and the other to everlasting death. On this discrimination and choice, the salvation of every man's soul, the pledges of future life, are at stake - whether is our lot to be one of eternal felicity, or of infinite misery? What, then, shall we say? Let us here suppose two persons, one of each class, that is, from each road, let them be placed before the dread tribunal of the Sovereign Judge, and there let their case be examined and weighed, in order to ascertain whether a condemnatory or a saving sentence can justly be pronounced. They will be interrogated whether they were Christians. Both will say that they were. Whether they properly believed in Christ? Both will, in like manner, answer yea. But when they will be examined as to what they believed, and how they believed, (for this investigation, respecting right faith, precedes that concerning life and character,) when a confession of right faith will be exacted of them; he who was educated in the lap and discipline of the Catholic Church will say: -

"Having been instructed by my parents, who had learned it from their fathers and forefathers, that I should, in all things, be obedient to the Catholic Church, and revere and observe its laws, admonitions, and decrees, as if Thou, Thyself, O Lord, hadst made them, and perceiving that almost all who bore the Christian name and title in our days, and before it, and followed thy standards far and wide over the world, were and had been of the same opinion, all of them acknowledging and venerating this very Church, as the mother of their faith, and regarding it as a kind of sacrilege to depart from her precepts and constitution, I studied to approve myself to Thee by the same faith which the Catholic Church keeps and inculcates. And though new men had come with the Scripture much in their mouths and hands, who attempted to stir some novelties, to pull down what was ancient, to argue against the Church, to snatch away and wrest from us the obedience which we all yielded to it, I was still desirous to adhere firmly to that which had been delivered to me by my parents, and observed from antiquity, with the consent of most holy and most learned Fathers; and although the actual manners of many prelates and ecclesiastics were such as might move my indignation, I did not, therefore, abandon my sentiments. For I concluded, that it was my duty to obey their precepts, which were certainly holy, as Thou, God, hadst commanded in Thy Gospel, while Thou behovedst to be the only Judge of their life and actions; and, especially, since I was myself stained by the many sins which were manifest to Thee on my forehead, I could not be a fit judge of others. For these sins, I now stand before Thy tribunal, imploring not strict justice, O Lord, but rather Thy mercy and readiness to forgive."

Thus will this one plead his cause.

The other will be summoned, and will appear. He will be commanded to speak. Supposing him to be one of those who are, or have been, the authors of dissension, he will thus begin his oration: -

"Almighty God, when I beheld the manners of ecclesiastics almost every where corrupt, and saw the priests, nevertheless, from a regard to religion, universally honored, offended at their wealth, a just indignation, as I consider it, inflamed my

mind, and made me their opponent; and when I beheld myself, after having devoted so many years to literature and theology, without that place in the Church which my labors had merited, while I saw many unworthy persons exalted to honors and priestly offices, I betook myself to the assailing of those who I thought were by no means pleasing and acceptable to Thee. And because I could not destroy their power without first trampling on the laws enacted by the Church, I induced a great part of the people to contemn those rights of the Church which had long before been ratified and inviolate. If these had been decreed in General Councils, I said we were not to yield to the authority of Councils; if they had been instituted by ancient Fathers and Doctors, I accused the old Fathers as unskilful and devoid of sound understanding; if by Roman Pontiffs, I affirmed that they had raised up a tyranny for themselves, and falsely assumed the name of Vicegerents of Christ: by all means, in short, I contended that all of us, thy worshippers, should shake off the tyrannical yoke of the Church, which sometimes forbids meats, which observes days, which will have us to confess our sins to priests, which orders vows to be performed, and which binds with so many chains of bondage men made free, O Christ, in Thee; and that we should trust to faith alone, and not also to good works, (which are particularly extolled and proclaimed in the Church,) to procure us righteousness and salvation - seeing, especially, that thou hadst paid the penalty for us, and by thy sacred blood wiped away all faults and crimes, in order that we, trusting to this our faith in thee, might thereafter be able to do, with greater freedom, whatsoever we listed. For I searched the Scriptures more ingeniously than those ancients did, and that more especially when I sought for something which I might wrest against them: Having thus by repute for learning and genius acquired fame and estimation among the people, though, indeed, I was not able to overturn the whole authority of the Church, I was, however, the author of great seditions and schisms in it."

After he has thus spoken, and spoken truly, (for there is no room to lie before that heavenly Judge though he has kept back much concerning his ambition, avarice, love of popular applause, inward fraud and malice, of which he is perfectly conscious, and which will appear inscribed on his very forehead,) I ask you, my Genevese brethren, whom I long to have of one mind with me in Christ, and in the church of Christ, What judgment, think you, will be passed on these two men and their associates and followers? Is it not certain, that he who followed the Catholic Church will not be judged guilty of any error in this respect? First, Because the Church errs not, and even cannot err, since the Holy Spirit constantly guides her public and universal decrees and Councils. Secondly, Even if she did err, or could have erred, (this, however, it is impious to say or believe,) no such error would be condemned in him who should, with a mind sincere and humble towards God, have followed the faith and authority of his ancestors. But the other, trusting to his own head, having none among the ancient Fathers, and not even general assemblies of the whole Bishops, whom he deems worthy of honor, and to whom he can bring his mind to yield and submit, arrogating all things to himself, more prepared to slander than to speak or teach, after revolting from the common Church, to what does he look as the haven of his fortunes? in what bulwark does he confide? to whom does he trust as his advocates with God, so as not to have great cause of dread that he will be cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth; that is, where he will for ever lament his miseries, and gnash with his teeth against himself, because, when it was in his power, if he had chosen, to avoid that most dreadful calamity, he had neglected to do so? Every person can understand for himself, what wretched and dismal companions grief and fury are to pass one's life with; especially when there will never be any end or any limit of the fatal loss - when weeping and wrath shall never cease.

But if all other things might in same way be tolerated and overlooked, how will this be borne, (for this, methinks, there cannot be with God any place for mercy and pardon,) that they attempted to tear the spouse of Christ in pieces, that that garment of the Lord, which heathen soldiers were unwilling to divide, they attempted not only to divide, but to rend? For already, since these men began, how many sects have torn the Church? Sects not agreeing with them, and yet disagreeing with each other - a manifest indication of falsehood, as all doctrine declares. Truth is always one, while falsehood is varied

and multiform; that which is straight is simple, that which is crooked has many turns. Can any one who acknowledges and confesses Christ, and into whose heart and mind the Holy Spirit hath shone, fail to perceive that such rending, such tearing of the holy Church, is the proper work of Satan, and not of God? What does God demand of us? What does Christ enjoin? That we be all one in him. Why was given us from heaven that singular and pre-eminent gift of love, a gift divinely implanted in the Christian race only, and not in other nations? Was it not that we might all confess the Lord with one heart and mouth? Do those men suppose that the Christian religion is any thing at all but peace with God, and concord with our neighbor? Let us see what the Lord himself says in John, when interceding with his Father for the disciples: "Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are: I ask not for them only, but for those also who are to believe in me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they too may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, as we also are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." You see, dearest brethren, and in the clear light of the gospel discern what it really is to be a Christian, since our faith towards God, and all the glory of God, both his with us, and ours with him, consists solely in this unity; since this is the only thing which Christ requires and asks of the Father concerning us - considering that his labors, his toils, his frail human body assumed for us, his cross and his death will produce fruit, both to the glory of God, (his first desire,) and to our salvation, (for which he was about to die,) if we shall be one among ourselves, and one in him. For this the Catholic Church always labors, for this she strives, viz., our concord and unity in the same Spirit, that all men, however divided by space or time, and so incapable of coming together as one body, may yet be both cherished and ruled by one Spirit, who is always and every where the same. To this Catholic Church and Holy Spirit those, on the contrary, are professed adversaries who attempt to break unity, to introduce various spirits, to dissolve consent, and banish concord from the Christian religion, attempting this, with an eagerness and a zeal, by machinations and arts, which no language can sufficiently express. I will not, indeed, pray against them that the Lord would destroy all deceitful lips and high-sounding tongues; nor, likewise, that he would add iniquity to their iniquity, but that he would convert them, and bring them to a right mind, I will earnestly entreat of the Lord, my God, as I now do.

And I beg and exhort you, my Genevese brethren, after the mists of error have at length cleared away from the eyes of your mind, and the light been displayed, that you would raise your eyes to that heaven which God has set before you as your everlasting country, that you would be pleased to return to concord with us, yield faithful homage to the Church, our mother, and worship God with us in one spirit. Nor if our manners perhaps displease you, if, by the fault of some, that splendor of the Church, which ought to be perpetual and untarnished, is somewhat obscured, let that move your minds, or draw you to a different or opposite party. You may, perhaps, hate our persons, (if the gospel allows it,) but you certainly ought not to have a hatred for our faith and doctrine; for it is written, "What they say do." Now, we say nothing more than express our eager desire for your salvation. If this, my dearest Genevese, shall be taken by you in good part, if you will listen favorably to one most desirous of your welfare, assuredly you will not repent of having recovered your former favor with God and praise with men. I, as is my part, and as my good-will towards you dictates, will be a constant suppliant to God for you - an unworthy one, indeed, through my own defects, but, perhaps, love will make me worthy. And then, whatever I possibly can do, although it is very small, still if I have in me any talent, skill, authority, industry, I make a tender of all to you and your interests, and will regard it as a great favor to myself, should you be able to reap any fruit and advantage from my labor, and assistance in things human and divine.

It only remains to beg of you to receive the messenger, who bears this letter to you, with the civility and kindness which your own humanity and the law of nations, and, above all, Christian meekness, require and demand. While this will be honorable to you, it will also be extremely agreeable to me. God guide and mercifully defend you, my dearest brethren.

Carpentras, XV. Cal Apr. (18th March) 1539

REPLY BY CALVIN TO CARDINAL SADOLET'S LETTER.

JOHN CALVIN TO JAMES SADOLET, CARDINAL, - HEALTH.

