

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF S. JOHN THE APOSTLE.

He commendeth the Lady and her sonnes for continuing in the old faith, bidding them so to doe hereafter also, lest they lose the reward of their workes in the day of iudgement: and to loue the true beleeuers, but with Heretikes to haue no societie: expreſsing also the points then in controuerſie.

The Seniour to the Lady Elect and her children, whom I loue in truth, and not I only, but also al that haue knowen the truth, ² for the truth which abideth in vs, and ſhal be with vs for euer. ³ Grace be with you, mercie, peace from God the Father, and from Chriſt IESVS the Sonne of the Father in truth, and charitie.

*Io. 15, 12.
1. Io. 3, 11.*

⁴ I was exceeding glad, becauſe I haue found of thy children walking in truth, as we haue receiued commandement of the Father. ⁵ And now I beſeech thee Lady, not as writing a new commandement to thee, but that which we haue had ^afrom the beginning, that we loue one another. ⁶ And this is charitie, that we walke according to his commandements. For this is the commandement, that as you haue heard from the beginning, you walke in the ſame: ⁷ becauſe many feducers are gone out into the world, which doe not confeſſe IESVS Chriſt to haue come into fleſh: this is a feducer and an Antichriſt.

⁸ Looke to your felues, that you loſe not the things which you haue wrought: but that you may receiue a full ^areward. ⁹ Euery one that ^breuolteth, and perſifteth not in the doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God. He that

^a Reward for keeping faſt the Catholike faith.

^b To goe backe or reuolt from the receiued truth and doctrine Apoſtolicall, is damnable.

perfitteth in the doctrine, the fame hath both the Father, and the Sonne. ¹⁰ If any man come to you, and bring not *this doctrine*, *receiue him not into the house*, *nor say, God faue you*, vnto him. ¹¹ For he that faith vnto him, *God faue you*, communicateth with his wicked workes.

¹² Hauing moe things to write vnto you: I would not by paper and inke: for I hope that I fhall be with you, and fpeake mouth to mouth: that your ioy may be ful. ¹³ The children of thy fifter elect falute thee.

Ro. 16, 17.

ANNOTATIONS

To hold faft the
old receiued faith.

5 From the beginning.) This is the Rule of a Chriftian Catholike man, to walke in that faith and worship of God which he hath receiued from the beginning. Which is that which we now cal according to the Scriptures, *the tradition of the Apostles*: that which is come to vs from man to man, from Bishop to Bishop, and fo from the Apostles. So shal a faithful man auoid feducers that rife vs in euery Age, teaching new doctrine.

To bring wilfully an-
other doctrine then
the Catholike Church
fetteth downe, is al-
waies a marke of
feducers & Heretikes.

10 This doctrine.) The Apostles, and true Pastours their lawful Successeurs, and the Church of God in holy Councel, vse to fet downe the true doctrine in those points which Heretikes cal into controuerfie. Which being once done and declared to the faithful, they need no other marke or description to know an Heretike or false Teacher by, but that he commeth with an other doctrine then that which is fet downe to them. Neither can the Heretikes shift themfelues, as now a-daies they would doe, faying, ô let vs first be proued Heretikes by the Scriptures, let them define an Heretike. No, this is not the Apostles Rule. Many a good honest shepheard knoweth a wolfe, that can not define him. But the Apostle faith, If he bring not this fet doctrine, he is a feducer. So holy Church faith now, Chrift is really in the B. Sacrament, vnder forme of bread and wine &c. If therefore he bring not this doctrine, he is a feducer, and an Heretike and we must auoid him, whether in his owne definitions and censures he seeme to himself an Heretike or no.

When & wherein to
cōuerse with Heretikes,
is tolerable, when &
wherein, it is damnable.

10 Receiue him not.) Though in such times and places where the communitie or most part be infected, necessitie often forceth the faithful to conuerse with such in worldly affaires, to salute them, to eate and speake with them, & the Church by decree of Councel, for the more quietnes of timorous consciences prouideth, that they incurre not excommunication or other censures for communicating in worldly affaires with any in this kind, except they be by name excommunicated or declared to be Heretikes: yet euen in worldly conuersation and secular actes of our life, we must

auoid them as much as we may, becaufe their familiaritie is many waies contagious and noifome to good men, namely to the fimple: but in matter of religion, in praying, reading their bookes, hearing their fermons, prefence at their feruice, partaking of their Sacraments, and al other communicating with them in fpiritual things, it is a great damnable finne to deale with them.

10 Nor fay, God faue you.) S. Irenæus (*li. 3. c. 3.*) reporteth a notable ftorie of this holy Apoftle touching this point, our of Polycarpe, which is this. *There be fome (faith he) that haue heard Polycarpe fay, that when Iohn the Difciple of our Lord was going to Ephefus, into a bath, to wash himfelf, and faw Cerinthus the Heretike within the fame, he fodenly skips out, faying that he feared left the bath should fal, becaufe Cerinthus the enemie of truth was within.* So faith he of S. Iohn, and addeth alfo a like worthie example of S. Polycarpe himfelf: who on a time meeting Marcion the Heretike, and the faid Marcion calling vpon him and asking whether he knew him not: Yes, quoth Polycarpe, *I know thee for Satans fonne and heire. So great feare (faith S. Irenæus) had the Apoftles & their difciples to communicate in word only, with fuch as were adulterers or corrupters of the truth: as S. Paul alfo warned, when he faid, A man that is an Heretike, after the firft and fecond admonition auoid.* So farre Irenæus. If then to fpeake with them or falute them, is fo earneftly to be auoided according to this Apoftles example & doctrine; what a finne is it to flatter them, to ferue them, to marrie with them, and fo-forth?

S. Iohn would not be in one bath with Cerinthus the Heretike.

The like zeale of S. Polycarpe, and other Apoftolike men in not communicating with Heretikes.

Tit. 3.

