

out the folly of attempting to "overthrow English Protestantism by abusing Protestants."

Does the writer in the *Rambler* think it will conciliate Protestants, or tend to prejudice them in favour of what he calls "Catholic truth," to denounce the Thirty-nine Articles as "vile"—to speak of the "chaotic world of Protestantism"—of "Protestantism as essentially a religion of negations," in which it is *difficult to find two people who do not disagree in their creed*—of "that singular thing, English Protestantism . . . raising new churches, and paying additional elergy by hundreds and thousands, yet *winking at burial-club poisonings, wife-beatings, and child-murders*, and extolling the English people as the most moral on the face of the earth"?

Were we to have *conciliated* our Roman Catholic readers by similar vituperation, instead of calm argument and affectionate remonstrance, we rather think we should have long since been consigned to the oblivion we should have merited, and all our fine professions about candour and fair play would have been justly set down as mere snares to entrap the weak or unwary, instead of being considered, as we trust they are (even by our opponents), as the honest expressions of an earnest desire to follow truth wherever it leads, and of a sincere confidence that "the ultimate power of truth and sincerity" must, at last, prevail.

While, however, we protest against such harsh and uncharitable sentiments as unworthy of an article on "The True Principle of Religious Controversy," and utterly inconsistent with the sound views so ably urged in the paragraphs first cited, we are glad to be able to add some further extracts, couched in a more candid spirit. Speaking of English Protestants, the writer says, in another passage—

"They make sacrifices for religion—some of them great sacrifices. . . . They have wonderfully improved in general morals during the last half century; and that, not under the pressure or from the example of Catholicism (of which they know nothing), but from some influence residing among themselves."

Well, this we think is some set-off against the grievous charge of *winking at burial-club poisonings, wife-beatings, and child-murders*; and, probably, our readers will agree with us, is somewhat inconsistent with it. But if the *Rambler* expects to influence the minds of English or Irish Protestants by really doing what he professes, "placing his confidence in the ultimate power of truth and sincerity," we would recommend him to act up to his own wise principles, as we have endeavoured (we hope not wholly unsuccessfully) to do, and sincerely and steadily try to *lead* the minds of those who now sincerely differ with their Roman Catholic brethren (men whom the *Rambler* acknowledges cannot be *driven*) by fair reasoning, learned and logical argument, and truthful historical statements, based on adequate authority, into that glorious unity, which has been so eloquently described by the great Burke, as being not "unity of belief in the bond of ignorance, nor unity of profession in the bond of hypocrisy, but unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." In the words of the *Rambler* itself, we think there is, indeed, "an indescribable power, a victorious efficacy, in the very look, the voice, the gestures, and still more in the words of those rare persons in whom Christian *love* not only lives, but is absolutely dominant, which is unapproached by all the achievements of logic, and all the captivating beauty of human discourse. The reason we believe to be this—that the saint appeals to that which is good in a man, and treats him as being better, perhaps, than he is; while we, for the most part, attack that which is evil in him, and treat him as worse than he is, or, at the best, with the barest measure of rigid justice."

We shall forward our present number to the Editor of the *Rambler*, in the hope that the

good spirit in which the main part of the article we have referred to is written, will induce the conductors of that journal to try whether there are to be found in our pages any of the "illogical assumptions, the violations of history, or the puzzled confusion," which they would have their readers to believe are the characteristics of all writers who are opposed to them. Our pages have dealt with so large a number of topics as to afford ample ground for detecting and exposing such faults, if they exist; and not pretending to the supernatural powers of infallibility, we are not vain enough to suppose that we may not at times have fallen into involuntary error. One thing we are sure of, however, that we would not willingly either *remain in error* ourselves, or lead others into it, and shall, therefore, be truly glad to have any errors into which we may have fallen pointed out if they exist; and, with that view, we shall be happy if the Editor of the *Rambler* will permit us, not in a boastful or pretending, but a sincere spirit of Christian friendship, to present him with the whole of our periodical, Nos. 1 to 40 inclusive, if he likes to break a friendly lance with us in controversy, carried on in the Christian spirit we both profess to admire and approve of. We can assure the Editor that we have no party object in view, but are sincerely anxious to promote the cause of truth and virtue, and that we ever look upon those who differ with us, as *friends* and not as enemies, when they are trying to convert us to the opinions which they conscientiously believe to be true; and should the *Rambler* succeed in exposing inconsistencies, or illogical assumptions, in what we have presented to the world, he will, at least, not find us "*shameless*," but, on the contrary, *sensitively alive to character*, and anxious to repair any wrong we may have done, as all honest men ought to be, when venturing to write on subjects of such vast importance to the happiness and safety of the whole human race, as the boundaries between religious truth and error.

DISPENSATIONS BY THE POPE.

OUR attention has been called to this subject by the leading article in the *Tablet* newspaper of March 24. A proposal has been made in Parliament to allow a widower to marry the sister of his deceased wife. It is not the object of our paper to discuss such questions; but if we were bound to give a decided opinion, we should fully agree with the *Tablet* in condemning this proposal, and, perhaps, on stronger grounds. For, if God has made man and wife to be "one flesh" (Gen. iii. 24; and Matthew xix. 5; and Mark x. 8.), then we do not see how it can be lawful for a man to marry his wife's sister, any more than his own sister. We hope the proposed change will be rejected in Parliament; and even if it should be adopted, we hope the Irish people will never act on it. So far, therefore, we are quite agreed with the *Tablet* about it. And we are sorry to find that all Roman Catholics do not agree with the *Tablet* on this subject; for Mr. Bowyer, an English Roman Catholic lawyer, who is member for Dundalk, did actually support this proposal in Parliament: on which the *Tablet* observes, "English lawyers have never been famous for their respect for the Holy See."