IN the great abundance of learned men whom our age has produced, your excellent learning and distinguished eloquence having deservedly procured you a place among the few whom all, who would be thought studious of liberal arts, look up to and revere, it is with great reluctance I bring forward your name before the learned world, and address to you the following expostulation. Nor, indeed, would I have done it if I had not been dragged into this arena by a strong necessity. For I am not unaware how reprehensible it would be to show any eagerness in attacking a man who has deserved so well of literature, nor how odious I should become to all the learned were they to see me stimulated by passion merely, and not impelled by any just cause, turning my pen against one whom, for his admirable endowments, they, not without good reason, deem worthy of love and honor. I trust, however, that after explaining the nature of my undertaking, I shall not only be exempted from all blame, but there will not be an individual who will not admit that the cause which I have undertaken I could not on any account have abandoned without basely deserting my duty.

You lately addressed a Letter to the Senate and People of Geneva, in which you sounded their inclination as to whether, after having once shaken off the yoke of the Roman Pontiff, they would submit to have it again imposed upon them. In that letter, as it was not expedient to wound the feelings of those whose favor you required to gain your cause, you acted the part of a good pleader; for you endeavored to soothe them by abundance of flattery, in order that you might gain them over to your views. Any thing of obloquy and bitterness you directed against those whose exertions had produced the revolt from that tyranny. And here (so help you) you bear down full sail upon those who, under pretense of the gospel, have by wicked arts urged on the city to what you deplore as the subversion of religion and of the Church. I, however, Sadolet, profess to be one of those whom with so much enmity you assail and stigmatise. For though religion was already established, and the form of the Church corrected, before I was invited to Geneva, yet having not only approved by my suffrage, but studied as much as in me lay to preserve and confirm what had been done by Viret and Farel, I cannot separate my case from theirs. Still, if you had attacked me in my private character, I could easily have forgiven the attack in consideration of your learning, and in honor of letters. But when I see that my ministry, which I feel assured is supported and sanctioned by a call from God, is wounded through my side, it would be perfidy, not patience, were I here to be silent and connive.

In that Church I have held the office first of Doctor, and then of Pastor. In my own right, I maintain, that in undertaking these offices I had a legitimate vocation. How faithfully and religiously I have performed them, there is no occasion for now showing at length. Perspicuity, erudition, prudence, ability, not even industry, will I now claim for myself, but that I certainly labored with the sincerity which became me in the work of the Lord, I can in conscience appeal to Christ, my Judge, and all his angels, while all good men bear clear testimony in my favor. This ministry, therefore, when it shall appear to have been of God, (as it certainly shall appear, after the cause has been heard,) were I in silence to allow you to tear and defame, who would not condemn such silence as treachery? Every person, therefore, now sees that the strongest obligations of duty - obligations which I cannot evade - constrain me to meet your accusations, if I would not with manifest perfidy desert and betray a cause with which the Lord has entrusted me.

For though I am for the present relieved of the charge of the Church of Geneva, that circumstance ought not to prevent me from embracing it with paternal affection - God, when he gave it to me in charge, having bound me to be faithful to it for ever. Now, then, when I see the worst snares laid for that Church, whose safety it has pleased the Lord to make my highest care, and grievous peril impending if not obviated, who will advise me to await the issue silent and unconcerned? How heartless, I ask, would it be to wink in idleness, and, as it were, vacillating at the destruction of one whose life you are bound vigilantly to guard and preserve? But more on this point were superfluous, since you yourself relieve me of all difficulty. For if neighborhood, and that not very near, has weighed so much with you, that while wishing to profess your love towards the Genevese, you hesitate not so bitterly to assail me and my fame, it will, undoubtedly, by the law of humanity, be conceded to me, while desiring to consult for the public good of a city entrusted to me by a far stronger obligation than that of neighborhood, to oppose

your counsels and endeavors, which I cannot doubt tend to its destruction. Besides, without paying the least regard to the Genevan Church, (though assuredly I cannot cast off that charge any more than that of my own soul,) supposing I were not actuated by any zeal for it, still, when my ministry (which, knowing it to be from Christ, I am bound, if need be, to maintain with my blood) is assailed and falsely traduced, how can it be lawful for me to bear it as if I saw it not ?

Wherefore, it is easy not only for impartial readers to judge, but for yourself, also, Sadolet, to consider how numerous and valid the reasons are which have compelled me to engage in this contest, if the name of contest should be given to a simple and dispassionate defense of my innocence against your calumnious accusations. I say my innocence, although I cannot plead for myself without, at the same time, including my colleagues, with whom all my measures in that administration were so conjoined, that whatever has been said against them I willingly take to myself. What the feelings are which I have had toward yourself in undertaking this cause, I will study to testify and prove by my mode of conducting it. For I will act so, that all may perceive that I have not only greatly the advantage of you in the goodness and justice of the cause, in conscientious rectitude, heartfelt sincerity, and candor of speech, but have also been considerably more successful in maintaining gentleness and moderation. There will doubtless be some things which will sting, or, it may be, speak daggers to your mind, but it will be my endeavor, first, not to allow any harsher expression to escape me than either the injustice of the accusations with which you have previously assailed me, or the necessity of the case may extort; and, secondly, not to allow any degree of harshness which may amount to intemperance or passion, or which may, by its appearance of petulance, give offense to ingenuous minds.

And, first, if you had to do with any other person, he would, undoubtedly, begin with the very argument which I have determined altogether to omit. For, without much ado, he would discuss your design in writing, until he should make it plain that your object was anything but what you profess it to be. For, were it not for the great credit you formerly acquired for candor, it is somewhat suspicious that a stranger, who never before had any intercourse with the Genevese, should now suddenly profess for them so great an affection, though no previous sign of it existed, while, as one imbued, almost from a boy, with Romish arts, (such arts as are now learned in the Court of Rome, that forge of all craft and trickery) educated, too, in the very bosom of Clement, and now, moreover, elected a cardinal, you have many things about you which, with most men, would in this matter subject you to suspicion. Then as to those insinuations by which you have supposed you might win your way into the minds of simple men, any one, not utterly stupid, might easily refute them. But things of this nature, though many will, perhaps, be disposed to believe them, I am unwilling to ascribe to you, because they seem to me unsuitable to the character of one who has been polished by all kinds of liberal learning. I will, therefore, in entering into discussion with you, give you credit for having written to the Genevese with the purest intention as becomes one of your learning, prudence, and gravity, and for having, in good faith, advised them to the course which you believed conducive to their interest and safety. But whatever may have been your intention, (I am unwilling, in this matter, to charge you with anything invidious,) when, with the bitterest and most contumelious expressions which you can employ, you distort, and endeavor utterly to destroy what the Lord delivered by our hands. I am compelled, whether I will or not, to withstand you openly. For then only 40 pastors edify the Church, when, besides leading docile souls to Christ, placidly, as with the hand, they are also armed to repel the machinations of those who strive to impede the work of God.

Although your Letter has many windings, its whole purport substantially is to recover the Genevese to the power of the Roman Pontiff, or to what you call the faith and obedience of the Church. But as, from the nature of the case, their feelings required to be softened, you preface with a long oration concerning the incomparable value of eternal life. You afterwards come nearer to the point, when you show that there is nothing more pestiferous to souls than a perverse worship of God; and again, that the best rule for the due worship of God is that which is prescribed by the Church, and that, therefore, there is no salvation for those who have violated the unity of the Church unless they repent. But you next contend, that separation from your fellowship is manifest revolt from the Church, and then that the gospel which the Genevese received from us is nothing but a large farrago of impious dogmas. From this you infer what kind of divine judgment awaits them if they attend not to your admonitions. But as it was

of the greatest importance to your cause to throw complete discredit on our words, you labor to the utmost to fill them with sinister suspicions of the zeal which they saw us manifest for their salvation. Accordingly, you captiously allege that we had no other end in view than to gratify our avarice and ambition. Since, then, your device has been to cast some stain upon us, in order that the minds of your readers, being preoccupied with hatred, might give us no credit, I will, before proceeding to other matters, briefly reply to that objection.

I am unwilling to speak of myself, but since you do not permit me to be altogether silent, I will say what I can consistent with modesty. Had I wished to consult my own interest, I would never have left your party. I will not, indeed, boast that there the road to preferment had been easy to me. I never desired it, and I could never bring my mind to catch at it; although I certainly know not a few of my own age who have crept up to some eminence - among them some whom I might have equaled, and others outstripped. This only I will be contented to say, it would not have been difficult for me to reach the summit of my wishes, viz., the enjoyment of literary ease with something of a free and honorable station. Therefore, I have no fear that any one not possessed of shameless effrontery will object to me, that out of the kingdom of the Pope I sought for any personal advantage which was not there ready to my hand.

And who dare object this to Farel? Had it been necessary for him to have by his own industry, he had already made attainments in literature, which would not have allowed him to suffer want, and he was of a more distinguished family than to require external aid. As to those of us to whom you pointed as with the finger, it seemed proper for us to reply in our own name. But since you seem to throw out indirect insinuations against all who in the present day are united with us in sustaining the same cause, I would have you understand, that not one can be mentioned for whom I cannot give you a better answer than for Farel and myself. Some of our Reformers are known to you by fame. As to them, I appeal to your own conscience. Think you it was hunger which drove them away from you, and made them in despair flee to that change as a means of bettering their fortunes? But not to go over a long catalogue, this I say, that of those who first engaged in this cause, there was none who with you might not, have been in better place and fortune than require on such grounds to look out for some new plan of life.

