Middleton confessed @@(E), that for 20 years he had laboured in vain to fabricate a ſpecious anſwer @@(f).

Having ſatisfied himſelf of the truth of revelation in gene­ral, it may be worth the young divine’s while to provide a defence of the Chriſtian religion againſt the objections of modern Judaiſm. In this part of his ſtudies he will need no other inſtruction than what he may reap from Limborch’s work entitled *De Veritate Religionis Christianae amica colla­tio cum erudito Judaeo.* “ In that diſputation which was held with Orobio, he will find all that the ſtretch of human parts on the one hand, or ſcience on the other, can produce to varniſh error or unravel ſophiſtry. All the papers of Orobio in defence of Judaiſm, as oppoſed to Chriſtianity, are printed at large, with Limborch’s anſwers, ſection by ſection ; and the ſubtileſt ſophiſms of a very ſuperior genius are ably and ſatisfactorily detected and expoſed by the ſtrong, profound, and clear reaſoning, of this renowned remonſtrant@@\*.” See Orobio and Limborch.

The various controverſies ſubſiſting between the ſeveral denominations of Chriſtians, about points which ſeparate them into different churches, ought next to be ſtudied in the order of the courſe ; for nothing is unimportant which divides the followers of that Maſter whoſe favourite precept was *love.* It has indeed been long faſhionable to decry po­lemical divinity as an uſeleſs, if not a pernicious, ſtudy ; but it is not impoſſible that this faſhion, like many others, has had its origin in ignorance, and that it tends to perpetuate thoſe schiſms which it profeſſes to lament. We are, how­ever, far, very far, from recommending to the young divine a perusal of the works of the ſeveral combatants on each ſide of a diſputed queſtion, till he has fitted himſelf for judging between them by a long courſe of preparatory ſtudy ; and the only preparation which can fit him for this purpoſe is an impartial and comprehensive ſtudy of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. He who has with accuracy traced the progreſs of our holy religion from the days of the apoſtles to the preſent time, and marked the introduction of new doctrines, and the riſe of the various ſects into which the Chriſtian world is unhappily divided, is furniſhed with a criterion within himſelf by which to judge of the importance and truth of the many conteſted doctrines ; whilſt he who, without this preparation, ſhall read a multitude of books on any one re­ligious controverſy, will be in danger of becoming a convert to his last author, if that author poſſeſs any tolerable share of art and ingenuity. This we know was the case with Pope, who declares, that in ſtudying the controverſy be­tween the churches oſ England and Rome, he found him­ſelf a Papiſt and Proteſtant by turns, according to the laſt book he read.

There are many hiſtories of the Chriſtian church which posseſs great merit, but we are acquainted with none which appears to us wholly impartial. Moſheim’s is perhaps the moſt perfect compend @@(G); and one of its greatest excel­lencies is, that on every subject the beſt writers are referred to for fuller information. Theſe indeed ſhould often be conſulted, not only to ſupply the defects neceſſarily resulting from the narrowneſs of the limits which the author, with great propriety, preſcribed to himſelf ; but alſo to cor­rect his partial obliquities; for with all his merits, and they were many and great, he is certainly not free from the in­fluence of prejudice. Indeed there is no coming at the true hiſtory of the primitive church, but by ſtudying the works of the primitive writers ; and the principal works of the four firſt centuries will amply reward the labour of perusing them @@(h). The rise and progreſs of the reformation in ge­neral, the moſt important period of church-hiſtory, may be beſt learned from Sleidan’s book *De Statu Religionis et Reipublicœ Carolo L. Caeſare Commentarii ;* the Hiſtory of the Reformation of the Church of Scotland from Knox and Spotiſwood ; and that of the Church of England from the much applauded work of Biſhop Burnet.

After this courſe of ecclefiaſtical hiſtory, the young di­vine may read with advantage the moſt important contro­verſies which have agitated the Chriſtian world ; for he will new read them without danger of giving up his faith to the mere authority of great names. To enumerate theſe con­troverſies, and to point out the ableſt authors who have written on each, would be a very tedious, and perhaps not a very profitable, taſk. On one controverſy, however, we are induced to recommend a very maſterly work, becauſe it is ſufficient of itſelf to fix the principles of Proteſtants with reſpect to the church of Rome, and to put to ſhame the faſhionable censurers of *polemical divinity.* The work to which we allude is Chillingworth’s book againſt Knott, entitled *The Religion of Protestants a ſafe way to Salvation ;* in which the ſchool jargon of that ſubtile Jeſuit is incomparably expoſed, and the long diſpute between the Popiſh and Reformed churches placed on its proper ground, the Holy Scriptures.

One of the ſtrongeſt and moſt plauſible objections to the ſtudy of polemical divinity, is its tendency to give a rigid turn to the sentiments of thoſe long engaged in it ; whilſt we know, from higher authority than that of the ableſt diſputant, that “ the end of the commandment is charity.” But for preserving charity in the minds of Chriſtians, there are better means than abſolute ignorance or indifference to truth. Charity is violated only when a church unreaſonably reſtrains the inquiries of its own members, or exerciſes intolerance towards thoſe who have renounced its jurisdiction. The injuſtice of the firſt ſpecies of ecclesiaſtical tyranny is expoſed in a very maſterly manner by Jeremy Taylor in his *Liberty of Prophesying,* and by Stillingfleet in his *Irenicum ;* the injuſtice of the ſecond, by Locke in his celebrated Letters on Toleration. The man who ſhall per

@@@[m]\* Warburton's Directions for the Study of Theology.

@@@(e) This piece of information we had from the late Dr Berkeley, prebendary of Canterbury, who had it from Arch- biſhop Secker, to whom the confeſſion was made.

@@@(f) To theſe defences of revelation we might have added the collection of sermons preached at Boyle’s lecture fronm 1691 to 1732, publiſhed in three volumes folio, 1739 ; the works of Leland; Biſhop Newton’s Dissertations on Prophecy ; and above all, Lardner’s Credibility of the Goſpel Hiſtory, with the Supplement to it. But there would be no end of recommending eminent writers on this ſubject. We have mentioned ſuch as we moſt approve among thoſe with whom we are beſt acquainted ; but we muſt, once for all, caution the reader againſt ſupposing that we approve of *every* thing to be found in any work except the ſacred ſcriptures.

@@@(g) The Biſhop of Landaff, in the catalogue of books publiſhed at the end of his Theological Tracts, recommends ſeveral other ecclesiaſtical hiſtories as works of great merit ; ſuch as, Dupin’s, Echard’s, Gregory’s, and Formey's, together with *Pauli Ernesti Jablonski Institutiones Historiae Christianae,* publiſhed at Frankfort in three volumes, 1754-67.

@@@(h) For a proof of this poſition, and for a just eſtimate of the value of the *Fathers,* as they are called, ſee the introduction to Warburton’s Julian, and Kett's Sermons at Bampton’s Lectures.