But our present question is with the power of the Pope to grant dispensations to people to do what is wrong.

The law now restrains men from marrying their wives' sisters. Some people try to get up an outcry against that law. The *Tablet* condemns that outcry, and says, "it is a scandalous reflection on the discipline of the Church, which has ever maintained, with zealous vigilance, these unpleasant restrictions on human extravagance."

But, if this be so, how are we to understand what the *Tablet* says further—"We know well that these marriages are now unlawful, and that *nothing can make them innocent but the permission of the Pope*?" Now, if these marriages are guilty and sinful in themselves, can the Pope give men leave to incur guilt and sin? and does his permission make it innocent to commit sin?

But the *Tablet* goes on to say—"The dispensation is most difficult to obtain, *excepting only where sin is in question*." Now, what does this mean? Does it mean that the Pope gives leave to commit sin, only where people *will* sin, whether they get leave or not? That seems to be the meaning; for the *Tablet*, in speaking of the evidence which Cardinal Wiseman gave, concerning these dispensations, says—"His Eminence was speaking

of one class of dispensations, *which come from the penitentiary*, and which were made, in a sense, *necessary by the sins of the petitioners*. . . . Nothing was further from his thoughts, or more removed from his practice, than the issue of dispensations, by which persons *of blameless life and conversation* could marry the sisters of their departed wives." So it seems that to get a dispensation, a man must first commit sin, and then "the penitentiary" gives him a dispensation to continue in his sin; and that makes his sin innocent!

But, if this be so, why does not the Pope allow all his subjects to continue in sin, and make them innocent, just by giving them a license or dispensation? Should he not give fair play to all? Should not the rich and poor be on the same level in respect of sin, and of the Pope's care to free them from sin?

But the *Tablet* says this is not so. The *Tablet* says—"If the law were changed to-morrow, no English Catholic *under the degree of a peer*, could reasonably presume that his case could be *listened to*; and it passes our comprehension how any Christian can say that this is a *poor man's question*."

In that case it passes our comprehension, too, how "dispensation" can be a "poor man's question." But it is quite within our comprehension, why dispensation is *not* a poor man's question. A dispensation from the Pope costs a large sum of money. So a poor man cannot get a dispensation to continue in sin with innocence, and a rich man can. The poor man, unless he gives up his sin, *must go to the devil*; but the rich man need only go to the Pope and be safe in his sin.

We leave it to our readers to consider, whether sin be no sin when the Pope gives license to live in sin? And, if this be so, whether the poor man should not have license to live in sin, as well as the rich man?

SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE POPE.

IN our last number we showed what differences exist in the Church of Rome about the *temporal* power of the Pope. Many of the greatest authorities of the Church of Rome have maintained that the temporal power of kings and princes is subject to the Pope, who has authority from God to command, and even to deprive them of their kingdoms. Many Popes have claimed and exercised this power; and none have since disclaimed it; but it still stands in the canon law, as part of the law of the Church of Rome, that it is "altogether necessary to salvation that every human creature should be subject to the Roman Pontiff."

On the other hand, Roman Catholic princes, as is natural, do generally resist and deny this doctrine; and we believe that most of the Roman Catholic laity at present do reject and deny it.

This involves serious questions. Either these Popes have falsely claimed to have a power from God, which God never gave them; or else a vast number of Roman Catholics have been, and now are, resisting a power which God has given to the Popes.

It is not our intention to pursue this point of the Pope's temporal supremacy any further at present; but if any of our Roman Catholic correspondents are disposed to discuss it, we are ready to supply them with materials in plenty.

But our present object is to ask, whether Roman Catholics are better agreed among themselves about the *spiritual* supremacy of the Pope.

Here, at least, we might expect to find Roman Catholics agreed; and yet it is far otherwise. For many ages past the Roman Catholic Church has contained in it two parties who hold opposite views about the Pope's spiritual supremacy; and these two parties continue to differ about it at this day.

One party thinks that the Pope is only the chief servant of the Church, and subject to the Church.

The other party thinks the Pope is lord and master of the Church, and that the Church is subject to him.

But it is better that we should give these two opposite views of the spiritual supremacy, from the writings of most eminent Roman Catholic divines, and not from our own. We, therefore, give the best and clearest statements we can find of the two different opinions.

We take the first statement from the learned Aeneas Sylvius.

NO. I. AENEAS SYLVIVS.

"It is the opinion of all those who are dead, if that ought to be called an *opinion*, which is fortified with sufficient authorities, that the Pope of Rome is subject to the universal Church; neither dare those who are living deny it. But they venture on this, to make a doubt among some, whether that should also be believed concerning a general council. For there are some, whether desirous of distinction, or that by flattery they expect rewards, who have begun to preach certain strange and *altogether new* doctrines, and are not afraid to exempt the Pope from the jurisdiction of the holy council; for ambition has blinded them, from whom not only this modern schism, but all schisms to this day, are found to have arisen. . . . They who are half ashamed to beg, do chiefly support this heresy of to-day, of whom one cries out, that the actions of those subject to him are to be judged by the Pope, but that the Roman Pontiff is reserved to the judgment of God alone. Another says, that no one shall judge the first See, because that neither by the emperor, nor by all