But come and consider with me for a little what the honors and powers are which we have gained. All our hearers will bear us witness that we did not covet or aspire to any other riches or dignities than those which fell to our lot. Since in all our words and deeds they not only perceived no trace of the ambition with which you charge us; but, on the contrary, saw clear evidence of our abhorring it with our whole heart, you cannot hope that by one little word their minds are to be so fascinated as to credit a futile slander in opposition to the many certain proofs with which we furnished them. And to appeal to facts rather than words, - the power of the sword, and other parts of civil jurisdiction, which bishops and priests, under the semblance of immunity, had wrested from the magistrate and claimed for themselves, have not we restored to the magistrate? All their usurped instruments of tyranny and ambition have not we detested, and struggled to abolish? If there was any hope of rising, why did we not craftily dissemble, so that those powers might have passed to us along with the office of governing the Church? And why did we make such exertion to overturn the whole of that dominion, or rather butchery, which they exercised upon souls, without any sanction from the Word of God? How did we not consider that it was just so much lost to ourselves? In regard to ecclesiastical revenues, they are still in a great measure swallowed up by these whirlpools. But if there was a hope that they will one day be deprived of them, (as at length they certainly must,) why did we not devise a way by which they might come to us? But when with clear voice we denounced as a thief any bishop who, out of ecclesiastical revenues, appropriated more to his own use than was necessary for a frugal and sober subsistence; when we protested that the Church was exposed to a deadly poison, so long as pastors were loaded with an affluence under which they themselves might ultimately sink, when we declared it inexpedient that these revenues should fall into their possession; finally, when we counseled that as much should be distributed to ministers as might suffice for a frugality befitting their order, not superabound for luxury, and that the rest should be dispensed according to the practice of the ancient Church; when we showed that men of weight ought to be elected to manage these revenues, under an obligation to account

annually to the Church and the magistracy, was this to entrap any of these for ourselves, or was it not rather voluntarily to shake ourselves free of them? All these things, indeed, demonstrate not what we are, but what we wished to be. But if these things are so plainly and generally known, that not one iota can be denied, with what face can you proceed to upbraid us with aspiring to extraordinary wealth and power, and this especially in the presence of men to whom none of those things are unknown? The monstrous lies which persons of your order spread against us among their own followers we are not surprised at, (for no man is present who can either reprimand or venture to refute them,) but where men have been eye-witnesses of all the things which we have above mentioned, to try to persuade them of the contrary is the part of a man of little discretion, and strongly derogates from Sadolet's reputation for learning, prudence, and gravity. But if you think that our intention must be judged by the result, it will be found that the only thing we aimed at was, that the kingdom of Christ might be promoted by our poverty and insignificance. So far are we from having abused His sacred name to purposes of ambition.

I pass in silence many other invectives which you thunder out against us, (open mouthed,) as it is said. You call us crafty men, enemies of Christian unity and peace, innovators on things ancient and well established, seditious, alike pestiferous to souls, and destructive both publicly and privately to society at large. Had you wished to escape rebuke, you either ought not, for the purpose of exciting prejudice, to have attributed to us a magniloquent tongue, or you ought to have kept your own magniloquence considerably more under check. I am unwilling, however, to dwell on each of these points; only I would have you to consider how unbecoming, not to say illiberal, it is, thus in many words to accuse the innocent of things, which by one word can be instantly refuted; although to inflict injury on man is a small matter, when compared with the indignity of that contumely, which, when you come to the question, you offer to Christ and his word. When the Genevese, instructed by our preaching, escaped from the gulf of error in which they were immersed, and betook themselves to a purer teaching of the gospel, you call it defection from the truth of God; when they threw off the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff, in order that they might establish among themselves a better form of Church, you call it a desertion from the Church. Come, then, and let us discuss both points in their order.

As to your preface, which, in proclaiming the excellence of eternal blessedness, occupies about a third part of your Letter, it cannot be necessary for me to dwell long in reply. For although commendation of the future and eternal life is a theme which deserves to be sounded in our ears by day and by night, to be constantly kept in remembrance, and made the subject of ceaseless meditation, yet I know not for what reason you have so spun out your discourse upon it here, unless it were to recommend yourself by giving some indication of religious feeling. But whether, in order to remove all doubt concerning yourself, you wished to testify that a life of glory seriously occupies your thoughts, or whether you supposed that those to whom you wrote required to be excited and spurred on by a long commendation of it, (for I am unwilling to divine what your intention may have been) it is not very sound theology to confine a man's thoughts so much to himself, and not to set before him, as the prime motive of his existence, zeal to illustrate the glory of God. For we are born first of all for God, and not for ourselves. As all things flowed from him, and subsist in him, so, says Paul, (Romans 11:36,) they ought to be referred to him. I acknowledge, indeed, that the Lord, the better to recommend the glory of his name to men, has tempered zeal for the promotion and extension of it, by uniting it indissolubly with our salvation. But since he has taught that this zeal ought to exceed all thought and care for our own good and advantage, and since natural equity also teaches that God does not receive what is his own, unless he is preferred to all things, it certainly is the part of a Christian man to ascend higher than merely to seek and secure the salvation of his own soul. I am persuaded, therefore, that there is no man imbued with true piety, who will not consider as insipid that long and labored exhortation to zeal for heavenly life, a zeal which keeps a man entirely devoted to himself, and does not, even by one expression, arouse him to sanctify the name of God. But I readily agree with you that, after this sanctification, we ought not to propose to ourselves any other object in life than to hasten towards that high calling; for God has set it before us as the constant aim of all our thoughts, and words, and actions. And, indeed, there is nothing in which man excels the lower animals, unless it be his spiritual communion with God in the hope of a blessed eternity. And, generally, all we aim at in our discourses is to arouse men to meditate upon it, and aspire to it.

I have also no difficulty in conceding to you, that there is nothing more perilous to our salvation than a preposterous and perverse worship of God. The primary rudiments, by which we are wont to train to piety those whom we wish to gain as disciples to Christ, are these; viz., not to frame any new worship of God for themselves at random, and after their own pleasure, but to know that the only legitimate worship is that which he himself approved from the beginning. For we maintain, what the sacred oracle declared, that obedience is more excellent than any sacrifice, (1 Samuel 15:22.) In short, we train them, by every means, to be contented with the one rule of worship which they have received from his mouth, and bid adieu to all fictitious worship.

Therefore, Sadolet, when you uttered this voluntary confession, you laid the foundation of my defense. For if you admit it to be a fearful destruction to the soul, when, by false opinions, divine truth is turned into a lie, it now only remains for us to inquire which of the two parties retains that Worship of God which is alone legitimate. In order that you may claim it for your party, you assume that the most certain rule of worship is that which is prescribed by the Church, although, as if we here opposed you, you bring the matter under consideration, in the manner which is usually observed in regard to doubtful questions. But, Sadolet, as I see you toiling in vain, I will relieve you from all trouble on this head. You are mistaken in supposing that we desire to lead away the people from that method of worshipping God which the Catholic Church always observed. You either labor under a delusion as to the term Church, or, at least, knowingly and willingly give it a gloss. I will immediately show the latter to be the case, though it may also be that you are somewhat in error. First, in defining the term, you omit what would have helped you, in no small degree, to the right understanding of it. When you describe it as that which in all parts, as well as at the present time, in every region of the earth, being united and consenting in Christ, has been always and every where directed by the one Spirit of Christ, what comes of the Word of the Lord, that clearest of all marks, and which the Lord himself, in pointing out the Church, so often recommends to us? For seeing how dangerous it would be to boast of the Spirit without the Word, he declared that the Church is indeed governed by the Holy Spirit, but in order that that government might not be vague and unstable, he annexed it to the Word. For this reason Christ exclaims, that those who are of God hear the word of God that his sheep are those which recognize his voice as that of their Shepherd, and any other voice as that of a stranger, (John 10:27.) For this reason the Spirit, by the mouth of Paul, declares, (Ephesians 2:20,) that the Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. Also, that the Church is made holy to the Lord, by the washing of water in the word of life. The same thing is declared still more clearly by the mouth of Peter, when he teaches that people are regenerated to God by that incorruptible seed, (1 Peter 1:23.) In short; why is the preaching of the gospel so often styled the kingdom of God, but because it is the scepter by which the heavenly King rules his people ?

Nor will you find this in the Apostolical writings only, but whenever the Prophets foretell the renewal of the Church, or its extension over the whole globe, they always assign the first place to the Word. For they tell that from Jerusalem will issue forth living waters, which being divided into four rivers, will inundate the whole earth, (Zechariah 14:8.) And what these living waters are, they themselves explain when they say

"That the law will come forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," (Isaiah 2:3.)

Well, then, does Chrysostom admonish us to reject all who under the pretense of the Spirit, lead us away from the simple doctrine of the gospel the Spirit having been promised not to reveal a new doctrine, but to impress the truth of the gospel on our minds. And we, in fact, experience in the present day how necessary the admonition was. We are assailed by two sects, which seem to differ most widely from each other. For what similitude is there in appearance between the Pope and the Anabaptists? And yet, that you may see that Satan never transforms himself so cunningly, as not in some measure to betray himself, the principal weapon with which they both assail us is the same. For when they boast extravagantly of the Spirit, the tendency certainly is to sink and bury the Word of God, that they may make room for their own falsehoods. And you, Sadolet, by stumbling on the very threshold, have paid the penalty of that affront which you offered to the Holy Spirit, when you separated him from the Word.

For, as if those who seek the way of God were standing where two ways meet, and destitute of any certain sign, you are forced to introduce them as hesitating whether it be more expedient to follow the authority of the Church, or to listen to those whom you call the inventors of new dogmas. Had you known, or been unwilling to disguise the fact, that the Spirit goes before the Church, to enlighten her in understanding the Word, while the Word itself is like the Lydian Stone, by which she tests all doctrines, would you have taken refuge in that most perplexing and thorny question? Learn, then, by your own experience, that it is no less unreasonable to boast of the Spirit without the Word, than it would be absurd to bring forward the Word itself without the Spirit. Now, if you can bear to receive a truer definition of the Church than your own, say, in future, that it is the society of all the saints, a society which, spread over the whole world, and existing in all ages, yet bound together by the one doctrine, and the one Spirit of Christ, cultivates and observes unity of faith and brotherly concord. With this Church we deny that we have any disagreement. Nay, rather, as we revere her as our mother, so we desire to remain in her bosom.

But here you bring a charge against us. For you teach that all which has been approved for fifteen hundred years or more, by the uniform consent of the faithful, is, by our headstrong rashness, torn up and destroyed. Here I will not require you to deal truly and candidly by us, (though this should be spontaneously offered by a philosopher, not to say a Christian.) I will only ask you not to stoop to an illiberal indulgence in calumny, which, even though we be silent, must be extremely injurious to your reputation with grave and honest men. You know, Sadolet, and if you venture to deny, I will make it palpable to all that you knew, yet cunningly and craftily disguised the fact, not only that our agreement with antiquity is far closer than yours, but that all we have attempted has been to renew that ancient form of the Church, which, at first sullied and distorted by illiterate men of indifferent character, was afterwards flagitiously mangled and almost destroyed by the Roman Pontiff and his faction.

I will not press you so closely as to call you back to that form which the Apostles instituted, (though in it we have the only model of a true Church, and whosoever deviates from it in the smallest degree is in error,) but to indulge you so far, place, I pray, before your eyes, that ancient form of the Church, such as their writings prove it to have been in the age of Chrysostom and Basil, among the Greeks, and of Cyprian, Ambrose, and Augustine, among the Latins; after so doing, contemplate the ruins of that Church, as now surviving among yourselves. Assuredly, the difference will appear as great as that which the Prophets describe between the famous Church which flourished under David and Solomon, and that which under Zedekiah and Jehoiakim had lapsed into every kind of superstition, and utterly vitiated the purity of divine worship. Will you here give the name of an enemy of antiquity to him who, zealous for ancient piety and holiness, and dissatisfied with the state of matters as existing in a dissolute and depraved Church, attempts to ameliorate its condition, and restore it to pristine splendor?

Since there are three things on which the safety of the Church is founded, viz., doctrine, discipline, and the sacraments, and to these a fourth is added, viz., ceremonies, by which to exercise the people in offices of piety, in order that we may be most sparing of the honor of your Church, by which of these things would you have us to judge her? The truth of Prophetical and Evangelical doctrine, on which the Church ought to be founded, has not only in a great measure perished in your Church, but is violently driven away by fire and sword. Will you obtrude upon me, for the Church, a body which furiously persecutes everything sanctioned by our religion, both as delivered by the oracles of God, and embodied in the writings of holy Fathers, and approved by ancient Councils? Where, pray, exist among you any vestiges of that true and holy discipline, which the ancient bishops exercised in the Church? Have you not scorned all their institutions? Have you not trampled all the Canons under foot? Then, your nefarious profanation of the sacraments I cannot think of without the utmost horror.

Of ceremonies, indeed, you have more than enough, but, for the most part, so childish in their import, and vitiated by innumerable forms of superstition, as to be utterly unavailing for the preservation of the Church. None of these things, you must be aware is exaggerated by me in a captious spirit. They all appear so openly, that they may be pointed out with the finger wherever there are eyes to behold them. Now, if you please, test us in the same way. You will, assuredly, fall far short of making good the charges which you have brought against us.

In the Sacraments, all we have attempted is to restore the native purity from which they had degenerated, and so enable them to resume their dignity. Ceremonies we have in a great measure abolished, but we were compelled to do so partly because by their multitude they had degenerated into a kind of Judaism, partly because they had filled the minds of the people with superstition, and could not possibly remain without doing the greatest injury to the piety which it was their office to promote. Still we have retained those which seemed sufficient for the circumstances of the times.

That our discipline is not such as the ancient Church professed we do not deny. But with what fairness is a charge of subverting discipline brought against us by those who themselves have utterly abolished it, and in our attempts to reinstate it in its rights have hitherto opposed us? As to our doctrine, we hesitate not to appeal to the ancient Church. And since, for the sake of example, you have touched on certain heads, as to which you thought you had some ground for accusing us, I will briefly show how unfairly and falsely you allege that these are things which have been devised by us against the opinion of the Church.

Before descending to particulars, however, I have already cautioned you, and would have you again and again consider with what reason you can charge it upon our people, as a fault that they have studied to explain the Scriptures. For you are aware, that by this study they have thrown such light on the Word of God, that, in this respect, even envy herself is ashamed to defraud them of all praise. You are just as uncandid when you aver that we have seduced the people by thorny and subtle questions, and so enticed them by that philosophy of which Paul bids Christians beware. What? Do you remember what kind of time it was when our Reformers appeared, and what kind of doctrine candidates for the ministry learned in the schools? You yourself know that it was mere sophistry, and sophistry so twisted, involved, tortuous, and puzzling, that scholastic theology might well be described as a species of secret magic. The denser the darkness in which any one shrouded a subject, the more he puzzled himself and others with preposterous riddles, the greater his fame for acumen and learning. And when those who had been formed in that forge wished to carry the fruit of their learning to the people with what skill, I ask, did they edify the Church?

Not to go over every point what sermons in Europe then exhibited that simplicity with which Paul wishes a Christian people to be always occupied? Nay, what one sermon was there from which old wives might not carry off more whimsies than they could devise at their own fireside in a month? For, as sermons were then usually divided, the first half was devoted to those misty questions of the schools which might astonish the rude populace, while the second contained sweet stories, or not unamusing speculations, by which the hearers might be kept on the alert. Only a few expressions were thrown in from the Word of God, that by their majesty they might procure credit for these frivolities. But as soon as our Reformers raised the standard, all these absurdities, in one moment, disappeared from amongst us. Your preachers, again, partly profited by our books, and partly compelled by shame and the general murmur, conformed to our example, though they still, with open throat, exhale the old absurdity. Hence any one who compares our method of procedure with the old method, or with that which is still in repute among you, will perceive that you have done us no small injustice. But had you continued your quotation from Paul a little farther, any boy would easily have perceived that the charge which you bring against us is undoubtedly applicable to yourselves. For Paul there interprets "vain philosophy" (Colossians 2:8) to mean that which preys upon pious souls, by means of the constitutions of men, and the elements of this world: and by these you have ruined the Church.

Even you yourself afterwards acquit us by your own testimony; for among those of our doctrines which you have thought proper to assail, you do not adduce one, the knowledge of which is not essentially necessary for the edification of the Church.

You, in the first place, touch upon justification by faith, the first and keenest subject of controversy between us. Is this a knotty and useless question? Wherever the knowledge of it is taken away, the glory of Christ is extinguished, religion abolished, the Church destroyed, and the hope of salvation utterly overthrown. That doctrine, then, though of the highest moment, we maintain that you have nefariously effaced from the memory of men. Our books are filled with convincing proofs of this fact, and the gross ignorance of this doctrine, which even still continues in all your churches, declares that our complaint is

by no means ill founded. But you very maliciously stir up prejudice against us, alleging that, by attributing every thing to faith, we leave no room for works.

I will not now enter upon a full discussion, which would require a large volume; but if you would look into the Catechism which I myself drew up for the Genevese, when I held the office of Pastor among them, three words would silence you. Here, however, I will briefly explain to you how we speak on this subject.

First, We bid a man begin by examining himself, and this not in a superficial and perfunctory manner, but to sist his conscience before the tribunal of God, and when sufficiently convinced of his iniquity, to reflect on the strictness of the sentence pronounced upon all sinners. Thus confounded and amazed at his misery, he is prostrated and humbled before God; and, casting away all self-confidence, groans as if given up to final perdition. Then we show that the only haven of safety is in the mercy of God, as manifested in Christ, in whom every part of our salvation is complete. As all mankind are, in the sight of God, lost sinners, we hold that Christ is their only righteousness, since, by his obedience, he has wiped off our transgressions; by his sacrifice, appeased the divine anger; by his blood, washed away our stains; by his cross, borne our curse; and by his death, made satisfaction for us. We maintain that in this way man is reconciled in Christ to God the Father, by no merit of his own, by no value of works, but by gratuitous mercy. When we embrace Christ by faith, and come, as it were, into communion with him, this we term, after the manner of Scripture, the righteousness of faith.

What have you here, Sadolet, to bite or carp at? Is it that we leave no room for works? Assuredly we do deny that, in justifying a man, they are worth one single straw. For Scripture everywhere cries aloud, that all are lost; and every man's own conscience bitterly accuses him. The same Scripture teaches, that no hope is left but in the mere goodness of God, by which sin is pardoned, and righteousness imputed to us. It declares both to be gratuitous, and finally concludes that a man is justified without works, (Romans 4:7.) But what notion, you ask, does the very term Righteousness suggest to us, if respect is not paid to good works? I answer, if you would attend to the true meaning of the term justifying in Scripture, you would have no difficulty. For it does not refer to a man's own righteousness, but to the mercy of God, which, contrary to the sinner's deserts, accepts of a righteousness :for him, and that by not imputing his unrighteousness. Our righteousness, I say, is that which is described by Paul, (2 Corinthians 5:19,) that God hath reconciled us to himself in Jesus Christ. The mode is afterwards subjoined by not imputing sin. He demonstrates that it is by faith only we: become partakers of that blessing, when he says that the ministry of reconciliation is contained in the gospel. But faith, you say, is a general term, and has a larger signification. I answer, that Paul, whenever he attributes to it the power of justifying, at the same time restricts it to a gratuitous promise of the divine favor, and keeps it far removed from all respect to works. Hence his familiar inference - if by faith, then not by works. On the other hand if by works, then not by faith.

But, it seems, injury is done to Christ, if, under the pretence of his grace, good works are repudiated; he having come to prepare a people acceptable to God, zealous of good works, while, to the same effect, are many similar passages which prove that Christ came in order that we, doing good works, might, through him, be accepted by God. This calumny, which our opponents have ever in their mouths, viz., that we take away the desire of well-doing from the Christian life by recommending gratuitous righteousness, is too frivolous to give us much concern. We deny that good works have any share in justification, but we claim full authority for them in the lives of the righteous. For, if he who has obtained justification possesses Christ, and, at the same time, Christ never is where his Spirit is not, it is obvious that gratuitous righteousness is necessarily connected with regeneration. Therefore, if you would duly understand how inseparable faith and works are, look to Christ, who, as the Apostle teaches, (1 Corinthians 1:30,) has been given to us for justification and for sanctification. Wherever, therefore, that righteousness of faith, which we maintain to be gratuitous, is, there too Christ is, and where Christ is, there too is the Spirit of holiness, who regenerates the soul to newness of life. On the contrary, where zeal for integrity and holiness is not in vigor, there neither is the Spirit of Christ nor Christ himself; and wherever Christ is not, there is no righteousness, nay, there is no faith; for faith cannot apprehend Christ for righteousness without the Spirit of sanctification.

Since, therefore, according to us, Christ regenerates to a blessed life those whom he justifies, and after rescuing them from the dominion of sin, hands them over to the dominion of righteousness, transforms them into the image of God, and so trains them by his Spirit into obedience to his will, there is no ground to complain that, by our doctrine, lust is left with loosened reins. The passages which you adduce have not a meaning at variance with our doctrine. But if you will pervert them in assailing gratuitous justification, see how unskillfully you argue. Paul elsewhere says (Ephesians 1:4) that we were chosen in Christ, before the creation of the world, to be holy and unblameable in the sight of God through love. Who will venture thence to infer, either that election is not gratuitous, or that our love is its cause? Nay, rather, as the end of gratuitous election, so also that of gratuitous justification is, that we may lead pure and unpolluted lives before God. For the saying of Paul is true, (1 Thessalonians 4:7) we have not been called to impurity, but to holiness. This, meanwhile, we constantly maintain, that man is not only justified freely once for all, without any merit of works, but that on this gratuitous justification the salvation of man perpetually depends. Nor is it possible that any work of man can be accepted by God unless it be gratuitously approved. Wherefore, I was amazed when I read your assertion, that love, is the first and chief cause of our salvation. O, Sadolet, who could ever have expected such a saying from you? Undoubtedly the very blind, while in darkness, feel the mercy of God too surely to dare to claim for their love the first cause of their salvation, while those who have merely one spark of divine light feel that their salvation consists in nothing else than their being adopted by God. For eternal salvation is the inheritance of the heavenly Father, and has been prepared solely for his children. Moreover, who can assign any other cause of our adoption than that which is uniformly announced in Scripture, viz., that we did not first love him, but were spontaneously received by him into favor and affection?

Your ignorance of this doctrine leads you on to the error of teaching that sins are expiated by penances and satisfactions. Where, then, will be that one expiatory victim, from which, if we depart, there remains, as Scripture testifies, no more sacrifice for sin? Search through all the divine oracles which we possess; if the blood of Christ alone is uniformly set forth as purchasing satisfaction, reconciliation, and ablution, how dare you presume to transfer so great an honor to your works? Nor have you any ground for ascribing this blasphemy to the Church of God. The ancient Church, I admit, had its satisfactions, not those, however, by which sinners might atone to God and ransom themselves from guilt, but by which they might prove that the repentance which they professed was not reigned, and efface the remembrance of that scandal which their sin had occasioned. For satisfactions were not regularly prescribed to all and sundry, but to those only who had fallen into some heinous wickedness.

In the case of the Eucharist, you blame us for attempting to confine the Lord of the universe, and his divine and spiritual power, (which is perfectly free and infinite,) within the corners of a corporeal nature with its circumscribed boundaries. What end, pray, will there be to calumny? We have always distinctly testified, that not only the divine power of Christ, but his essence also, is diffused over all, and defined by no limits, and yet you hesitate not to upbraid us with confining it within the corners of corporeal nature! How so? Because we are unwilling with you to chain down his body to earthly elements. But had you any regard for sincerity, assuredly you are not ignorant how great a difference there is between the two things - between removing the local presence of Christ's body from bread, and circumscribing his spiritual power within bodily limits. Nor ought you to charge our doctrine with novelty, since it was always held by the Church as an acknowledged point. But as this subject alone would extend to a volume, in order that both of us may escape so toilsome a discussion, the better course will be for you to read Augustine's Epistle to Dardanus, where you will find how one and the same Christ more than fills heaven and earth with the vastness of his divinity, and yet is not everywhere diffused in respect of his humanity.

We loudly proclaim the communion of flesh and blood, which is exhibited to believers in the Supper; and we distinctly show that that flesh is truly meat, and that blood truly drink - that the soul, not contented with an imaginary conception, enjoys them in very truth. That presence of Christ, by which we are ingrafted in him, we by no means exclude from the Supper, nor shroud in darkness, though we hold that there must be no local limitation, that the glorious body of Christ must not be degraded to earthly elements; that there must be no fiction of transubstantiating the bread into Christ, and afterwards worshipping it as Christ. We explain the dignity and end of this solemn rite in the

loftiest terms which we can employ, and then declare how great the advantages which we derive from it. Almost all these things are neglected by you. For, overlooking the divine beneficence which is here bestowed upon us, overlooking the legitimate use of so great a benefit, (the topics on which it were becoming most especially to dwell,) you count it enough that the people gaze stupidly at the visible sign, without any understanding of the spiritual mystery. In condemning your gross dogma of transubstantiation, and declaring that stupid adoration which detains the minds of men among the elements, and permits them not to rise to Christ, to be perverse and impious, we have not acted without the concurrence of the ancient Church, under whose shadow you endeavor in vain to hide the very vile superstitions to which you are here addicted.

In auricular confession we have disapproved of that law of Innocent, which enjoins every man once a year to pass all his sins in review before his priest. It would be tedious to enumerate all the reasons which induced us to abrogate it. But that the thing was nefarious is apparent even from this, that pious consciences, which formerly boiled with perpetual anxiety, have at length begun, after being freed from that dire torment, to rest with confidence in the divine favor; to say nothing, meanwhile, of the many disasters which it brought upon the Church, and which justly entitle us to hold it in execration. For the present, take this for our answer, that it was neither commanded by Christ, nor practiced by the ancient Church. We have forcibly wrested from the hands of the sophists all the passages of Scripture which they had contrived to distort in support of it, while the common books on ecclesiastical history show that it had no existence in an earlier age. The testimonies of the Fathers are to the same effect. It is, therefore, mere deception when you say, that the humility therein manifested was enjoined and instituted by Christ and the Church. For though there appears in it a certain show of humility, it is very far from being true, that every kind of abasement, which assumes the name of humility, is commended by God. Accordingly, Paul teaches, (Colossians 2:18,) that that humility only is genuine which is framed in conformity to the Word of God.

In asserting the intercession of the saints, if all you mean is, that they continually pray for the completion of Christ's kingdom, on which the salvation of all the faithful depends, there is none of us who calls it in question. Accordingly, you have lost your pains in laboring this part so much, but, no doubt, you were unwilling to lose the opportunity of repeating the false asseveration which charges us with thinking that the soul perishes with the body. That philosophy we leave to your Popes and College of Cardinals, by whom it was for many years most faithfully cultivated, and ceases not to be cultivated in the present day. To them also your subsequent remark applies, viz., to live luxuriously, without any solicitude concerning a future life, and hold us miserable wretches in derision, for labouring so anxiously in behalf of the kingdom of Christ. But, in regard to the intercession of the saints, we insist on a point which it is not strange that you omit. For here innumerable superstitions were to be cut off, superstitions which had risen to such a height, that the intercession of Christ was utterly erased from men's thoughts, saints were invoked as gods, the peculiar offices of Deity were distributed among them, and a worship paid to them which differed in nothing from that ancient idolatry which we all deservedly execrate.

As to purgatory, we know that ancient churches made some mention of the dead in their prayers, but it was done seldom and soberly, and consisted only of a few words. It was, in short, a mention in which it was obvious that nothing more was meant than to attest in passing the affection which was felt toward the dead. As yet, the architects were unborn, by whom your purgatory was built; and who afterwards enlarged it to such a width, and raised it to such a height, that it now forms the chief prop of your kingdom. You yourself know what a hydra of errors thence emerged; you know what tricks superstition has at its own hand devised, wherewith to disport itself; you know how many impostures avarice has here fabricated, in order to milk men of every class; you know how great detriment it has done to piety. For, not to mention how much true worship has in consequence decayed, the worst result certainly was, that while all, without any command from God, were vying with each other in helping the dead, they utterly neglected the congenial offices of charity, which are so strongly enjoined.

I will not permit you, Sadolet, by inscribing the name of Church on such abominations, both to defame her against all law and justice, and prejudice the ignorant against us, as if we were determined

to wage war with the Church. For though we admit that in ancient times some seeds of superstition were sown, which detracted somewhat from the purity of the gospel, still you know, that it is not so long ago since those monsters of impiety with which we war were born or, at least, grew to such a size. Indeed, in attacking, breaking down, and destroying your kingdom, we are armed not only with the energy of the Divine Word, but with the aid of the holy Fathers also.

That I may altogether disarm you of the authority of the Church, which, as your shield of Ajax, you ever and anon oppose to us, I will show, by some additional examples, how widely you differ from that holy antiquity.

We accuse you of overthrowing the ministry, of which the empty name remains with you, without the reality. As far as the office of feeding the people is concerned, the very children perceive that Bishops and Presbyters are dumb statues, while men of all ranks know by experience, that they are active only in robbing and devouring. We are indignant, that in the room of the sacred Supper has been substituted a sacrifice, by which the death of Christ is emptied of its virtues. We exclaim against the execrable traffic in masses, and we complain, that the Supper of the Lord, as to one of its halves, has been stolen from the Christian people. We inveigh against the accursed worship of images. We show that the sacraments are vitiated by many profane notions. We tell how indulgences crept in with fearful dishonor to the cross of Christ. We lament, that by means of human traditions, Christian liberty has been crushed and destroyed. Of these and similar pests, we have been careful to purge the churches which the Lord has committed to us. Expostulate with us, if you can, for the injury which we inflicted on the Catholic Church, by daring to violate its sacred sanctions. The fact is now too notorious for you to gain anything by denying it, viz., that in all these points, the ancient Church is clearly on our side, and opposes you, not less than we ourselves do.

But here we are met by what you say, when, in order to palliate matters, you allege that though your manners should be irregular, that is no reason why we should make a schism in the holy Church. It is scarcely possible that the minds of the common people should not be greatly alienated from you by the many examples of cruelty, avarice, intemperance, arrogance, insolence, lust, and all sorts of wickedness, which are openly manifested by men of your order, but none of those things would have driven us to the attempt which we made under a much stronger necessity. That necessity was, that the light of divine truth had been extinguished, the word of God buried, the virtue of Christ left in profound oblivion, and the pastoral office subverted. Meanwhile, impiety so stalked abroad, that almost no doctrine of religion was pure from admixture, no ceremony free from error, no part, however minute, of divine worship untarnished by superstition. Do those who contend against such evils declare war against the Church, and not rather assist her in her extreme distress? And yet you would take credit for your obedience and humility in refraining, through veneration for the Church, from applying your hand to the removal of these abominations. What has a Christian man to do with that prevaricating obedience, which, while the word of God is licentiously contemned, yields its homage to human vanity? What has he to do with that contumacious and rude humility, which, despising the majesty of God, only looks up with reverence to men? Have done with empty names of virtue, employed merely as cloaks for vice, and let us exhibit the thing itself in its true colors. Ours be the humility, which, beginning with the lowest, and paying respect to each in his degree, yields the highest honor and respect to the Church, in subordination, however, to Christ the Church's head; ours the obedience, which, while it disposes us to listen to our elders and superiors, tests all obedience by the word of God; in fine, ours the Church, whose supreme-care it is humbly and religiously to venerate the word of God, and submit to its authority.

But what arrogance, you will say, to boast that the Church is with you alone, and to deny it to all the world besides! We, indeed, Sadolet, deny not that those over which you preside are Churches of Christ but we maintain that the Roman Pontiff, with his whole herd of pseudo-bishops, who have seized upon the pastor's office, are ravening wolves, whose only study has hitherto been to scatter and trample upon the kingdom of Christ, filling it with ruin and devastation. Nor are we the first to make the complaint. With what vehemence does Bernard thunder against Eugenius and all the bishops of his own age? Yet how much more tolerable was its condition then than now? For iniquity has reached its height, and now

those shadowy prelates, by whom you think the Church stands or perishes, and by whom we say that she has been cruelly torn and mutilated, and brought to the very brink of destruction, can hear neither their vices nor the cure of them. Destroyed the Church would have been, had not God, with singular goodness, prevented. For in all places where the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff prevails, you scarcely see as many stray and tattered vestiges as will enable you to perceive that these Churches lie half buried. Nor should you think this absurd, since Paul tells you (2 Thessalonians 2:4) that antichrist would have his seat in no other place than in the midst of God's sanctuary. Ought not this single warning to put us on our guard against tricks and devices which may be practiced in the name of the Church?

But whatever the character of the men, still you say it is written, "What they tell you, do." No doubt, if they sit in the chair of Moses. But when, from the chair of verity, they intoxicate the people with folly it is written,

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," (Matthew 16:6.)

It is not ours, Sadolet to rob the Church of any right which the goodness of God not only has conceded to her, but strictly guarded for her by numerous prohibition. For, as pastors are not sent forth by Him to rule the Church with a licentious and lawless authority, but are astricted to a certain rule of duty which they must not exceed, so the Church is ordered (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1) to see that those who are appointed over her on these terms faithfully accord with their vocation. But we must either hold the testimony of Christ of little moment, or must hold it impious to infringe in the least degree on the authority of those whom he has invested with such splendid titles! Nay, it is you who are mistaken in supposing that the Lord set tyrants over his people to rule them at pleasure, when he bestowed so much authority on those whom he sent to promulgate the gospel. Your error lies here, viz., in not reflecting that their power, before they were furnished with it, was circumscribed within certain limits. We admit therefore, that ecclesiastical pastors are to be heard just like Christ himself, but they must be pastors who execute the office entrusted to them. And this office, we maintain, is not presumptuously to introduce whatever their own pleasure has rashly devised, but religiously and in good faith to deliver the oracles which they have received at the mouth of the Lord. For within these boundaries Christ confined the reverence which he required to be paid to the Apostles; nor does Peter (1 Peter 4:11) either claim for himself or allow to others anything more than that, as often as they speak among the faithful, they speak as from the mouth of the Lord. Paul, indeed, justly extols (2 Corinthians 12:10) the spiritual power with which he was invested, but with this proviso, that it was to avail only for edification, was to wear no semblance of domination, was not to be employed in subjugating faith.

Let your Pontiff, then, boast as he may of the succession of Peter: even should he make good his title to it, he will establish nothing more than that obedience is due to him from the Christian people, so long as he himself maintains his fidelity to Christ, and deviates not from the purity of the gospel. For the Church of the faithful does not force you into any other order than that in which the Lord wished you to stand, when it tests you by that rule by which all your power is defined the order, I say, which the Lord himself instituted among the faithful, viz., that a Prophet holding the place of teacher should be judged by the congregation, [consessu,] (1 Corinthians 14:29.) Whoever exempts himself from this must first expunge his name from the list of Prophets. And here a very wide field for exposing your ignorance opens upon me, since, in matters of religious controversy, all that you leave to the faithful is to shut their own eyes, and to submit implicitly to their teachers. But since it is certain that every soul which depends not on God alone is enslaved to Satan, how miserable must they be who are imbued with such rudiments of faith? Hence, I observe Sadolet, that you have too indolent a theology, as is almost always the case with those who have never had experience in serious struggles of conscience. For, otherwise, you would never place a Christian man on ground so slippery, nay, so precipitous that he can scarcely stand a moment if even the slightest push is given him. Give me, I say not some unlearned man from among the people, but the rudest clown, and if he is to belong to the flock of God, he must be prepared for that warfare which He has ordained for all the godly. An armed enemy is at hand, on the alert to engage - an enemy most skillful and unassailable by mortal strength; to resist him, with what guards must not that poor man be defended, with what weapons armed, if he is not to be instantly annihilated? Paul informs us, (Ephesians 6:17,) that the only sword with which he can fight is the word of the Lord. A

soul, therefore, when deprived of the word of God, is given up unarmed to the devil for destruction. Now, then, will not the first machination of the enemy be to wrest the sword from the soldier of Christ? And what the method of wresting it, but to set him a doubting whether it be the word of the Lord that he is leaning upon, or the word of man? What will you do for this unhappy being? Will you bid him look round for learned men on whom reclining he may take his rest? But the enemy will not leave him so much as a breathing time in this subterfuge. For when once he has driven him to lean upon men, he will keep urging and repeating his blows until he throws him over the precipice. Thus he must either be easily overthrown, or he must forsake man, and look directly to God. So true it is, that Christian faith must not be founded on human testimony, not propped up by doubtful opinion, not reclined on human authority, but engraven on our hearts by the finger of the living God, so as not to be obliterated by any coloring of error. There is nothing of Christ, then, in him who does not hold the elementary principle, that it is God alone who enlightens our minds to perceive his truth, who by his Spirit seals it on our hearts, and by his sure attestation to it confirms our conscience. This is, if I may so express it, that full and firm assurance commended by Paul, and which, as it leaves no room for doubt, so not only does it not hesitate and waver among human arguments as to which party it ought to adhere, but maintains its consistency though the whole world should oppose.

Hence arises that power of judging which we attribute to the Church, and wish to preserve unimpaired. For how much soever the world may fluctuate and jar with contending opinions, the faithful soul is never so destitute as not to have a straight course to salvation. I do not, however, dream of a perspicacity of faith which never errs in discriminating between truth and falsehood, is never deceived, nor do I figure to myself an arrogance which looks down as from a height on the whole human race, waits for no man's judgment, and makes no distinction between learned and unlearned. On the contrary, I admit that pious and truly religious minds do not; always attain to all the mysteries of God, but are sometimes blind in the clearest matters - the Lord, doubtless, so providing, in order to accustom them to modesty and submission. Again, I admit that they have such a respect for all good men, not to say the Church, that they do not easily allow themselves to be separated from any man in whom they have discovered a true knowledge of Christ; so that sometimes they choose rather to suspend their judgment; than to rush, on slight grounds, into dissent. I only contend, that so long as they insist on the word of the Lord, they are never so caught as to be led away to destruction, while their conviction of the truth of the word of God is so clear and certain, that it cannot be overthrown by either men or angels. Away, then, with that nugatory simplicity (which you say becomes the rude and illiterate) of looking up and yielding to the beck of those who are more learned! For, besides that the name of faith is undeservedly bestowed on any religious persuasion, however obstinate, which rests any where but in God, who can give such a name to some (I know not what) wavering opinion, which is not only easily wrested from them by the arts of the devil, but fluctuates of its own accord with the temper of the times, and of which no other end can be hoped for than that it will at length vanish away?

As to your assertion, that our only aim in shaking off this tyrannical yoke was to set ourselves free for unbridled licentiousness after, (so help us!) casting away all thoughts of future life, let judgment be given after comparing our conduct with yours. We abound, indeed, in numerous faults, too often do we sin and fall; still, though truth would, modesty will not, permit me to boast how far we excel you in every respect unless, perchance, you are to except Rome, that famous abode of sanctity, which having burst asunder the cords of pure discipline, and trodden all honor under foot, has so overflowed with all kinds of iniquity, that scarcely any thing so abominable has ever been before. We behaved, forsooth, to expose our heads to so many perils and dangers that we might not, after her example, be placed under too severe constraint! But we have not the least objection that the discipline which was sanctioned by ancient canons should be in force in the present day, and be carefully and faithfully observed; nay, we have always protested that the miserable condition into which the Church had fallen was owing to nothing more than to its enervation by luxury and indulgence. For the body of the Church, to cohere well, must be bound together by discipline as with sinews. But how, on your part is discipline either observed or desired? Where are those ancient canons with which, like a bridle, bishops and presbyters were kept to their duty? How are your bishops elected? after what trial? what examination? what care? what caution? How are they inducted to their office? with what order? what solemnity? They merely take an official oath that they will perform the pastoral office, and this apparently for no other end than

that they may add perjury to their other iniquities. Since, then, in seizing upon ecclesiastical offices they seem to enter upon an authority astricted by no law, they think themselves free to do as they please and hence it is that among pirates and robbers there is apparently more justice and regular government, more effect given to law, than by all your order.

But since, towards the end, a person has been introduced to plead our cause, and you have cited us as defenders to the tribunal of God, I have no hesitation in calling upon you there to meet me. For such is our consciousness of the truth of our doctrine, that it has do dread of the heavenly Judge, from whom, we doubt not, that it proceeded. But it dwells not on those frivolities with which it has pleased you to amuse yourself; certainly very much out of place. For what more unseasonable than after you had come into the presence of God, to set about devising I know not what follies, and framing for us an absurd defence which must instantly fail. In pious minds, as often as that day is suggested, the impression made is too solemn to leave them at leisure so to disport themselves. Therefore, frivolity aside, let us think of that day, in expectation of which the minds of men ought ever to be on the watch. And let us remember, that while it is a day to be desired by the faithful, it is also one at which the ungodly and profane, and those who are despisers of God, may well be alarmed. Let us turn our ears to the clang of that trumpet which even the ashes of the dead shall hear in their tombs. Let us direct our thoughts and minds to that Judge who, by the mere brightness of his countenance, will disclose whatever lurks in darkness, lay open all the secrets of the human heart, and crush all the wicked by the mere breath of his mouth. Consider, now, what serious answer you are to make for yourself and your party: Our cause, as it is supported by the truth of God, will be at no loss for a complete defense. I speak not of our persons, whose safety will be found not in defense, but in humble confession and suppliant deprecation; but in so far as our ministry is concerned, there is none of us who will not be able thus to speak : -

"O Lord, I have, indeed, experienced how difficult and grievous it was to bear the invidious accusations with which I was harassed on the earth; but with the same confidence with which I then appealed to thy tribunal, I now appear before thee, because I know that in thy judgment truth always reigns - that truth by whose assurance supported I first ventured to attempt - with whose assistance provided I was able to accomplish whatever I have achieved in thy Church. They charged me with two of the worst of crimes - heresy and schism. And the heresy was, that I dared to protest against dogmas which they received. But what could I have done? I heard from thy mouth that there was no other light of truth which could direct our souls into the way of life, than that which was kindled by thy Word. I heard that whatever human minds of themselves conceive concerning thy Majesty, the worship of thy Deity, and the mysteries of thy religion, was vanity. I heard that their introducing into the Church instead of thy Word, doctrines sprung from the human brain, was sacrilegious presumption. But when I turned my eyes towards men, I saw very different principles prevailing. Those who were regarded as the leaders of faith neither understood thy Word, nor greatly cared for it. They only drove unhappy people to and fro with strange doctrines, and deluded them with I know not what follies. Among the people themselves, the highest veneration paid to thy Word was to revere it at a distance, as a thing inaccessible, and abstain from all investigation of it. Owing to this supine: state of the pastors, and this stupidity of the people, every place was filled with pernicious errors, falsehoods, and superstition. They, indeed, called thee the only God, but it was while transferring to others the glory which thou hast claimed for thy Majesty. They figured and had for themselves as many gods as they had saints, whom they chose to worship. Thy Christ was indeed worshipped as God, and retained the name of Savior; but where he ought to have been honored, he was left almost without honor. For, spoiled of his own virtue, he passed unnoticed among the crowd of saints, like one of the meanest of them. There was none who duly considered that one sacrifice which he offered on the cross, and by which he reconciled us to thysself none who ever dreamed of thinking of his eternal priesthood, and the intercession depending upon it - none who trusted in his righteousness only.

That confident hope of salvation which is both enjoined by thy Word, and founded upon it, had almost vanished. Nay, it was received as a kind of oracle, that it was foolish arrogance, and, as they termed it, presumption for any one trusting to thy goodness, and the righteousness of thy Son, to entertain a sure and unfaltering hope of salvation. Not a few profane opinions plucked up by the roots, the first principles of that doctrine which thou hast delivered to us in thy Word. The true meaning of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, also, were corrupted by numerous falsehoods. And then, when all, with no small insult to thy mercy, put confidence in good works, when by good works they strove to merit thy favor, to procure justification, to expiate their sins, and make satisfaction to thee, (each of these things obliterating and making void the virtue of Christ's cross,) they were yet altogether ignorant wherein good works consisted. For, just as if they were not at all instructed in righteousness by thy law they had fabricated for themselves many useless frivolities, as a means of procuring thy favor, and on these they so plumed themselves, that, in comparison of them, they almost contemned the standard of true righteousness which thy law recommended - to such a degree had human desires, after usurping the ascendancy, derogated, if not from the belief, at least from the authority, of thy precepts therein contained. That I might perceive these things, thou, O Lord, didst shine upon me with the brightness of thy Spirit; that I might comprehend how impious and noxious they were, thou didst bear before me the torch of thy Word; that I might abominate them as they deserved, thou didst stimulate my soul. But in rendering an account of my doctrine thou seest (what my own conscience declares) that it was not my intention to stray beyond those limits which I saw had been fixed by all thy servants. Whatever I felt assured that I had learned from thy mouth, I desired to dispense faithfully to the Church. Assuredly, the thing at which I chiefly aimed, and for which I most diligently labored, was that the glory of thy goodness and justice after dispersing the mists by which it was formerly obscured, might shine forth conspicuous, that the virtue and blessings of thy Christ (all glosses being wiped away) might be fully displayed. For I thought it impious to leave in obscurity things which we were born to ponder and meditate. Nor did I think that truths, whose magnitude no language can express, were to be maliciously or falsely declared. I hesitated not to dwell at greater length on topics on which the salvation of my hearers depended. For the oracle could never deceive which declares,

'This is eternal life to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.' (John 17:37)"

"As to the charge of forsaking the Church which they were wont to bring against me there is nothing of which my conscience accuses me, unless, indeed, he is to be considered a deserter, who seeing the soldiers routed and scattered, and abandoning the ranks, raises the leader's standard, and recalls them to their posts. For thus, O Lord, were all thy servants dispersed, so that they could not, by any possibility, hear the command, but had almost forgotten their leader, and their service, and their military oath. In order to bring them together, when thus scattered, I raised not a foreign standard, but that noble banner of thine whom we must follow, if we would be classed among thy people.

"Then I was assailed by those who, when they ought to have kept others in their ranks, had led them astray, and when I determined not to desist, opposed me with violence. On this grievous tumults arose, and the contest blazed and issued in disruption. With whom the blame rests it is for thee, O Lord, to decide. Always, both by word and deed, have I protested how eager I was for unity. Mine, however, was a unity of the Church, which should begin with thee and end in thee. For as oft as thou didst recommend to us peace and concord, thou, at the same time, didst show that thou wert the only bond for preserving it. But if I desired to be at peace with those

who boasted of being the heads of the Church and pillars of faith I behoved to purchase it with the denial of thy truth. I thought that any thing was to be endured sooner than stoop to such a nefarious paction. For thy Anointed hath declared, that though heaven and earth should be confounded, yet thy word must endure for ever, (Matthew 24:35.) Nor did I think that I dissented from thy Church, because I was at war with those leaders; for thou hast forewarned me both by thy Son and by the apostles, that that place would be occupied by persons to whom I ought by no means to consent. Christ had predicted not of strangers, but of men who should give themselves out for pastors, that they would be ravenous wolves and false prophets, and had, at the same time cautioned to beware of them. Where Christ ordered me to beware, was I to lend my aid? And the apostles declared that there would be no enemies of thy Church more pestilential than those from within, who should conceal themselves under the title of pastors, (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:18.) Why should I have hesitated to separate myself from persons whom they forewarned me to hold as enemies? I had before my eyes the examples of thy prophets, who I saw had a similar contest with the priests and prophets of their day, though these were undoubtedly the rulers of the Church among the Israelitish people. But thy prophets are not regarded as schismatics, because, when they wished to revive religion which had fallen into decay, they desisted not, although opposed with the utmost violence. They still remained in the unity of the Church, though they were doomed to perdition by wicked priests, and deemed unworthy of a place among men, not to say saints. Confirmed by their example, I too persisted. Though denounced as a deserter of the Church, and threatened, I was in no respect deterred, or induced to proceed less firmly and boldly in opposing those who in the character of pastors, wasted thy Church with a more than impious tyranny. My conscience told me how strong the zeal was with which I burned for the unity of thy Church, provided thy truth were made the bond of concord. As the commotions which followed were not excited by me, so there is no ground for imputing them to me.

"Thou, O Lord, knowest, and the fact itself has testified to men, that the only thing I asked was, that all controversies should be decided by thy word, that thus both parties might unite with one mind to establish thy kingdom; and I declined not to restore peace to the Church at the expense of my head, if I were found to have been unnecessarily the cause of tumult. But what did our opponents? Did they not instantly, and like madmen, fly to fires, swords, and gibbets? Did they not decide that their only security was in arms and cruelty? Did they not instigate all ranks to the same fury? Did they not spurn at all methods of pacification? To this it is owing that a matter, which might at one time have been settled amicably, has blazed into such a contest. But although, amidst the great confusion, the judgments of men were various, I am freed from all fear, now that we stand at thy tribunal, where equity, combined with truth, cannot but decide in favor of innocence."

Such, Sadolet, is our pleading, not the fictitious one which you, in order to aggravate our case, were pleased to devise, but that the perfect truth of which is known to the good even now, and will be made manifest to all creatures on that day.

Nor will those who, instructed by our preaching, have adhered to our cause, be at a loss what to say for themselves, since each will be ready with this defense : -

"I, O Lord, as I had been educated from a boy, always professed the Christian faith. But at first I had no other reason for my faith than that which then every where prevailed. Thy word, which ought to have shone on all thy people like a lamp, was taken away, or at least suppressed as to us. And lest any one should long for greater light, an idea had been instilled into the minds of all, that the investigation of that hidden celestial philosophy was better delegated to a few, whom the others might

consult as oracles - that the highest knowledge befitting plebeian minds was to subdue themselves into obedience to the Church. Then, the rudiments in which I had been instructed were of a kind which could neither properly train me to the legitimate worship of thy Deity, nor pave the way for me to a sure hope of salvation, nor train me aright for the duties of the Christian life. I had learned, indeed, to worship thee only as my God, but as the true method of worshipping was altogether unknown to me, I stumbled at the very threshold. I believed, as I had been taught, that I was redeemed by the death of thy Son from liability to eternal death, but the redemption I thought of was one whose virtue could never reach me. I anticipated a future resurrection, but hated to think of it, as being an event most dreadful. And this feeling not only had dominion over me in private, but was derived from the doctrine which was then uniformly delivered to the people by their Christian teachers. They, indeed, preached of thy clemency towards men, but confined it to those who should show themselves deserving of it. They, moreover, placed this desert in the righteousness of works, so that he only was received into thy favor who reconciled himself to thee by works. Nor, meanwhile, did they disguise the fact, that we are miserable sinners, that we often fall through infirmity of the flesh, and that to all, therefore, thy mercy behaved to be the common haven of salvation; but the method of obtaining it, which they pointed out, was by making satisfaction to thee for offenses. Then, the satisfaction enjoined was, first, after confessing all our sins to a priest, suppliantly to ask pardon and absolution; and, secondly, by good to efface from thy remembrance our bad actions. Lastly, in order to supply what was still wanting, we were to add sacrifices and solemn expiations. Then, because thou wert a stern judge and strict avenger of iniquity, they showed how dreadful thy presence must be. Hence they bade us flee first to the saints, that by their intercession thou mightest be rendered exorable and propitious to us.

"When, however, I had performed all these things, though I had some intervals of quiet, I was still far off from true peace of conscience; for, whenever I descended into myself, or raised my mind to thee, extreme terror seized me - terror which no expiations nor satisfactions could cure. And the more closely I examined myself, the sharper the stings with which my conscience was pricked, so that the only solace which remained to me was to delude myself by obliviousness. Still, as nothing better offered, I continued the course which I had begun, when, lo, a very different form of doctrine started up, not one which led us away from the Christian profession, but one which brought it back to its fountain head, and, as it were, clearing away the dross, restored it to its original purity. Offended by the novelty, I lent an unwilling ear, and at first, I confess, strenuously and passionately resisted; for (such is the firmness or effrontery with which it is natural to men to persist in the course which they have once undertaken) it was with the greatest difficulty I was induced to confess that I had all my life long been in ignorance and error. One thing, in particular, made me averse to those new teachers viz., reverence for the Church. But when once I opened my ears, and allowed myself to be taught, I perceived that this fear of derogating from the majesty of the Church was groundless. For they reminded me how great the difference is between schism from the Church, and studying to correct the faults by which the Church herself was contaminated. They spoke nobly of the Church, and showed the greatest desire to cultivate unity. And lest it should seem they quibbled on the term Church, they showed it was no new thing for Antichrists to preside there in place of pastors. 'Of this they produced not a few examples, from which it appeared that they aimed at nothing but the edification of the Church, and in that respect were similarly circumstanced with many of Christ's servants whom we ourselves included in the catalogue of saints. For inveighing more freely against the Roman Pontiff, who was revered as the Vicegerent of Christ, the Successor of Peter, and the Head of the Church, they excused themselves thus: Such titles as those are empty bugbears, by which the eyes of the pious ought not to be so blinded as not to venture to look at

them, and sift the reality. It was when the world was plunged in ignorance and sloth, as in a deep sleep, that the Pope had risen to such an eminence; certainly neither appointed Head of the Church by the word of God, nor ordained by a legitimate act of the Church, but of his own accord, self-elected. Moreover, the tyranny which he let loose against the people of God was not to be endured, if we wished to have the kingdom of Christ amongst us in safety.

"And they wanted not most powerful arguments to confirm all their positions. First, they clearly disposed of every thing that was then commonly adduced to establish the primacy of the Pope. When they had taken away all these props, they also, by the word of God, tumbled him from his lofty height. On the whole, they made it clear and palpable, to learned and unlearned, that the true order of the Church had then perished - that the keys under which the discipline of the Church is comprehended had been altered very much for the worse - that Christian liberty had fallen in short, that the kingdom of Christ was prostrated when this primacy was reared up. They told me, moreover, as a means of pricking my conscience, that I could not safely connive at these things as if they concerned me not; that so far art thou from patronising any voluntary error, that even he who is led astray by mere ignorance does not err with impunity. This they proved by the testimony of thy Son,

'If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.' (Matthew 15:14)

My mind being now prepared for serious attention, I at length perceived, as if light had broken in upon me, in what a style of error I had wallowed, and how much pollution and impurity I had thereby contracted. Being exceedingly alarmed at the misery into which I had fallen, and much more at that which threatened me in the view of eternal death, I, as in duty bound, made it my first business to betake myself to thy way, condemning my past life, not without groans and tears. And now, O Lord, what remains to a wretch like me, but instead of defense, earnestly to supplicate thee not to judge according to its deserts that fearful abandonment of thy word, from which, in thy wondrous goodness, thou hast at last delivered me."

Now, Sadolet if you please, compare this pleading with that which you have put into the mouth of your plebeian. It will be strange if you hesitate which of the two you ought to prefer. For the safety of that man hangs by a thread whose defense turns wholly on this - that he has constantly adhered to the religion handed down to him from his forefathers. At this rate, Jews, and Turks, and Saracens, would escape the judgment of God. Away, then, with this vain quibbling at a tribunal which will be erected not to approve the authority of man, but to condemn all flesh of vanity and falsehood, and vindicate the truth of God only.

But were I disposed to contend with you in trifles, what picture might I paint, I say not, of a Pope, or a Cardinal, or any reverend Prelate whatsoever of your faction, (in what colors almost every man of them might, without any great stretch of ingenuity, be exhibited, you well know,) but of any, even the most select among your doctors? For his condemnation, there would, assuredly, be no need either to adduce doubtful conjectures against him, or devise false accusations. He would be burdened heavily enough with such as are certainly just. But that I may not seem to imitate what I blame in you, I decline this mode of pleading. I will only exhort these men to turn for once to themselves, and consider with what fidelity they feed the Christian people, who cannot have any other food than the Word of their God. And that they may not flatter themselves too much, because they now act their part with great applause, and for the most part, amid favorable acclamations, let them remember, that they have not yet come to the conclusion; at which, assuredly, they will not have a theater on which to vend their smoke with impunity, and, by their tricks, ensnare credulous minds, but will stand or fall by the decision of God himself, whose judgment will not be regulated by the popular gale, butt by his own inflexible justice; and who will not only inquire into each man's deeds, but put to proof the hidden sincerity or iniquity of his heart. I dare not pronounce on all without exception; and yet, how many of

them feel in their consciences, that, in contending against us, they are hiring out their services to men, rather than [giving them] to God?

While, throughout your Letter, you treat us without mercy, towards its conclusion, you pour out the venom of your bitterness upon us with open mouth. But though your invectives by no means hurt us, and have already been partly answered, I would yet ask, what could make you think of accusing us of avarice? Think you our Reformers were so dull as not to perceive from the very outset, that they were entering on a course most adverse to gain and lucre? And, when they charged you with greediness, did they not see that they were necessarily binding themselves to temperance and frugality, if they were not to become ridiculous even to children? When they showed that the method of correcting that greediness was to disburden pastors of their excessive wealth, in order that they might be more at liberty to care for the Church, did they not spontaneously shut against themselves the avenue to wealth? For what riches now remained to which they might aspire? What! Would not the shortest road to riches and honours have been to have transacted with you at the very first, on the terms which were offered? How much would your Pontiff then have paid to many for their silence? How much would he pay for it, even at the present day? If they are actuated in the least degree by avarice, why do they cut off all hope of improving their fortune, and prefer to be thus perpetually wretched, rather than enrich themselves without difficulty, and in a twinkling? But ambition, forsooth, withholds them! What ground you had for this other insinuation I see not, since those who first engaged in this cause could expect nothing else than to be spurned by the whole world, and those who afterwards adhered to it exposed themselves knowingly and willingly to endless insults and revilings from every quarter. But where is this fraud and inward malice? No suspicion of such things cleaves to us. Talk of them rather in your sacred Consistory, where they are in operation every day.

As I hasten to a conclusion, I am compelled to pass by your calumny, that, leaning entirely to our own judgment, we find not in the whole Church one individual to whom we think deference is due. That it is a calumny, I have already sufficiently demonstrated. For, although we hold that the Word of God alone lies beyond the sphere of our judgment, and that Fathers and Councils are of authority only in so far as they accord with the rule of the Word, we still give to Councils and Fathers such rank and honor as it; is meet for them to hold, under Christ.

But the most serious charge of all is, that we have attempted to dismember the Spouse of Christ. Were that true, both you and the whole world might well regard us as desperate. But I will not admit the charge, unless you can make out that the Spouse of Christ is dismembered by those who desire to present her as a chaste virgin to Christ, - who are animated by a degree of holy zeal to preserve her spotless for Christ, - who seeing her polluted by base seducers, recall her to conjugal fidelity, - who unhesitatingly wage war against all the adulterers whom they detect laying snares for her chastity. And what but this have we done? Had not your faction of a Church attempted, nay, violated her chastity, by strange doctrines? Had she not been violently prostituted by your numberless superstitions? Had she not been defiled by that vilest species of adultery, the worship of images? And because, forsooth, we did not suffer you so to insult the sacred chamber of Christ, we are said to have lacerated his Spouse! But I tell you that that laceration, of which you falsely accuse us, is witnessed not obscurely among yourselves; - a laceration not only of the Church, but of Christ himself, who is there beheld miserably mangled. How can the Church adhere to her Spouse while she has him not in satiety? For where is the safety of Christ, while the glory of his justice and holiness, and wisdom, is transferred elsewhere?

But it seems, before we kindled the strife all was tranquillity and perfect peace! True! among pastors, and also among the common people, stupor and sloth had caused, that there were almost no controversies respecting religion. But in the schools, how lustily did sophists brawl? You cannot, therefore take credit for a tranquil kingdom, when there was tranquillity for no other reason than because Christ was silent. I admit, that, on the revival of the gospel, great disputes arose where all was quietness before. But that is unjustly imputed to our Reformers, who, during the whole course of their proceedings, desired nothing more than that religion being revived, the Churches, which discord had scattered and dispersed, might be gathered together into true unity. And not to go back upon old transactions, what sacrifices did they, on a late occasion, decline to make, merely that they might

procure peace to the Churches? But all their efforts are rendered vain by your opposition. For, while they desire peace, that along with it the kingdom of Christ may flourish, and you, on the other hand, think that all which is gained to Christ is lost to you, it is not strange that you strenuously resist. And you have arts by which you can in one day overturn all that they accomplish for the glory of Christ in many months. I will not overwhelm you with words, because one word will make the matter clear. Our Reformers offered to render an account of their doctrine. If overcome in argument, they decline not to submit. To whom, then, is it owing that the Church enjoys not perfect peace, and the light of truth? Go now, and charge us as seditious, in not permitting the Church to be quiet!

But, (that you might not omit any thing which might tend to prejudice our cause,) since, during these few years, many sects have sprung up, you, with your usual candor, lay the blame upon us. See with what fairness, or even with what plausibility! If we deserve hatred on that account, the Christian name also must, in times of old, have deserved it from the ungodly. Therefore, either cease to molest us on this subject, or openly declare that the Christian religion, which begets so many tumults in the world, ought to be banished from the memory of man! It ought not to hurt our cause in the least, that Satan has tried in all ways to impede the work of Christ. It were more to the point to inquire which party has devotedly opposed itself to all the sects which have arisen. It is plain, that while you were idle and fast asleep, we alone bore all the brunt.

The Lord grant, Sadolet, that you and all your party may at length perceive, that the only true bond of Ecclesiastical unity would exist if Christ the Lord, who hath reconciled us to God the Father, were to gather us out of our present dispersion into the fellowship of his body, that so, through his one Word and Spirit, we might join together with one heart and one soul.

Basle, September 1, 1539.
